

# Grace in the Psalms: Experiencing the Heart of God's Love and Mercy

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Dr. Matthew Webster

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Daily Devotional to Feed Your Soul

Growing in Grace Small Group Books 1-5

How to Study the Bible &  
Discover the Beauty of God's Word



## Table of Contents

### **Small Group Sample Schedule Outline**

**-17-**

#### **Introduction to Grace in the Psalms**

**-21-**

- Overview of the Psalms as a source of comfort, worship, and spiritual insight
- How grace is woven throughout the Psalms and the Hebrew Scriptures
- The role of grace in the personal expressions of the Psalmists
  - Identifying the different types of Psalms
  - Understanding which Psalms were used for which Jewish Feasts
- Authorship and Dates: Who wrote the Psalms, when were they written, and what events were taking place during their composition?
- Psalms in the Old Covenant: The benefits we have in the New Covenant compared to the Old.
  - The Psalms: Songs of Jesus

#### **Chapter 1:**

#### **The Grace of God's Presence**

**-56-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 23, Psalm 46, Psalm 139
- Unpacking God's constant presence as a gift of grace in times of peace and trouble

- Exploring how God's grace is reflected in His nearness and help

---

**Chapter 2:**  
**Grace for the Brokenhearted**  
**-80-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 6, Psalm 34, Psalm 38, Psalm 51, Psalm 147
- God's grace to heal, restore, and comfort those who are broken and contrite in heart
  - The power of grace in repentance and forgiveness

---

**Small Groups Week 1: Introduction &  
The Grace of God's Presence**  
**-100-**

- Introduction: Different Types of Psalms & Their Uses (Pages 21-30)
  - Chapter 1: The Grace of God's Presence (Psalm 23, 46, 139)
  - Chapter 2: Grace for the Brokenhearted (Psalm 6, 34, 38, 51, 147)
- Discussion: How does God's presence bring grace in peace and trouble? How has God healed your brokenness?

---

**Chapter 3:**  
**Grace in Times of Trouble**  
**-103-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 4, Psalm 31, Psalm 43, Psalm 46, Psalm 56, Psalm 61, Psalm 62, Psalm 91, Psalm 121

- Grace for protection, deliverance, and refuge during seasons of distress
- Understanding grace as a shield in times of danger or fear

#### **Chapter 4: The Grace of Forgiveness -117-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 32, Psalm 51, Psalm 103, Psalm 106, Psalm 130, Psalm 141
- Reflecting on God's grace in forgiving sins and cleansing the soul
- How grace leads to freedom from guilt and shame

#### **Chapter 5: The Grace of God's Mercy -136-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 41, Psalm 86, Psalm 103, Psalm 136, Psalm 145
- The abundant mercy of God as an expression of His grace
- Exploring the recurring refrain "His love endures forever" and its implications for grace

#### **Small Groups Week 2: Grace in Times of Trouble & Forgiveness -147-**

- Introduction: Psalms and Jewish Feasts (Pages 30-32, 45)
- Chapter 3: Grace in Times of Trouble (Psalm 4, 31, 43, 46, 56, 61, 62, 91, 121)

- Chapter 4: The Grace of Forgiveness (Psalm 32, 51, 103, 106, 130, 141)
  - Chapter 5: The Grace of God's Mercy (Psalm 41, 86, 103, 136, 145)
  - Discussion: How do the Psalms teach us to rely on grace in difficult times? What role does grace play in forgiveness?
- 

### **Chapter 6: Grace in Worship and Praise -150-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 50, Psalm 68, Psalm 81, Psalm 95, Psalm 96, Psalm 98, Psalm 99, Psalm 100, Psalm 113, Psalm 115, Psalm 117, Psalm 122, Psalm 134, Psalm 135, Psalm 148, Psalm 150
- How grace invites us to praise, worship, and give thanks to God
- Understanding grace as the motivation behind our devotion

### **Chapter 7: The Grace of God's Provision -169-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 23, Psalm 65, Psalm 104, Psalm 127, Psalm 128
  - Grace in God's provision of daily needs, protection, and abundance
- Reflecting on the Psalmists' gratitude for God's constant provision

## **Chapter 8: Grace for the Oppressed and the Marginalized -180-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 9, Psalm 10, Psalm 12, Psalm 34, Psalm 123, Psalm 146
  - The grace God extends to those who are oppressed, forgotten, or marginalized in society
  - How God's justice and grace are intertwined in His care for the poor and needy
- 

## **Small Group Week 3: Worship, Provision, & Justice for the Oppressed -195-**

- Introduction: Authorship and Dates of Psalms (Pages 32-51)
  - Chapter 6: Grace in Worship and Praise (Psalm 50, 68, 81, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 113, 115, 117, 122, 134, 135, 148, 150)
  - Chapter 7: The Grace of God's Provision (Psalm 23, 65, 104, 127, 128)
  - Chapter 8: Grace for the Oppressed and the Marginalized (Psalm 9, 10, 12, 34, 123, 146)
  - Discussion: How does grace lead us to worship, provide for us, and extend justice to the oppressed?
- 

## **Chapter 9: The Grace of God's Covenant Faithfulness -197-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 15, Psalm 24, Psalm 45, Psalm 89, Psalm 105



- Exploring God's grace as a demonstration of His faithfulness to His promises and covenants
- The assurance of grace in the unbreakable covenant between God and His people

**Chapter 10:**  
**Grace: The Triumph of Deliverance**  
**-214-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 3, Psalm 5, Psalm 7, Psalm 11, Psalm 12, Psalm 17, Psalm 23, Psalm 27, Psalm 35, Psalm 54, Psalm 57, Psalm 59, Psalm 64, Psalm 83, Psalm 109, Psalm 129, Psalm 140
- How grace helps us trust in God's deliverance and protection from enemies
- Understanding grace in the context of victory over spiritual and earthly foes

**Chapter 11:**  
**The Overflowing Grace of God's Lovingkindness**  
**-231-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 36, Psalm 63
- Grace as a reflection of God's steadfast love, kindness, and goodness toward His people
  - A look at the deep love of God that overflows to the saints

---

**Small Groups Week 4: Covenant Faithfulness,  
Deliverance, & Lovingkindness**  
**-245-**

- Introduction: Psalms in the Old Covenant vs. the New (Pages 51-52)
- Chapter 9: The Grace of God's Covenant Faithfulness (Psalm 15, 24, 45, 89, 105)

- Chapter 10: Grace: The Triumph of Deliverance (Psalm 3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 17, 23, 27, 35, 54, 57, 59, 64, 83, 109, 129, 140)
  - Chapter 11: The Overflowing Grace of God's Lovingkindness (Psalm 36, 63)
  - Discussion: How does God's faithfulness and deliverance demonstrate His grace?
- 

### **Chapter 12: The Eternal Grace of God's Sovereignty -247-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 2, Psalm 8, Psalm 29, Psalm 33, Psalm 47, Psalm 90, Psalm 93, Psalm 97, Psalm 103, Psalm 110
- Grace that comes from acknowledging God's sovereignty and His rule over all creation
  - Learning to rest in the grace of His unchanging nature

### **Chapter 13: The Grace of Joy in God's Salvation -269-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 16, Psalm 40, Psalm 51, Psalm 92, Psalm 116
- Exploring how grace leads to joy and rejoicing in the salvation of the Lord
- The transformative power of grace in bringing joy even in challenging circumstances

### **Chapter 14: Grace in Lament and Honest Prayer -284-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 13, Psalm 22, Psalm 42, Psalm 44, Psalm 55, Psalm 69, Psalm 70, Psalm 74, Psalm 77, Psalm 79, Psalm 88, Psalm 102, Psalm 120, Psalm 137, Psalm 142, Psalm 143
- How grace enables us to be honest with God in our struggles and laments
- The healing aspect of God's grace when we express our pain and frustrations before Him

---

### **Small Groups Week 5: God's Sovereignty, Joy, & Lament** **-316-**

- Introduction: The Psalms as the Songs of Jesus (Pages 52-54)
  - Chapter 12: The Eternal Grace of God's Sovereignty (Psalm 2, 8, 29, 33, 47, 90, 93, 97, 103, 110)
- Chapter 13: The Grace of Joy in God's Salvation (Psalm 16, 40, 51, 92, 116)
- Chapter 14: Grace in Lament and Honest Prayer (Psalm 13, 22, 42, 44, 55, 69, 70, 74, 77, 79, 88, 102, 120, 137, 142, 143)
- Discussion: How do sovereignty, joy, and lament all connect to grace?

---

### **Chapter 15:** **The Final Grace: Hope in God's Future Salvation** **-318-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 53, Psalm 118, Psalm 145
- How grace points to the future hope of God's ultimate salvation and redemption of His people

- Looking forward to the fulfillment of God's promises of grace and eternal life

**Chapter 16:  
The Grace of God's Guidance  
-331-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 1, Psalm 19, Psalm 25, Psalm 32, Psalm 73, Psalm 131
- How God's grace offers wisdom, clarity, and direction in times of uncertainty
  - Seeking God's guidance through prayer, reflection, and trust in His Word

**Chapter 17:  
Grace in the Psalms of Thanksgiving  
-345-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 66, Psalm 100, Psalm 111, Psalm 118, Psalm 138
- How grace cultivates a heart of thankfulness and joy
- Gratitude as a response to God's grace, recognizing His goodness and provision

**Small Groups Week 6: Future Hope, God's  
Guidance, & Thanksgiving  
-360-**

- Chapter 15: The Final Grace: Hope in God's Future Salvation (Psalm 14, 53, 118, 145)
  - Chapter 16: The Grace of God's Guidance (Psalm 1, 19, 25, 32, 73, 131)
- Chapter 17: Grace in the Psalms of Thanksgiving (Psalm 66, 100, 111, 118, 138)
- Discussion: How does grace sustain us in waiting and guide us in our journey?

---

**Chapter 18:**  
**The Grace of Restoration**  
**-363-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 30, Psalm 51, Psalm 71, Psalm 80, Psalm 85, Psalm 107, Psalm 114, Psalm 126, Psalm 147
- How God's grace restores the broken and renews the contrite
  - Grace rebuilding what has been damaged or lost, whether through sin, sorrow, or failure

**Chapter 19:**  
**The Grace of God's Promises**  
**-401-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 49, Psalm 84, Psalm 89, Psalm 119, Psalm 132
  - How God's covenant promises are a profound expression of His grace
- Grace sustaining God's promises, offering hope and assurance

**Chapter 20:**  
**Grace in the Midst of Waiting**  
**-418-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 27, Psalm 39, Psalm 130
- How grace helps endure seasons of waiting, trusting in God's timing
  - Holding onto hope when answers don't come quickly, relying on God's faithfulness

---

**Small Groups Week 7: Restoration, God's Promises, & Waiting**  
**-433-**

- Chapter 18: The Grace of Restoration (Psalm 30, 51, 71, 80, 85, 107, 114, 126, 147)

- Chapter 19: The Grace of God's Promises (Psalm 49, 84, 89, 119, 132)
    - Chapter 20: Grace in the Midst of Waiting (Psalm 27, 39, 130)
  - Discussion: How does grace bring restoration, sustain us through God's promises, and help us in waiting?
- 

### **Chapter 21: The Grace of God's Righteous Judgment -436-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 9, Psalm 14, Psalm 26, Psalm 37, Psalm 52, Psalm 58, Psalm 75, Psalm 76, Psalm 82, Psalm 94, Psalm 101
  - Exploring the intersection of grace and justice in God's righteous judgment
- How God's justice brings order, peace, and grace to a broken world

### **Chapter 22: Grace in the Psalms of Victory -455-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 18, Psalm 20, Psalm 21, Psalm 60, Psalm 108, Psalm 144, Psalm 149
  - How grace equips believers for triumph and deliverance
- Victory as a gift of God's grace, whether in personal struggles or external battles

---

**Chapter 23:**  
**The Grace of God's Protection**  
**-478-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 48, Psalm 91, Psalm 121, Psalm 124, Psalm 125
- How God's grace provides physical, spiritual, and emotional protection
- God's presence shields believers from harm and offers safety

**Chapter 24:**  
**Grace for Generations**  
**-497-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 67, Psalm 72, Psalm 78, Psalm 87, Psalm 133, Psalm 145
- Exploring generational grace, with God's faithfulness passed down to future generations
- Reflecting on God's enduring grace throughout our lives and legacy

**Chapter 25:**  
**The Grace of God's Strength**  
**-514-**

- Key Psalms: Psalm 28, Psalm 29, Psalm 112
- How God's grace provides strength for the weary, weak, or overwhelmed
- Sustaining grace in our moments of personal weakness and trials

---

**Small Groups Week 8: Righteous Judgment,  
Victory, Protection, Generations, & Strength**  
**-530-**

- Chapter 21: The Grace of God's Righteous Judgment (Psalm 9, 14, 26, 37, 52, 58, 75, 76, 82, 94, 101)
  - Chapter 22: Grace in the Psalms of Victory (Psalms 18, 20, 21, 60, 108, 144, 149)
  - Chapter 23: The Grace of God's Protection (Psalm 48, 91, 121, 124, 125)
    - Chapter 24: Grace for Generations (Psalm 67, 72, 78, 87, 133, 145)
  - Chapter 25: The Grace of God's Strength (Psalm 28, 29, 112)
  - Discussion: What final lessons about grace stand out to you from the Psalms?  
How will you apply them?
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## **Small Group Sample Schedule**

### **Week 1: Introduction & The Grace of God's Presence**

- Introduction: Overview of Psalms & Grace in the Hebrew Scriptures
  - Introduction: Different Types of Psalms & Their Uses
  - Chapter 1: The Grace of God's Presence (Psalm 23, 46, 139)
  - Chapter 2: Grace for the Brokenhearted (Psalm 6, 34, 38, 51, 147)
  - Key Thought: How does God's presence bring grace in peace and trouble? How has God healed your brokenness?
- 

### **Week 2: Grace in Times of Trouble & Forgiveness**

- Introduction: Psalms and Jewish Feasts
  - Chapter 3: Grace in Times of Trouble (Psalm 4, 31, 43, 46, 56, 61, 62, 91, 121)
  - Chapter 4: The Grace of Forgiveness (Psalm 32, 51, 103, 106, 130, 141)
  - Chapter 5: The Grace of God's Mercy (Psalm 41, 86, 103, 136, 145)
  - Key Thought: How do the Psalms teach us to rely on grace in difficult times? What role does grace play in forgiveness?
- 

### **Week 3: Worship, Provision, & Justice for the Oppressed**

- Introduction: Authorship and Dates of Psalms
- Chapter 6: Grace in Worship and Praise (Psalm 50, 68, 81, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 113, 115, 117, 122, 134, 135, 148, 150)

- Chapter 7: The Grace of God's Provision (Psalm 23, 65, 104, 127, 128)
- Chapter 8: Grace for the Oppressed and the Marginalized (Psalm 9, 10, 12, 34, 123, 146)
- Key Thought: How does grace lead us to worship, provide for us, and extend justice to the oppressed?

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#### **Week 4: Covenant Faithfulness, Deliverance, & Lovingkindness**

- Introduction: Psalms in the Old Covenant vs. the New
- Chapter 9: The Grace of God's Covenant Faithfulness (Psalm 15, 24, 45, 89, 105)
- Chapter 10: Grace: The Triumph of Deliverance (Psalm 3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 17, 23, 27, 35, 54, 57, 59, 64, 83, 109, 129, 140)
- Chapter 11: The Overflowing Grace of God's Lovingkindness (Psalm 36, 63)
- Key Thought: How do God's faithfulness and deliverance demonstrate His grace?

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#### **Week 5: God's Sovereignty, Joy, & Lament**

- Introduction: The Psalms as the Songs of Jesus
- Chapter 12: The Eternal Grace of God's Sovereignty (Psalm 2, 8, 29, 33, 47, 90, 93, 97, 103, 110)
- Chapter 13: The Grace of Joy in God's Salvation (Psalm 16, 40, 51, 92, 116)
- Chapter 14: Grace in Lament and Honest Prayer (Psalm 13, 22, 42, 44, 55, 69, 70, 74, 77, 79, 88, 102, 120, 137, 142, 143)
- Key Thought: How do sovereignty, joy, and lament all connect to grace?

---

## **Week 6: Future Hope, God's Guidance, & Thanksgiving**

- Introduction: The Role of Psalms in Worship Throughout History
- Chapter 15: The Final Grace: Hope in God's Future Salvation (Psalm 14, 53, 118, 145)
- Chapter 16: The Grace of God's Guidance (Psalm 1, 19, 25, 32, 73, 131)
- Chapter 17: Grace in the Psalms of Thanksgiving (Psalm 66, 100, 111, 118, 138)
- Key Thought: How does grace sustain us in waiting and guide us in our journey?

---

## **Week 7: Restoration, God's Promises, & Waiting**

- Chapter 18: The Grace of Restoration (Psalm 30, 51, 71, 80, 85, 107, 114, 126, 147)
- Chapter 19: The Grace of God's Promises (Psalm 49, 84, 89, 119, 132)
- Chapter 20: Grace in the Midst of Waiting (Psalm 27, 39, 130)
- Key Thought: How does grace bring restoration, sustain us through God's promises, and help us in waiting?

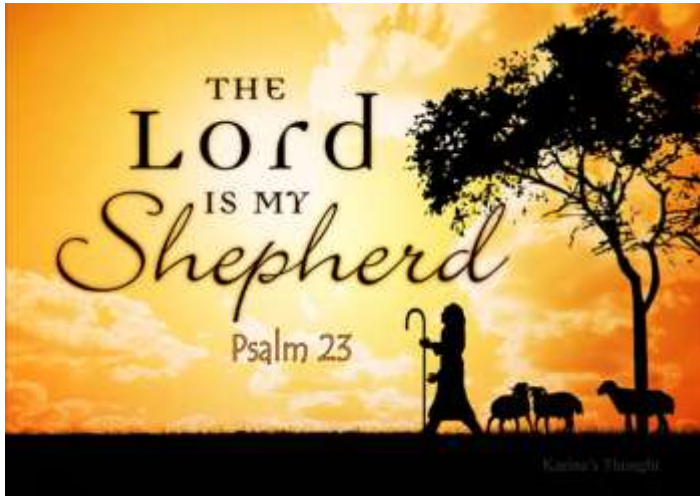
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## **Week 8: Righteous Judgment, Victory, Protection, Generations, & Strength**

- Chapter 21: The Grace of God's Righteous Judgment (Psalm 9, 14, 26, 37, 52, 58, 75, 76, 82, 94, 101)
- Chapter 22: Grace in the Psalms of Victory (Psalms 18, 20, 21, 60, 108, 144, 149)

- Chapter 23: The Grace of God's Protection (Psalm 48, 91, 121, 124, 125)
  - Chapter 24: Grace for Generations (Psalm 67, 72, 78, 87, 133, 145)
  - Chapter 25: The Grace of God's Strength (Psalm 28, 29, 112)
  - Key Thought: What final lessons about grace stand out to you from the Psalms? How will you apply them?
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## Introduction to Grace in the Psalms



## **Discovering Grace in the Psalms**

The Psalms have long been a cherished and powerful part of Scripture. Revered for their deep emotional expression, theological insight, and poetic beauty, the Psalms serve as a profound source of comfort, worship, and spiritual guidance. Whether sung in worship, recited in moments of personal reflection, or shared in communal gatherings, the psalms can resonate deeply with the human experience. They connect us to God's heart, revealing His presence, love, and mercy in ways that transcend time and culture.

The theme of grace runs like a golden thread through the entire book of Psalms. From the cries of lament to the songs of praise, the psalmists consistently call on God's grace to intervene, heal, restore, and renew. Grace, in the Hebrew Scriptures, is more than an abstract theological concept; it is the very foundation of God's relationship with His people. In the Psalms, grace is woven into the prayers and praises of the people of Israel, offering us a glimpse into how God's grace interacts with humanity in real and tangible ways.

Every aspect of life is represented in the Psalms, and ultimately, they point us to Jesus. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus embodies the fullness of God's grace, transforming what was written in the Psalms into a living reality. Every prayer of deliverance, every cry for mercy, every declaration of God's faithfulness in the Psalms finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus. The Psalms are not just ancient songs; they are prophetic glimpses of the grace that would come through Christ, showing us that all of

Scripture finds its deepest meaning in Him. Jesus embodies the fullness of God's grace, transforming what was written in the Psalms into a living reality. The Psalms are not just ancient songs; they are prophetic glimpses of the grace that would come through Christ, showing us that all of Scripture finds its deepest meaning in Him.

The Psalms were His songbook—Jesus would have sung the Great Hallel (Psalms 113-118) at the Passover meal (Matthew 26:30, Mark 14:26). The Psalms are quoted by Him more than any other book of the Bible, and it is not only a collection of hymns He sang, but also a profound revelation of who He is. The Psalms do more than simply point to Jesus; they unveil His heart, His purpose, and the grace He came to give.<sup>1</sup>

### **Peculiarities of Hebrew Poetry in the Psalms**

Unlike classical European poetry, Hebrew poetry does not rely on rhyme or meter but instead features parallelism—a repetition or contrast of ideas to emphasize meaning. This comes in three forms:

- **Synonymous Parallelism** – Repeats the same idea in different words (Psalm 49:1).
- **Antithetic Parallelism** – Contrasts two opposing ideas (Psalm 1:6).
- **Synthetic Parallelism** – Expands on an initial thought (Psalm 22:4).

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<sup>1</sup>Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller. *A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms: The Songs of Jesus*. Introduction viii-ix. Viking Publication. 2015.

Another key poetic feature is the acrostic structure, seen in Psalm 119, where each section begins with successive Hebrew letters. The Psalms also frequently use vivid imagery and alliteration, reinforcing their beauty and depth. Other acrostic Psalms include Psalms 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, and 145.

### **Psalm 25**

Uses an imperfect acrostic, following 22 Hebrew letters with some irregularities—two letters are missing, and one is repeated—yet it still shows a deliberate alphabetic design to reflect order amid a plea for guidance and mercy.

### **Psalm 34**

Follows an alphabetic acrostic with each verse beginning with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, though the letter waw (ו) is omitted, creating a slightly incomplete but still structured form.

### **Psalm 37**

Features a double-line acrostic, where every other verse begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet, giving it a meditative, proverb-like pacing.

### **Psalm 111**

A tight and complete acrostic, with each half-verse (or clause) starting with successive Hebrew letters, emphasizing God's works and covenant faithfulness.

### **Psalm 112**

Structurally mirrors Psalm 111 with a perfect half-verse acrostic, pairing the celebration of righteous living with the structure of the Hebrew alphabet.



## **Psalm 119**

The most elaborate acrostic in the Bible, with 22 stanzas of 8 verses each, where each verse in a stanza begins with the same Hebrew letter, covering the entire alphabet, emphasizing comprehensive devotion to God's Word.

## **Psalm 145**

A near-complete acrostic psalm of praise by David, with one letter (nun/נ) missing in most Hebrew manuscripts, though found in some Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek translations, suggesting it may have been part of the original.

### **The Book of Psalms is Five Books**

The book of Psalms is traditionally divided into five books<sup>2</sup>, which many scholars believe is a deliberate parallel to the five books of Moses (Torah). The division of Psalms into five books is significant because the number five in Hebrew thought is often associated with grace (chesed). This numerical symbolism reinforces the idea that Psalms is, at its core, a book of grace, showing God's unmerited favor, steadfast love, and faithfulness throughout Israel's history and personal struggles.

Here's how the division looks:

#### **1. Book 1 (Psalms 1–41)**

##### **Separation of the Just from the Unjust**

- Many attributed it to David.

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<sup>2</sup>Study Light Commentary.

[www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/default/psalms.html](http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/default/psalms.html)

- Themes: personal devotion, trust in God, and deliverance.

## 2. **Book 2** (Psalms 42–72)

### **The Sufferings of the Just**

- Includes psalms from the sons of Korah, Asaph, and David.
- Themes: national struggles, longing for God’s presence, and prayers for the king.

## 3. **Book 3** (Psalms 73–89)

### **Return of the People and God’s Goodness**

- Mostly Psalms of Asaph and the sons of Korah.
- Themes: national crises, God’s justice, and faithfulness in suffering.

## 4. **Book 4** (Psalms 90–106)

### **Jehovah’s Government in the Millennium**

- Begins with a psalm by Moses (Psalm 90).
- Themes: God’s eternal reign and reliance on Him in uncertain times.

## 5. **Book 5** (Psalms 107–150)

### **Summary of Jehovah’s Ways with His People**

- Includes the Songs of Ascents (Psalms 120–134) and Hallelujah Psalms (Psalms 146–150).
- Themes: thanksgiving, praise, and messianic hope.

Each book ends with a doxology—a short hymn of praise—except for the last, which concludes with a grand finale of praise (Psalm 150).

## **The Psalms: A Source of Comfort, Worship, and Spiritual Insight**

The Psalms are often called the “prayer book of the Bible,” and for good reason. They serve as a mirror to the human soul, expressing a wide range of emotions from deep sorrow to overwhelming joy, from fear to confident hope. In times of distress, they provide comfort, offering words of assurance that God is present, even in the darkest of moments. In times of celebration, they guide worship, reminding us of God’s greatness, His faithfulness, and His enduring love.

“The Psalms were the divinely inspired hymnbook for the public worship of God in ancient Israel (1 Chronicles 16:8-36). Because Psalms were not simply read but sung, they penetrated the minds and imaginations of the people as only music can do. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, it was only natural that the crowd would spontaneously greet Him by reciting a line from a psalm (Mark 11:9, Psalm 118:26). The early Christians sang and prayed the psalms as well (Colossians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 14:26).”<sup>3</sup>

The Psalms are more than just songs or poems—they are heartfelt prayers that echo the cries of the human soul. Within these sacred verses, we encounter the full spectrum of human emotion and spiritual experience. The Psalms guide us through life’s complexities, offering words when we struggle to express our

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<sup>3</sup>Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller. *A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms: The Songs of Jesus*. Introduction vii. Viking Publication. 2015.

deepest fears, grief, and hopes. They teach us how to worship, encouraging us to honor God with both reverence and intimacy. Additionally, they provide spiritual insight, prompting us to reflect on God's character, His promises, and His dealings with His people. The Psalms are the most intensely personal of all the books in the Bible. They speak to us in the language of the heart.<sup>4</sup> "The Psalms are the medicine for the soul. They give strength to the weak, comfort to the sorrowful, and joy to the troubled."<sup>5</sup>

## **The Book of Psalms: A Guide to Old Testament Worship**

The Book of Psalms, often referred to as the most treasured and widely read book in the Old Testament, serves as a comprehensive guide to Old Testament worship. It is a collection of poems, hymns, and prayers that reflect the religious experiences of the Jewish people throughout various periods of their history. Psalms provide numerous examples of worship expressions that can guide us in our worship practices today. Among these expressions are:

1. **Boast/Praise (Adoration) – הָלַל (*Halal*)** root of Hallelujah – To boast, celebrate, or praise with exuberance. Hallelujah: Praise Yahweh (praise the Lord).<sup>6</sup>
2. **Worship with your hands (clap, lift them) – יָדָה (*Yadah*)** – To extend the hands in worship and praise.

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<sup>4</sup>C.S. Lewis. Reflections in the Psalms. Harper One. 1958.

<sup>5</sup>Inspiration from Charles Spurgeon. The Treasury of David.

[www.archive.spurgeon.org/treasury/ps103.php#expl](http://www.archive.spurgeon.org/treasury/ps103.php#expl)

<sup>6</sup>[www.biblehub.com/greek/239.htm](http://www.biblehub.com/greek/239.htm)

3. **Hymn of thanksgiving** – תודה (*Todah*) – A thanksgiving offering or song of gratitude.
4. **Shout for joy** – רוע (*Ruah*) – To shout in triumph and joy.
5. **Dance** – מְחול (*Machol*) – A dance or whirling motion as an act of celebration.
6. **Play an instrument** – נָגַן (*Nagan*) – To play a stringed instrument in worship.
7. **Bow down/kneel** – שָׁחָה (*Shachah*) – To bow low or prostrate oneself in worship.
8. **Sing** – שִׁיר (*Shir*) – To sing a song. (*Zamar*—זָמַר—can also mean to sing praises, often with instruments).
9. **Prayer as worship** – תְּפִלָּה (*Tefillah*) – Prayer, often used in the sense of intercession or worshipful communication with God.
10. **Remembering the Works/Word of the Lord** – זָכַר (*Zakar*) – To remember, call to mind, or recount God's deeds.
11. **Incense & Sacrifices** – קָטַר (*Qatar*) – To offer incense as a form of worship; זֶבַח (*Zebach*) refers to an animal sacrifice (which is not needed or done in the New Testament any longer because Jesus is our Passover Lamb).

These expressions demonstrate the wide variety of ways worship was offered to God in the Old Testament, and their influence is still felt in contemporary worship. However, it is important to note that while these expressions are significant, they were part of a context that changed with the coming of Christ.

## Five Additional Mentions of Worship

Beyond the expressions mentioned in the Psalms, there are five additional elements of worship to consider:

- 1. Creation** – Creation itself proclaims the glory of God (Psalm 19:1), and our creative gifts can be an expression of worship to Him.
- 2. Lying Prostrate** – Though not explicitly used in the Psalms as a form of worship, bowing down or falling prostrate as a sign of reverence was a common biblical expression of worship (Numbers 20:6).
- 3. Altars** – Altars were used in worship, to commemorate encounters with God, to make covenants, and even to find refuge (Genesis 8:20, Exodus 24:1-8).
- 4. Palm Branches** – Palm branches were used in the New Testament to celebrate the triumph of Jesus (Matthew 21), symbolizing victory, goodness, and steadfastness.
- 5. Festivals** – The major festivals were divinely ordained occasions for worship.<sup>7</sup>

Here is a list of the feasts celebrated in Scripture:

### Spring Feasts

**Passover (Pesach)** – Celebrates Israel's deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 12:1-30).

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<sup>7</sup>Dr. Matthew Webster. The Evolution of Worship: From the Garden to the Gates of Heaven. Kindle Direct Publishing. P. 38. 2022.

**Feast of Unleavened Bread**

**(Chag HaMatzot)** – A seven-day feast following Passover, symbolizing purity and removal of sin (Leviticus 23:6-8).

**Feast of Firstfruits (Yom HaBikkurim)** –

Celebrates the first harvest and foreshadows the Resurrection of Christ (Leviticus 23:9-14).

**Feast of Weeks (Shavuot/Pentecost)** –

Marks the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai and later the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Leviticus 23:15-22).

**Fall Feasts****Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah/Rosh**

**Hashanah)** – A day of sounding the shofar, signifying repentance and the coming judgment (Leviticus 23:23-25).

**Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)** – A

solemn day of repentance and atonement for sins (Leviticus 23:26-32).

**Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)** – A joyous festival remembering Israel's wilderness journey and God's provision (Leviticus 23:33-43).

**Other Biblical Festivals**

**Sabbath (Shabbat)** – A weekly day of rest and worship (Exodus 20:8-11).

**New Moon Festival (Rosh Chodesh)** – A monthly observance marking the beginning of each new lunar month (Numbers 10:10, Psalm 81:3).

**Post-Exilic Festivals (Not in Torah but Observed in Scripture)**

**Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah)** – Celebrates the rededication of the Temple after the Maccabean Revolt (John 10:22, 1 Maccabees 4:36-59).

**Feast of Lots (Purim)** – Commemorates Israel's deliverance through Queen Esther (Esther 9:20-32).

**Worship in the Old and New Testament: A Shift from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant**

When exploring the various expressions of worship in the Old Testament, it's essential to consider the evolution of worship that occurred with the coming of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the New Covenant. The worship practices in the Old Testament were rooted in the understanding that the full redemption of God's people had not yet come. Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, a new way of worship was introduced—worship that is now defined by the spirit and truth of God. In John 17:5-6a, Jesus reveals a new, intimate relationship with God, making it possible for believers to know God as Father.

**Transition to New Testament Worship: A Change in Focus**



The New Testament marks a joyful shift from the Old Covenant, where worship centered on rituals, sacrifices, and Temple practices, to a new kind of worship in the Spirit focused on the victory we have in Jesus. Through practices like communion, we no longer offer repeated sacrifices, but we celebrate the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ, remembering Him as He commanded: "Do this in remembrance of Me." Worship becomes not just a duty, but a declaration of His triumph and our shared hope. Through Jesus Christ, the greatest expression of God's love was revealed—the sacrifice that reconciled humanity with God. In Romans 5:11, we boast in God through Jesus Christ, our Savior. This "boasting" is different from Old Testament boasting, as it reflects the ultimate act of love demonstrated on the cross.

In 1 Corinthians 1:31, Paul writes that believers should "boast in the Lord". This echoes Jeremiah's prophecy, where boasting is tied to understanding and knowing God. For Christians, this boasting is grounded in the understanding of God's sacrifice for our sins, which the Old Testament believers could only look forward to.

### **Incorporating Old Testament Expressions of Worship in the New Covenant**

While the New Testament doesn't explicitly reiterate all the Old Testament forms of worship, such as bowing, clapping, or dancing, these expressions are not invalid. Worship in the New Covenant is not restricted to a narrow set of practices.

For example, while some Christian denominations argue against certain Old Testament expressions, others—myself included— believe in the freedom to express worship in diverse forms, as long as it is led by the Holy Spirit and grounded in truth—the truth revealed in God’s Word and ultimately in Jesus Christ and His finished work. Worship in truth means aligning our worship with God’s revealed character and will, not personal preference or cultural tradition. It is a response to who God is and what He has done, shaped by Scripture and empowered by the Spirit.

Worship in Spirit is through the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit awakens in us an understanding of God’s beauty and splendor, and power. It’s the Holy Spirit who stirs us to celebrate, rejoice, and give thanks. It’s the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes to see and savor all that God is for us in Jesus. To say that we must worship God “in spirit” means, among other things, that it must originate from within, from the heart, motivated by a response to God’s love and gratitude for all He is and has done.”<sup>8</sup>

## **Bow Down and Kneel in Worship**

One powerful expression of worship in the Old Testament is bowing or kneeling before God. Though not technically within the New Testament era, bowing during Jesus’ earthly ministry is often portrayed as a prophetic and deeply symbolic expression of worship, such as in the story of the woman who anointed His feet with perfume (Matthew 26:6–13).

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<sup>8</sup>Sam Storms. What Does It Mean to Worship God in Spirit and Truth? March 14, 2020. [www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-does-it-mean-to-worship-god-in-spirit-and-truth/](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-does-it-mean-to-worship-god-in-spirit-and-truth/)

While this act of worship wasn't explicitly a New Covenant practice, it symbolized a deep reverence for Christ's sacrifice. The act of kneeling today still serves as a meaningful expression of respect and awe toward God. Even though bowing isn't emphasized as a common worship practice in the early church, we are told that one day every knee will bow before God in reverence (Romans 14:11).

### **Instrumental Worship in the New Testament**

Instrumental music is not a major feature of New Testament worship, but it has a historical presence in Jewish practices. Following the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, Jewish synagogues ceased using instruments in worship. In contrast, the New Testament records instances of singing, but musical instruments are not mentioned as a regular part of early Christian worship.

Despite this, there is no outright prohibition against instruments in worship. The New Testament emphasizes singing as an essential part of worship, as seen in Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16, and Acts 16:25. Instruments, when used in conjunction with singing, are an acceptable expression of worship. As Paul says in Colossians 3:16-17, worship is an internal, heartfelt response to the message of Christ.

### **New Testament Worship: Freedom and Spirit**

In the New Testament, believers are called to worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). Worship is not bound to any particular physical expression but is an overflow of a believer's relationship with Christ. The New Testament describes worship in the following ways:

- **Teaching and Preaching:** The Word of God is central to worship.
- **Singing:** The early church sang to remember and celebrate the Gospel.
- **Communion:** The Lord's Supper is a sacramental act of worship.
- **Acts of Service:** Worship is expressed through serving others in love.
- **Prayer:** Prayer is an essential element of worship.
- **Giving:** Giving generously is also an expression of worship (Hebrews 13:16, Philippians 4:18).
- **Fellowship:** Gathering together in unity, sharing life, and encouraging one another is a form of worship (Acts 2:42, Hebrews 10:25).
- **Baptism:** While baptism does not save us, it is an essential act of obedience and public identification with Christ. It symbolizes the believer's death to sin and resurrection to new life in Jesus. Baptism is a one-time act in the life of a believer, marking the beginning of their journey of faith and commitment to follow Christ. (Romans 6:3–4).
- **Everyday Living:** Romans 12:1 speaks of offering our bodies as living sacrifices—our whole lives as spiritual worship.

Through these expressions, worship becomes a lifestyle, not just a ritual or activity. The entire life of the believer is an act of worship, bringing glory to God in all that we do.

In conclusion, while many of the Old Testament expressions of worship, such as the use of instruments or bowing, are not explicitly mentioned in the New Testament, they are still valid forms of worship in the broader Christian context. Worship today, done in spirit and truth, reflects the love and sacrifice of Christ in every aspect of life. As Christians, we are free to express our worship to God in diverse ways—through prayer, singing, service, and yes, even through instruments and physical acts like bowing or dancing—because our worship is not constrained by laws, but is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

### **Grace Woven Throughout the Psalms and the Hebrew Scriptures**

The Hebrew Scriptures, which include the Psalms, present grace as an essential element of God's nature. The word for grace in Hebrew, *chesed*, often translated as "steadfast love" or "lovingkindness,"<sup>9</sup> speaks to the covenantal love God has for His people. It is an unconditional love, one that is not based on the merit of the recipient but on God's own character. This covenantal grace is beautifully displayed throughout the Psalms, where the psalmists call upon God's grace for deliverance, forgiveness, restoration, and healing.

The grace found in the Psalms is often expressed in the form of God's mercy, His willingness to forgive, and His faithful presence in times of need. For example, in the Psalms of Lament, the psalmist often calls out to God for mercy amid distress, pleading for God's grace to intervene.

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<sup>9</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2617/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2617/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

In Psalms of Praise, the psalmist celebrates the grace of God's salvation and His continual faithfulness. Grace is not simply a theological idea in the Psalms—it is experienced and celebrated in the lives of those who call on God.

### **The Role of Grace in the Personal Expressions of the Psalmists**

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Psalms is the deeply personal nature of their expressions. The psalmists—whether King David, Asaph, the sons of Korah, or others—speak from their own life experiences. They bring their joys, their fears, their sins, and their hopes before God. Grace is central to these personal expressions because it is God's grace that makes their relationship with Him possible. Without grace, there could be no communion, no prayer, and no hope for forgiveness or restoration.

The psalmists, through their personal expressions, give us a model for how to approach God with honesty, vulnerability, and faith. When David confesses his sin in Psalm 51, he does so with the understanding that God's grace is the only hope for healing and restoration. When the psalmist calls out for deliverance in Psalm 6, it is God's grace that he is appealing to. And when the psalmists celebrate God's greatness in the Psalms of Praise, they do so knowing that it is God's grace that sustains them. In every circumstance, the psalmists' expressions reveal that grace is not only for times of sin and failure but also for moments of triumph, awe, and adoration.

## **Identifying the Different Types of Psalms**

The Psalms encompass a wide variety of types, each with its own unique purpose and emotional tone. These include:

### **1. Hymns (Psalms of Praise)**

- These psalms focus on glorifying God for His greatness, creation, and mighty acts.
- Examples: Psalm 8, Psalm 19, Psalm 29, Psalm 33, Psalm 100, Psalm 148
- Key Features: Call to worship, descriptions of God's majesty, and expressions of joy.

### **2. Lament Psalms**

- These express grief, sorrow, or distress, often calling out to God for help in times of suffering.
- Examples: Psalm 13, Psalm 22, Psalm 42, Psalm 88, Psalm 130
- Key Features: A cry for help, description of the problem, request for intervention and trust in God.
- Two Types:
  - Individual Lament (e.g., Psalm 51)
  - Community Lament (e.g., Psalm 74)

### **3. Thanksgiving Psalms**

- These express gratitude for God's deliverance, provision, and answered prayers.

- Examples: Psalm 30, Psalm 34, Psalm 92, Psalm 107, Psalm 118
- Key Features: A declaration of thanks, recounting of past troubles, and acknowledgment of God's help.

#### **4. Royal Psalms**

- These focus on Israel's king, God's rule, and often point to the Messiah.
- Examples: Psalm 2, Psalm 20, Psalm 45, Psalm 72, Psalm 110
- Key Features: Descriptions of the king's role, divine blessing, and future messianic rule.

#### **5. Wisdom Psalms**

- These guide righteous living, contrasting the wise and the foolish.
- Examples: Psalm 1, Psalm 37, Psalm 49, Psalm 73, Psalm 119
- Key Features: Instructional tone, focus on God's Law, and themes of justice and morality.

#### **6. Penitential Psalms (Repentance Psalms)**

- These express sorrow for sin and a plea for forgiveness.
- Examples: Psalm 6, Psalm 32, Psalm 38, Psalm 51, Psalm 130
- Key Features: Confession of sin, acknowledgment of guilt, and a request for mercy.



## **7. Imprecatory Psalms**

- These call upon God to bring justice and judgment upon the wicked.
- Examples: Psalm 35, Psalm 58, Psalm 69, Psalm 109, Psalm 137
- Key Features: Pleas for divine justice, expressions of frustration, and confidence in God's righteousness.

## **8. Pilgrimage Psalms (Songs of Ascent)**

- These were sung by Israelites traveling to Jerusalem for festivals.
- Examples: Psalm 120–134
- Key Features: Themes of journeying, anticipation of worship, and God's protection.

## **9. Enthronement Psalms**

- These declare God's sovereign reign over creation and the nations.
- Examples: Psalm 47, Psalm 93, Psalm 96–99
- Key Features: Exaltation of God's kingship, His authority over nations, and calls to worship.

## **10. Messianic Psalms**

- These foreshadow the coming of Christ, His suffering, reign, and victory.
- Examples: Psalm 2, Psalm 22, Psalm 69, Psalm 110

- Key Features: Prophecies about the Messiah, suffering servant imagery, and references fulfilled in Jesus.

## **11. Creation Psalms**

- These focus on God's power and majesty in creating and sustaining the world.
- Examples: Psalm 8, Psalm 19, Psalm 65, Psalm 104
- Key Features: Praise for God's creation, reflections on nature, and recognition of His sovereignty.

## **12. Torah Psalms (Law Psalms)**

- These emphasize the beauty and importance of God's Law (Torah) and obedience to it.
- Examples: Psalm 1, Psalm 19, Psalm 119
- Key Features: Delight in God's commandments, calls to meditate on His Word, and wisdom themes.

## **13. Prophetic Psalms**

- These convey God's messages, warnings, or promises as a prophet might.
- Examples: Psalm 50, Psalm 81, Psalm 95
- Key Features: Divine pronouncements, calls to repentance, and reminders of God's covenant.

## **14. Liturgical Psalms**

- These were used in public worship, often involving responses from priests and the congregation.
- Examples: Psalm 15, Psalm 24, Psalm 134
- Key Features: Questions and answers about who may approach God, instructions for worship, and call-and-response patterns.

## **15. Enthronement & Processional Psalms**

- These were likely sung during religious ceremonies, coronations, or Temple processions.
- Examples: Psalm 24, Psalm 68, Psalm 118
- Key Features: Themes of God's rule, His presence in the Temple, and worshipful gatherings.

## **16. Psalms of Confidence (Trust Psalms)**

- These express deep trust in God's protection and provision, even in difficult times.
- Examples: Psalm 23, Psalm 27, Psalm 62, Psalm 91
- Key Features: Personal confidence in God's care, imagery of safety, and expressions of peace.

## **17. Historical Psalms (Psalms of Remembrance)**

- These recount Israel's history and God's faithfulness throughout it.
- Examples: Psalm 78, Psalm 105, Psalm 106, Psalm 136

- Key Features: Retelling of Israel's deliverance, covenant history, and God's mighty acts.

## **18. Didactic Psalms (Teaching Psalms)**

- These instruct believers in faith, morality, and wisdom to live righteously.
- Examples: Psalm 34, Psalm 37, Psalm 112
- Key Features: Proverb-like wisdom, moral teachings, and emphasis on godly living.

## **19. Psalms of Restoration**

- These psalms focus on God's work of bringing His people or individuals back from suffering, exile, or despair, offering hope for renewal and healing.
- **Examples:** Psalm 80, Psalm 126, Psalm 51, Psalm 130
- **Key Features:** Acknowledgment of past suffering, a plea for God's intervention, and trust in His ability to restore and heal.

## **20. Psalms of Reconciliation**

- These psalms focus on themes of peace, reconciliation with God, or the restoration of relationships, whether with God or others.
- **Examples:** Psalm 51 (after David's sin with Bathsheba), Psalm 85
- **Key Features:** Acknowledgment of brokenness, a call for healing, and trust in God's grace to restore peace and unity.

## **Psalms and the Jewish Feasts**

Many of the psalms were used in the context of Jewish feasts and festivals. These occasions were not just times of celebration but also opportunities for worship and reflection on God's grace. Some of the key feasts and the psalms associated with them include:

1. **Passover (Pesach)** – Celebrating Israel's deliverance from Egypt, Psalms 113–118 were sung as part of the Passover meal, recounting God's saving acts and grace.
2. **Feast of Weeks (Shavuot)** – Celebrating the giving of the Law, Psalms 19 and 119 were often recited, reflecting on God's commandments and His grace in revealing them.
3. **Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)** – Psalms 120–134, known as the Psalms of Ascents, were sung by pilgrims as they journeyed to Jerusalem for the feast, reminding them of God's grace in their journey and His provision.
4. **Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)** – Psalm 51, a psalm of repentance, was often recited on this solemn day, calling on God's mercy and grace for forgiveness.

These feasts were times for the people of Israel to remember and celebrate God's grace and faithfulness throughout their history.

## **The Authors of the Psalms, Their Timing and Location, and the Historical Context Behind Their Composition**

The Psalms were written by various authors over many centuries. King David, known as “the sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Samuel 23:1), is traditionally credited with writing many of the psalms. Other significant contributors include Asaph, the sons of Korah, Solomon, and other unknown authors. The Psalms were written during various periods of Israel’s history, including the reign of David, the Babylonian exile, and the post-exilic period. These times of war, exile, sin, repentance, and restoration shaped the themes of the psalms.

David’s psalms often reflect his personal experiences as a king, a warrior, and a man after God’s own heart. The psalms from the exile period express deep longing and hope for God’s deliverance, while those written after the return from exile celebrate God’s faithfulness in restoring His people.

### **Historical Context of the Psalms**

- **Davidic Era (c. 1000 BC)** – Psalms reflect personal trials, victories, and Israel’s worship practices.
- **Solomonic Period (c. 970–930 BC)** – Psalms focuses on wisdom, prosperity, and Temple dedication.
- **Divided Kingdom & Exile (c. 900–500 BC)** – Many Psalms lament Israel’s sin, exile, and plea for restoration.

- **Post-Exilic Period (after 539 BC)** – Psalms reflect gratitude for restoration and worship renewal.

## **1. Psalms of Moses (1 Psalm)**

- **Author:** Moses
- **Time Period:** c. **1407 BC** (during Israel's wilderness journey)
- **Example: Psalm 90**
- **Themes:** The brevity of life, God's eternal nature, and seeking His mercy.

## **2. Psalms of David (73+ Psalms)**

David's psalms cover a wide range of emotions, from deep despair to triumphant praise. Many were written during key moments in his life.

### **David's Early Psalms (Fleeing from Saul, c. 1013–1011 BC)**

- **Psalm 59** – Written when Saul sent men to watch David's house to kill him (1 Samuel 20).
- **Psalm 52** – Written about Doeg the Edomite's betrayal (1 Samuel 21).
- **Psalm 34** – Composed before Ahimelech, reflecting on God's deliverance (1 Samuel 21).
- **Psalm 56** – Written while David was captured in Gath (1 Samuel 21).
- **Psalms 57, 142** – Psalms from David's time hiding in the cave (1 Samuel 22).

- **Psalms 54** – Written during David’s escape from Saul at Keilah (1 Samuel 23).

### **David’s Psalms of Victory and Worship (c. 998–970 BC)**

- **Psalms 60** – A song of victory over Edom (2 Samuel 8).
- **Psalms 15** – A reflection on Zion and who may dwell in God’s presence.
- **Psalms 24** – A declaration of God’s glory and kingship.
- **Psalms 96, 105, 106** – Songs of praise sung during the Ark’s return (1 Chronicles 16).

### **David’s Psalms of Repentance and Reflection (c. 991–970 BC)**

- **Psalms 51** – A heartfelt confession after his sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12).
- **Psalms 63** – A psalm of thirsting for God during his exile (2 Samuel 16).
- **Psalms 41, 55** – Written while fleeing from Absalom (2 Samuel 17).
- **Psalms 108** – A declaration of steadfast trust in God (2 Samuel 23).
- **Psalms 37** – A psalm of salvation and trust in God’s justice (1 Kings 2).

### **3. Psalms of Asaph (12 Psalms, c. 979 BC and later)**



Asaph was a chief musician during David's time, and his descendants continued composing Psalms in later periods.

- **Psalms 50, 73, 75–78, 80–83, 89**
- **Themes:** Justice, worship, and faithfulness of God.

#### **4. Psalms of the Sons of Korah (11 Psalms, c. 979 BC and later)**

The sons of Korah were a Levitical family known for leading worship.

- **Psalms 42, 44–49, 84, 85, 87, 88**
- **Notable Events:**
  - **Psalm 45** – Written during Solomon's time, possibly a royal wedding psalm (1 Kings 3, c. 967 BC).
  - **Psalms 46–48** – Songs of refuge and deliverance, possibly written during Hezekiah's reign (2 Chronicles 32, c. 701 BC).

#### **5. Psalms of Solomon (2+ Psalms, c. 967–950 BC)**

Solomon, David's son, composed Psalms reflecting wisdom, kingship, and worship.

- **Psalm 72** – A prayer for the king's reign (2 Chronicles 1).
- **Psalms 135, 136** – Praise psalms sung at the Temple dedication (2 Chronicles 7).

- **Psalm 127** – A psalm of blessing and trust in God’s provision.

## **6. Psalms of Ethan the Ezrahite (1 Psalm, c. 900 BC)**

- **Psalm 89** – A reflection on the Davidic covenant and God’s faithfulness.

## **7. Psalms of Unknown Authors (Approximately 49 Psalms, Various Periods)**

Some Psalms have no named author, though they were likely composed by various individuals over time.

- **Examples:** Psalms 1, 2, 10, 33, 43, 66, 67, 71, 91–100, 102, 104–107, 111–121, 123, 125, 126, 128–130, 132, 134–137, 146–150
- **Historical Contexts:**
  - **Psalms 74, 79** – Written during the Babylonian exile, reflecting on Jerusalem’s destruction (Jeremiah 52, c. 586 BC).

## **Summary of Psalms Timeline**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Psalms Written</b>
<b>1407 BC</b>	Moses in the wilderness	Psalm 90
<b>1013–1011 BC</b>	David’s early years, fleeing Saul	Psalms 34, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 142
<b>998 BC</b>	David’s victories and Temple worship	Psalms 15, 24, 60, 96, 105, 106
<b>991 BC</b>	David’s repentance after Bathsheba	Psalm 51
<b>972 BC</b>	David is in exile from Absalom	Psalms 41, 55, 63
<b>970 BC</b>	David’s final years	Psalms 37, 108
<b>967 BC</b>	Solomon’s reign begins	Psalm 72

<b>Year</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Psalms Written</b>
<b>959 BC</b>	Solomon dedicates the Temple	Psalms 135, 136
<b>701 BC</b>	Assyrian invasion; Hezekiah's reign	Psalms 46–48
<b>586 BC</b>	Jerusalem was destroyed Babylonian exile	Psalms 74, 79 <sup>10</sup>

### **Psalms in the Old Covenant and the Advantages of the New Covenant**

The Psalms capture the entirety of human experience in a broken world while directing us to the Lord's glory as our ultimate hope and refuge. They reflect the faith of those who lived under the Old Covenant, longing for God's redemption and promises to be fulfilled. With the coming of Christ, the New Covenant brings a greater revelation of God's grace, offering believers a deeper assurance of His presence and salvation. This contrast invites us to explore the Psalms in the context of the Old Covenant and the advantages found in the New Covenant.

The Psalms were written within the context of the Old Covenant, a covenant between God and the people of Israel that centered on the Law, sacrifices, and the Temple. In the Old Covenant, grace was experienced through God's mercy, His forgiveness of sins, and His presence with His people, particularly through the sacrificial system. In the New Covenant, however, we experience grace in a fuller way through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>10</sup>[www.biblehub.com/timeline/psalms/1.htm](http://www.biblehub.com/timeline/psalms/1.htm)

Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the Psalms, the one who brings ultimate healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Through Christ, we have direct access to God's grace, without the need for sacrifices or intermediaries. The psalms, therefore, take on new meaning for us in the light of the New Covenant, revealing not just God's grace in the past but His grace made available to us through Jesus.

### **Embracing Grace through the Psalms**

The Psalms invite us to explore the depth of God's grace as we engage with the emotions, prayers, and praises of the psalmists. They remind us of God's presence in our lives, His mercy in our suffering, and His faithfulness in our triumphs. As we read and meditate on the Psalms, may we discover the grace that is available to us in every season—whether in moments of joy or sorrow, repentance or celebration. The Psalms are not only a record of God's grace in the past but also a living testimony of the grace that continues to meet us where we are today.

The book of Psalms is a tapestry of raw emotion, deep worship, and divine truth. Within its verses, we find songs of praise, cries for help, and declarations of God's faithfulness. Yet, woven through every lament and every hymn is a theme that points beyond the psalmists' immediate circumstances—a theme of grace.

Grace is not merely a New Testament concept; it is embedded in the Psalms, revealing God's unchanging character. In moments of desperation, grace sustains.

In times of repentance, grace restores. And in seasons of waiting, grace reassures. The psalmists did not fully grasp the complete picture of God's redemptive plan, but they pointed toward it. Their words, inspired by the Holy Spirit, find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the embodiment of grace itself.

Jesus taught from the Psalms, prayed them, and fulfilled their deepest longings. When we read Psalm 23, we hear echoes of the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep. When we meditate on Psalm 22, we see the suffering Messiah crying out on the cross. The Psalms, though written centuries before Christ's birth, testify to the grace that would be fully revealed through Him. This book is an invitation to see grace anew in the Psalms. Whether you are rejoicing, struggling, or seeking direction, the Psalms provide a wellspring of hope. They remind us that God's grace is not just a theological concept—it is a living, present reality that meets us in every season of life.

"Dance freely, but not blindly. Live authentically but with humility and love."

—A meditation inspired by Proverbs 22:1


Before diving into the Psalms, may we embrace hearts shaped by grace, living not for accolades or appearances, but from the overflow of the abundant grace we've received in Christ.

# Snapshot of the Life of David the Sweet Psalmist of Israel<sup>11</sup>

CHRONOLOGY OF DAVID'S LIFE <sup>170</sup>			
Event	Date	Age	Reference
Birth	1041	0	2 Sam. 5:4-5
Anointing by Samuel	1029	12	1 Sam. 16:1-13
Defeat of Goliath	1024	17	1 Sam. 17
Exile from Saul	1020-1011	21-30	1 Sam. 21—31
Anointing as King over Judah	1011	30	2 Sam. 2:1-4
Anointing as King over all Israel	1004	37	2 Sam. 5:1-3
Philistines Wars	1004	37	2 Sam. 5:17-25
Conquest of Jerusalem	1004	37	2 Sam. 5:6-10
Mephibosheth's Move to Jerusalem	996	45	2 Sam. 9:1-13
The Three Year Famine	996-993	45-48	2 Sam. 21:1-14
The Ammonite Wars	993-990	48-51	2 Sam. 10—12
Adultery and Murder	992	49	2 Sam. 11
Birth of Solomon	991	50	2 Sam. 12:24-25
Rape of Tamar	987	54	2 Sam. 13:1-22
Death of Amnon	985	56	2 Sam. 13:23-36
Exile of Absalom	985-982	56-59	2 Sam. 13:37-39
Absalom's Return to Jerusalem	982-980	59-61	2 Sam. 14:21-24
Construction of Palace	980-978	61-63	1 Chron. 15:1
Construction of Tabernacle	977	64	1 Chron. 15:1
Move of Ark to Jerusalem	977	64	2 Sam. 6:12-19
Absalom's Rebellion and David's Exile	976	65	2 Sam. 15—18
Rebellion of Sheba	976	65	2 Sam. 20:1-22
The Census	975	66	2 Sam. 24:1-17
Purchase of Temple Site	973	68	2 Sam. 24:18-25
The Davidic Covenant	973	68	2 Sam. 7
Co-regency with Solomon	973-971	68-70	1 Chron. 23:1
Rebellion of Adonijah	972	69	1 Kings 1:5-37
Coronation of Solomon	971	70	1 Chron. 29:22-23
Death	971	70	1 Kings 2:10-11

<sup>11</sup>Dr. Matthew Webster. How to Study the Bible & Discover the Beauty of God’s Word. Kindle Direct Publishing 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. P. 36. 2025.

**Chapter 1:**  
**The Grace of God's Presence**  
**Psalm 23, Psalm 46, Psalm 139**



In your presence there is  
fullness of joy; at your  
right hand are pleasures  
forevermore.

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P S A L M 1 6 : 1 1

## Chapter 1: The Grace of God's Presence

The grace of God's presence is the reality that sustains us, comforts us, and guides us through life's highs and lows. In the Psalms, we encounter a profound and intimate portrait of God's presence. "It is depicted as a refuge (Psalm 46:1), a shelter (Psalm 139:5), and a companion (Psalm 23:4), both in times of peace (Psalm 23:2) and in moments of deepest struggle (Psalm 46:10, Psalm 139:11-12).

The psalmists knew that God's nearness was a constant source of grace, and this truth is as relevant today as it was for Old Testament saints. In this chapter, we will explore how the Psalms portray the grace found in God's abiding presence. We will look specifically at three key psalms—Psalm 23, Psalm 46, and Psalm 139—and unpack how these ancient prayers reveal God's grace in both times of tranquility and distress. Through them, we will see that God's nearness is not conditional, and His help is always available. Whether we are resting in green pastures or walking through the valley of the shadow of death, God's presence is a gift of grace that never leaves us.

We begin *Grace in the Psalms* with Psalm 23 because it beautifully captures the essence of grace—God's unearned, unshakable love and provision for us. This psalm is not merely a comforting passage; it is a profound declaration of how grace meets us in every season of life.

Psalm 23 paints a picture of the Lord as our Shepherd, the One who provides for us, leads us, restores us, and walks with us even in our darkest valleys. From the peaceful green pastures to the table He prepares



before us, every verse reveals that His care is not based on our striving but on His goodness and mercy that follow us all the days of our lives.

In 2 Samuel 2:1-4, after the death of King Saul, David was anointed king over Judah in Hebron, and it marked the beginning of his reign and the period of division before he became king over all of Israel. Psalm 23 speaks to the themes of trust in God's guidance and provision, fitting for a time when David was relying on God's direction during a time of transition and conflict.

The opening lines of Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," convey a sense of safety and confidence in God's care, which would have resonated with David as he began his reign in Hebron, facing both external opposition and internal challenges.

### **Psalm 23: A Reflection of David's Bethlehem Roots**

Psalm 23 is most closely associated with Bethlehem, David's hometown, where he was anointed as king by Samuel (as described in 1 Samuel 16:1-13).

Though Bethlehem isn't mentioned in Psalm 23, this psalm reflects David's early life there—his time as a young shepherd, his anointing by Samuel (1 Samuel 16:1-13), and the deep trust in God he developed in those formative years. The opening line, "The Lord is my shepherd," draws directly from David's own experience tending his father's sheep in the fields around Bethlehem.

During that time, he learned to rely on God for protection and guidance, as he later told Saul: “The Lord delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear” (1 Samuel 17:37). Psalm 23 powerfully expresses the faith, dependence, and confidence in God that were shaped in David’s youth.



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By beginning our first chapter with Psalm 23, we set the tone for our journey through the Psalms, seeing grace not as an abstract idea but as a lived reality. Before we look at cries for deliverance, songs of praise, or declarations of God’s faithfulness, we must first rest in the truth that He is our Shepherd and that His grace is enough.

As we step into the Psalms together, let’s begin where grace begins: with the assurance that we are deeply

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<sup>12</sup>Leon Mauldin. Shepherds’ Fields in Bethlehem. Leon’s Message Board Bible History, and Geography...and More. September 13, 2019.  
[www.leonmauldin.blog/2019/09/13/shepherds-field-in-bethlehem/](http://www.leonmauldin.blog/2019/09/13/shepherds-field-in-bethlehem/)

known, fully loved, and eternally cared for by our Good Shepherd.

### **Psalm 23: The Lord is My Shepherd**

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psalm 23:1–6, ESV).

The entirety of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm shows relationship, rest, supply, guidance, protection, abundance, faithfulness, etc... Psalm 23 is simply amazing.

Psalm 23 paints a picture of God as our shepherd—the One who cares for His sheep, guiding them to safety, restoring their souls, and comforting them in their darkest hours. The psalmist affirms that God’s grace is shown through His provision, “I shall not want” is more than a statement about lacking nothing—it’s a profound declaration of contentment, rooted in the sufficiency of God’s presence.

In every season of life, God offers more than enough: rest, nourishment, guidance, and restoration. The purpose of the Christian life is to find our deepest satisfaction in God. When we are fully satisfied in Him, we discover that all our other desires are fulfilled in His presence.

It doesn't do us any good to acknowledge that Jesus is a shepherd, even a good one, without recognizing the powerful truth that He is my Shepherd. Because Jesus is the One in whom I belong, He is my Lord. I shall not want.

Jesus said, "I am the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture." A good shepherd will lead His sheep out to lie down in green pastures.

The more strongly you believe that He is taking care of you, the more it will change your thoughts and feelings. If you need freedom from a bad situation, see Jesus, your good Shepherd, leading you out of it by His Word that brings life. In the Message translation, it says, "By Your words I can see where I'm going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path" (Psalm 119:105).

When you allow Jesus to be your Good Shepherd, He will bring you to green pastures and make you lie down. You can rest, for He will provide for you. "He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake" (Psalm 23:2-3).

The Hebrew word for "still" means "rest."<sup>13</sup> God wants you in a place of resting in the victory He has already won at the cross.

In quiet waters and green pastures, God's presence is both a gift and a blessing. It's easy to acknowledge God's grace when life is calm and peaceful.

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<sup>13</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4496/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4496/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

But it's in the valley, "the valley of the shadow of death," where the true depth of God's grace is often revealed. In these moments of fear and uncertainty, the psalmist declares that God's presence brings comfort. The rod and staff, symbols of a shepherd's care, are reminders that God's guidance and protection are a source of grace that never wavers. God's presence is both a sanctuary in times of peace and a refuge in times of trouble. His grace remains with us, whether we are in moments of quiet contentment or walking through the most difficult chapters of our lives.

God desires that we stop striving in our strength and start trusting fully in His love and grace. He calls us to lay down our efforts to earn His favor and instead rest in the finished work of Christ. The only "work" left for us is the work of faith—the daily choice to believe, to rest, and to rely completely on His undeserved favor toward us.

It takes faith to enter into God's rest. As Hebrews 4:11a says, "Let us therefore strive to enter that rest." This isn't about physical rest alone or simply setting aside one day a week. It's about placing our whole trust and confidence in Christ to save, sustain, and lead us. True rest comes from knowing that the work is already done—Christ has completed it.

God's rest is the place He always intended for us. From the very beginning, Adam and Eve were created to live in perfect fellowship with God, trusting Him for everything (Genesis 2). That same invitation still stands today. We are called to rest in Jesus, our true ark, who carries us through life's storms, not by our striving, but by His strength.

The fall of mankind did not catch God off guard; He had made provision long before there was a problem. 1 Peter tells us, "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God" (1 Peter 1:18-21). Christ was chosen, foreordained, and destined for the cross from the beginning of time before the world existed because God knew that sin would separate us and remove us from the resting place in which He created us to dwell. Sin is what separated us, but sin is no longer an issue through Christ's sacrifice, so there remains the promise of entering into God's rest through faith in Jesus.

Just as God rested because everything was finished and He created everything with seeds and the ability to reproduce, we can rest in the finished work of the cross. We, too, have been born again with the living and lasting Word, which regenerates our spirit. Peter goes on to say, "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God" (1 Peter 1:23). Jesus restores us to where mankind was before the fall. He has erased the guilt and shame that sin heaps on us. He has restored the relationship with the Father that we were created for. By trusting in Jesus as our source, we too can enter into the rest that God desires for us, the rest in which He created Adam and Eve. Jesus is the Sabbath rest for the people of God.

"Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows" (Psalm 23:4-5). "You anoint my head with oil" (Psalm 23:5b). In the shepherding context, anointing the head of a sheep with oil had a practical purpose, which can help us understand the spiritual symbolism even better. Shepherds in ancient times used oil to anoint the heads of their sheep for various reasons. Here are five reasons the Lord anoints us with oil. "The number 5 symbolizes God's grace, kindness, and mercy toward humankind."<sup>14</sup>

1. **Protection from Insects and Parasites:** One common reason was to protect the sheep from insects, parasites, and especially flies that would lay their eggs in the sheep's wool and nostrils. These flies could cause irritation, infections, and even death. The oil acted as a natural deterrent, making the sheep less attractive to these pests.
2. **Healing and Soothing:** Anointing with oil could also help soothe any existing wounds or skin irritations on the sheep. It had a healing and comforting effect.
3. **Identification and Care:** Shepherds would anoint their sheep as a way to identify them as belonging to their flock. This also demonstrated the shepherd's care and attention to each sheep's well-being.

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<sup>14</sup>Aly Rusciano. What Does the Number Five Mean in the Bible? February 26, 2025. [www.wikihow.com/Bible-Number-5-Meaning](http://www.wikihow.com/Bible-Number-5-Meaning)

4. "You anoint my head with oil" **signifies God's care and protection for His people**. Just as a shepherd used oil to shield sheep from harm, God offers spiritual protection from the "flies" of life—temptations, trials, and challenges. The anointing also represents God's healing and soothing presence during times of distress and discomfort.
5. Beyond the practical benefits, anointing the sheep was **a sign of favor and belonging**. In a spiritual sense, being anointed by God signifies being chosen, set apart, and blessed. It's a reminder of our identity as His children and members of His flock.

"You prepare a table before Me in the presence of my enemies" (Psalm 23:5). God wants us to rejoice in Jesus during our troubles. No matter how bad things may appear to be now, rest in Jesus' finished work by coming to the Lord's table, and receive your victory, restoration, and wholeness as you receive communion, proclaiming the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:26).

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (Psalm 23:6).

Goodness in Hebrew means prosperity<sup>15</sup> and mercy; here it could be translated as lovingkindness or favor.<sup>16</sup> If you look up the Hebrew word for "follow," it means "to chase, hunt, or pursue."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2896/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2896/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>16</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2617/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2617/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>17</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7291/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7291/kjv/wlc/0-1/)



Psalm 23:6 can be read as follows: “Surely prosperity and Your favor shall pursue me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever” (Psalm 23:6).

### **Psalm 46: God is Our Refuge and Strength**

“God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear though the Earth gives way,  
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the  
sea, though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of  
God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;  
God will help her when morning dawns.

The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;  
He utters His voice, the Earth melts.

The Lord of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress” (Psalm 46:1–7, ESV).

Psalm 46 offers another profound glimpse into God’s constant presence in times of trouble. The opening declaration, “God is our refuge and strength,” reveals the grace of His closeness, especially in the moments when life seems to crumble.

The psalmist reminds us that God’s help is “very present” in times of trouble. It is easy to feel that God is distant when we are faced with trouble, pain, or uncertainty. In moments of hardship, the weight of our circumstances can overshadow our awareness of His presence, making it feel as if God is far away, or even absent. When life becomes overwhelming—whether through personal struggles, grief, or fear—it can be hard to sense the closeness of a loving, faithful God. Our emotions, doubts, and struggles may cloud our vision, causing us to feel isolated or abandoned.

Yet, the psalmist offers a powerful reminder: God's help is "very present" in times of trouble (Psalm 46:1). This verse underscores a profound truth: even when we don't feel His presence, God is always with us. He is not a distant or passive observer; He is actively involved in our lives, especially in our times of need. God is immediately present with us, offering comfort, strength, and refuge, even when we can't perceive it.

This promise is reaffirmed in the New Testament through Jesus Christ's words:

- **Matthew 28:20** – "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."  
Jesus assures us of His constant presence, promising to be with His followers, even until the very end of time.
- **John 14:16-17** – "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."  
Here, Jesus promises the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, emphasizing that the Spirit will be with us forever, offering guidance and support.
- **Romans 8:9-11** – "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who

raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

This passage emphasizes that the Holy Spirit not only dwells within believers but also gives life and empowerment in times of need.

Together, these scriptures assure us that God is always present with us, both through the continual presence of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, offering constant refuge and help in our lives.

The Psalms frequently highlight that God is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18). His presence isn't dependent on our feelings or circumstances—He is a constant, faithful companion. When we are in trouble, He promises that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6). The challenge, then, is not that God has abandoned us, but that our struggles may make it difficult for us to recognize His closeness.

By turning to the Psalms, we find a source of strength and comfort, as they continually remind us that God is always near, ready to help, restore, and carry us through the storm. Even in the darkest moments, He remains our refuge and fortress, never far from us. When we shift our focus from our troubles to the truth of God's unwavering presence, we can begin to experience His peace and assurance, knowing He is “very present” in all circumstances.

### **God is Our Refuge**

The image of God as a “refuge” is one of safety and protection. A refuge is a place where one can find shelter from the storms of life.

And yet, Psalm 46 doesn't paint a picture of calm seas. It speaks of chaos—of mountains shaking, waters foaming, and nations raging. It is a vivid depiction of a world in turmoil. And yet, in the midst of all this, God's presence remains unshaken. He is the steady hand that holds us when the world trembles.

When David calls God a "refuge", he isn't just using poetic language—it reflects something real and tangible. Here's what a refuge looked like in his world:



## **1. Walled Cities or Fortresses**

- In ancient Israel and the surrounding regions, people would flee to fortified cities or mountainside strongholds during times of danger (like war or invasion).
- These cities had thick stone walls, gates, and watchtowers—designed to protect against enemies.
- Think of places like Jerusalem, Hebron, or **En Gedi**, where David once hid in caves while fleeing Saul (1 Samuel 23–24).

When David calls God his "fortress" or "strong tower" (Psalm 18:2), he's drawing from this real-world experience.



## **2. Cities of Refuge**

- The Law of Moses designated six cities of refuge (Numbers 35; Joshua 20).
- These were places where someone who accidentally killed another person could flee for safety from revenge until a fair trial.

- These cities symbolized mercy, safety, and justice—all themes that tie deeply into how God is portrayed in the Psalms.

## **The Six Refuge Cities**

### **West of the Jordan (in Canaan):**

1. **Kedesh** – in Galilee, in the hill country of Naphtali (northern Israel)
2. **Shechem** – in the hill country of Ephraim (central Israel)
3. **Hebron** – also called Kiriath-Arba, in the hill country of Judah (southern Israel)

### **East of the Jordan (in the Transjordan):**

4. **Bezer** – in the wilderness on the plateau, in the tribe of Reuben
5. **Ramoth** – in Gilead, in the territory of Gad
6. **Golan** – in Bashan, in the territory of Manasseh

## **3. Natural Hideouts: Caves and Rocks**

- David, the primary author of many psalms, often found refuge in caves or rocky terrain when he was running from Saul or other enemies.
- These natural shelters provided protection from the weather, wild animals, and the pursuit of men.

Passages like “You are my rock and my fortress” (Psalm 31:3) reflect this raw, personal experience of physical hiding places.

## † Spiritual Meaning

Over time, especially in the Psalms, REFUGE became a metaphor for God's presence—a safe place not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually. It meant:

- Shelter from fear (Psalm 46:1)
- Protection from enemies (Psalm 91:2)
- Peace in the middle of chaos (Psalm 62:1-2)

The grace of God's presence in Psalm 46 does not remove us from hardship, but rather one that strengthens and sustains us in the midst of it. His nearness doesn't make the storm disappear, but it gives us the courage to face it with hope. In a world that often feels as if it is falling apart, Psalm 46 reminds us that God is with us, and His presence is a gift of grace that provides us with the strength to endure.

The most common mistake made with Psalm 46:10 is quoting only part of the verse. A phrase from this verse often shows up on coffee mugs, artwork, and fridge magnets: "Be still, and know that I am God." But how many of us remember what comes after that familiar line? Or do we realize that what follows—and even what comes before it—is key to understanding how we can truly be still and know that He is God? It's rare to see the second half of the verse included on these items. Why? Simply because it doesn't fit as neatly on a coffee mug. As a result, we latch on to the comforting "Be still and know that I am God," but we sometimes miss the deeper understanding of how to live it out. It's a bit ironic that the very thing that helps us get moving in the morning—coffee—is the same thing telling us to be still.

The greatest honor we can give to Psalm 46:10 is to quote it in its entirety: "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the Earth" (Psalm 46:10). This verse serves as a profound reminder and source of comfort that we can rest in God's sovereign control. Stillness doesn't imply inactivity; it means surrendering to God and trusting Him as His plan unfolds. We don't need to try to force or rush the work God is bringing about. When we accept His rest, we become the most productive.

This can be illustrated through a story about a lumberjack competition. One man challenged another to an all-day wood-chopping contest. The challenger worked tirelessly, stopping only briefly for lunch, while the other man took multiple breaks throughout the day. At the end of the day, the challenger was frustrated to find that the man who had taken breaks had chopped more wood. "I don't understand," the challenger said. "Every time I looked, you were resting. Yet, you chopped more wood than I did."

The other man smiled and replied, "What you didn't notice is that while I rested, I was sharpening my axe."<sup>18</sup>

Proverbs 27:17 says, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another." Just as iron sharpens iron to make a tool more effective, we, too, are sharpened spiritually through our relationship with God and one another. When we rest in God, receive His Word, and surrender to Him, we are spiritually renewed and ready to accomplish more through His strength. This is how we sharpen our spiritual axes.

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<sup>18</sup>L.S. Chafer. Grace. I Was Sharpening My Ax. [www.bible.org/node/14323](http://www.bible.org/node/14323)

Being still before God doesn't mean we stop moving; rather, we pause long enough to reflect on His power and plan. In the face of trouble, like the tumultuous events described in Psalm 46:2–6—earthquakes, storms, and wars—we can rest in God's peace. Our stillness acknowledges that He is God, and it empowers us to face whatever comes our way.

Psalm 46 was written during the reign of King Jehoshaphat, as recorded in 2 Chronicles 20 when Israel faced a grave threat from the combined armies of Moab, Ammon, and Edom. In the face of this danger, the people of Israel responded by placing their trust in God and expressing their faith through song. The psalm begins with a bold proclamation: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

When we read verse 10, the words "Be still" come from the Hebrew word "raphah", which means "relax."<sup>19</sup> Relax and know that God is with you. He is your refuge, your strength, and your ever-present help in times of need. During the chaos, we can find rest in Him.

Verse 6b beautifully reminds us that God's response to the raging nations is this: "He utters His voice, and the Earth melts." His response to troubled waters is not more chaos, but a river whose streams bring joy and peace to the city of God. This is how we experience the peace of God: by becoming still before Him, by recognizing His voice in the quiet moments, and by trusting in His supremacy and triumph.

But what does acknowledging God mean? It means recognizing His omniscience (all-knowing),

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<sup>19</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7503/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7503/kjv/wlc/0-1/)



omnipresence (present everywhere), and omnipotence (all-powerful). Acknowledging God allows us to trust Him fully, surrendering our plans to His better, divine will. This stillness, this trust, allows us to find peace in the most turbulent of circumstances.

“I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the Earth” (Psalm 46:10). At times, it can be tempting to seek alliances with worldly powers, just as Israel did with Egypt during Isaiah’s time. But God reminds us that He alone is exalted. We don’t need to look elsewhere for help; we can rely on Him completely. As Isaiah 30:15 reminds us, “In repentance and rest is your salvation; in quietness and trust is your strength.”

True rest is found only in God’s presence, even though He may work through others to help us.

I’ve learned that when I fully surrender to Him, acknowledging His constant control, I find peace and strength, even in difficult times. Psalm 46 reminds us that God is always with us, our refuge and strength, ready to support us in every need. When our spirits are overwhelmed, repeating the affirmation, “God is my refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble,” reassures us that, despite our struggles, God remains exalted and His plan will prevail.

Many of us tirelessly strive to earn God’s approval, only to feel more distant from Him. Yet, as Peter discovered when he labored all night without success (John 21:5), it wasn’t until he surrendered to Jesus’ guidance that his net overflowed with fish. God abundantly provides for those who trust and follow Him.

If you're feeling weary, frustrated, or overwhelmed, remember that God is with you, always ready to offer His help. He knows exactly what you need. Rest in His presence today.

### **Psalm 139: The Inescapable Presence of God**

Psalm 139 is a song that comes in four stanzas, each with six verses. It's so powerful that many scholars call this psalm the crown of David's songs.

"O Lord, You have searched me and known me!  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
You discern my thoughts from afar.  
You search out my path and my lying down  
and are acquainted with all my ways.  
Even before a word is on my tongue,  
behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.  
You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay Your hand upon me.  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is high; I cannot attain it.  
Where shall I go from Your Spirit?  
Or where shall I flee from Your presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, You are there!  
If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there!  
If I take the wings of the morning  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
even there Your hand shall lead me,  
and Your right hand shall hold me.  
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light about me be night,"  
even the darkness is not dark to You;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light with You"  
(Psalm 139:1–12, ESV).

Psalm 139 presents a deeply intimate and personal reflection on the grace of God's omnipresence. Unlike Psalm 23 or Psalm 46, which focus on God's presence in the external circumstances of life, Psalm 139 reveals that God's grace is present with us even in the depths of our hearts. The psalmist begins by acknowledging that God knows us fully—our thoughts, our words, and our ways. There is no part of our lives, no corner of our hearts, that is hidden from Him.

What's striking about this psalm is the overwhelming comfort of knowing that there is nowhere we can go where God is not present. His grace is not confined to certain places or moments; His nearness is inescapable.

Whether we are in the heights of heaven or the depths of despair, God's presence is with us. His grace is not a distant force, but a constant companion, offering us comfort and guidance at every turn.

Psalm 139 reminds us that God's grace is not dependent on our circumstances. Whether we are in times of peace or moments of deep anguish, God's presence remains the same. We cannot escape His love, and this is one of the greatest gifts of grace we can experience.

This song resonates deeply with the human experience. "You have searched me and known me"—how often do we wonder, "Am I truly known? Does God even see me for who I am?" We may be recognized as "the professional" or "the parent" by others, yet the question remains: who knows the "true me"—all my struggles, passions, and vulnerabilities? We all long for genuine intimacy, which can only be found when we are fully known.

Psalm 139 assures us that God understands us completely. “You know my sitting down and my rising up”—nothing in us is hidden from Him. David marvels at how God surrounds him, declaring, “You have hedged me behind and before”—a poetic expression of God’s constant guidance and protection. His knowledge of us is so profound that David confesses, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.” Even in our moments of failure, God remains close, and His care fills our hearts with awe.

This truth is even more uplifting when we remember our union with Jesus. Not only does God know every detail of our lives, but He also walks with us wherever we go. Whether we’re scaling the heights of a mountain or descending into the depths of a dark cave, His presence is constant. I recall climbing the Annapurna range in Nepal, where, in exhaustion and peril, I felt God’s unwavering companionship. Similarly, in the shadowy caves of Puerto Rico, with bats flitting overhead, His presence was unmistakable. Whether we feel strong or broken, high or low, God’s presence is always around us.

David also reflects on the comfort of God’s light in the darkness: “If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me,’ even the night shall be light about me.” He speaks not just of physical darkness but of those times when we feel overwhelmed by our own mistakes. Moreover, David acknowledges that before he was even born, God had already been a part of his story, fashioning his days with purpose (Psalm 139:16). Our lives aren’t random; they are intentionally crafted by a loving Creator.

Furthermore, David is humbled by the thought that God’s considerations for us are more numerous than

the grains of sand—a reminder of how valued we are. Yet, his song takes a more somber tone as he expresses his frustration with those who oppose God. Though his emotions are raw and honest, they serve as a contrast to the overwhelming grace God offers. In closing, David's heartfelt plea, "Search me, O God, and know my heart," invites us to do the same. As we reflect on Psalm 139, let it encourage us to welcome God into every corner of our lives. Even in our darkest moments, His love, care, and transformative power are ready to bring healing and freedom. Through Christ, we can trust that God's presence will guide and restore us.

### **The Gift of Grace in God's Presence**

In these three psalms—Psalm 23, Psalm 46, and Psalm 139—we see that God's presence is a constant source of grace. Whether we are walking through the green pastures of peace or the dark valleys of fear, God is near, offering us strength, comfort, and protection. His presence is not a fleeting experience, but an enduring gift of grace that we can rely on no matter the circumstances. As we continue to explore the Psalms, we will see that God's nearness is a recurring theme—a grace that sustains us in every season of life.

**Chapter 2:**  
**Grace for the Brokenhearted**  
**Psalm 6, Psalm 34, Psalm 38, Psalm 51,**  
**Psalm 147**



## **Chapter 2: Grace for the Brokenhearted**

The Psalms offer a profound and beautiful invitation for those who are brokenhearted to experience God's healing and comfort. Whether the pain comes from personal failure, loss, or the weight of sin, the psalmists show us that God's grace meets us most powerfully in our deepest brokenness. In those moments, He draws near to the brokenhearted—not just to soothe our wounds, but to begin the work of restoration. Through Christ, that restoration leads to something greater: true wholeness. What was once fractured by sin and sorrow is made new in Him. His grace doesn't just mend us—it transforms us, offering lasting hope and a new identity rooted in His love.

In this chapter, we will explore five key psalms—Psalm 6, Psalm 34, Psalm 38, Psalm 51, and Psalm 147—that offer vivid depictions of God's grace for those who are broken and crushed in spirit. These psalms reflect the transformative power of grace in healing, restoring, and comforting us in our most vulnerable places. As we unpack these psalms, we will also see how God's grace operates through repentance and forgiveness, offering new beginnings to those who cast their cares on Him.

### **Psalm 6: A Cry for Mercy in Suffering**

“O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your anger,  
nor discipline me in Your wrath.  
Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing;  
heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.  
My soul also is greatly troubled.  
But You, O Lord—how long?

Turn, O Lord, deliver my life;  
save me for the sake of Your steadfast love.  
For in death there is no remembrance of You;  
in Sheol who will give You praise?

I am weary with my moaning;  
every night I flood my bed with tears;  
I drench my couch with my weeping.  
My eye wastes away because of grief;  
it grows weak because of all my foes.  
Depart from me, all you workers of evil,  
for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping.

The Lord has heard my plea;  
the Lord accepts my prayer.

All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly  
troubled; they shall turn back and be put to shame in  
a moment" (Psalm 6:1–10, ESV).

Psalm 6 is a poignant example of the psalmist's raw cry for mercy in the midst of deep suffering. The psalmist's pain is physical, emotional, and spiritual, but throughout this psalm, the thread of grace is clear. Despite feeling overwhelmed by the heaviness of his suffering, the psalmist turns to God with bold honesty, asking for grace. His request for healing, "heal me, O Lord," is not just about physical restoration but a plea for mercy and relief from the anguish that burdens his soul.

The psalmist acknowledges that God's grace is what will deliver him, and he pleads with God to respond not out of judgment, but out of His "steadfast love."



In this way, Psalm 6 reveals God's grace as the answer to human suffering—God's presence is a compassionate balm that brings hope even in our darkest moments. In the New Testament, God's steadfast love—hinted at in Psalm 6—is fully revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. The cross is the ultimate assurance that God responds to human suffering not with judgment, but with grace and compassion. Romans 5:8 declares, "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." This means we no longer plead for mercy uncertainly, as the psalmists did, but approach God with confidence, knowing that His response is always grounded in love (Hebrews 4:16). The suffering servant of Isaiah becomes the suffering Savior of the Gospels, and in Him, we see the full expression of God's steadfast love—a love that moves toward us, lifts us, and never lets us go.

Psalm 6 reveals that God hears the prayers of the weak because of His unfailing love (*chesed*), the unwavering love of a covenantal God who cares for us, not because we are perfect, but because of His own goodness (Psalm 6:4). "Turn, LORD, and deliver me; save me because of Your unfailing love."

### **Psalm 34: Grace in Every Trial**

"I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the LORD, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Psalm 34:1–4).

Psalm 34 is a beautiful celebration of God's grace, emphasizing His goodness, deliverance, and faithfulness to those who trust in Him. Written by

David after being delivered from danger, this psalm invites us to “taste and see that the Lord is good” (v. 8), reminding us that grace is not just something to know but something to experience.

Psalm 34, one of David’s most powerful psalms, was written during a deeply challenging time in his life, while he was hiding in the cave of Adullam. It’s striking to note that David penned these words during one of the lowest points in his life.

This season was undoubtedly one of the darkest for David, on the run from King Saul, filled with fear, and even pretending to be mad before the king of Gath, only to retreat to a cave for safety.

In such a humiliating and fearful situation, David could have easily succumbed to self-pity or condemnation. Yet, instead of letting his circumstances defeat him, he chose to bless the Lord and let His praises continually fill his mouth.

Was David afraid? Absolutely! He feared that Saul might catch him or that the king of Gath might kill him in retaliation for Goliath’s death. Yet, amid his fear, David chose to seek the Lord through worship in that cave.

And in God’s faithfulness, He not only delivered David from all his fears but also transformed the men who were with him in the cave. They went from being distressed, in debt, and discontented, to becoming fearless warriors—giant-slayers in their own right, mighty men who would serve David faithfully for the rest of their lives (2 Samuel 23:8–39).

Do you believe today that God truly loves you and is faithful to deliver you? No matter if you're feeling overwhelmed by fear, weighed down by debt, distressed, or simply discontent with life, take heart. When you turn to the Lord in worship, just as David did, He hears you. He responds with grace, brings deliverance in His perfect way, and begins a transformation that reaches far beyond your present circumstances.

Worship is one of the simplest yet most powerful ways to break free from self-focus. Instead of dwelling on the painful symptoms or the fearful circumstances troubling you, turn your attention to Jesus. When you're occupied with Him, everything will work together for your good.<sup>20</sup>

Psalm 34:4 (NLT) – “I prayed to the Lord, and He answered me. He freed me from all my fears.”

David's response to bad news and fearful situations was simple: he prayed to the Lord. Just like David, when we pray, God answers us and frees us from all our fears. But prayer is more than a one-time cry for help—it's meant to be an ongoing conversation.

Prayer is a two-way dialogue between you and God. Like any meaningful relationship, it involves both speaking and listening. As you grow in hearing His voice and sharing your heart, you step into the limitless potential of communion with your Creator.

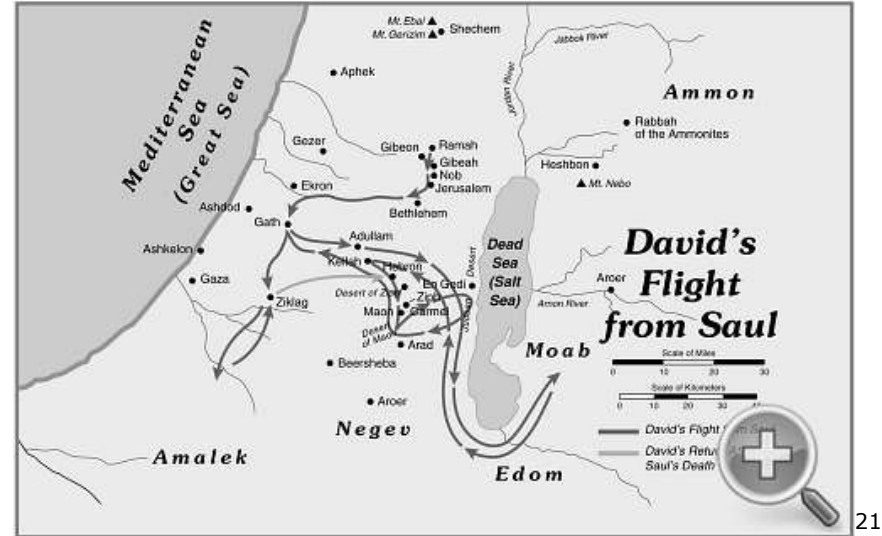
What many don't realize about Psalm 34 is that David wrote it during one of the most desperate moments of his life. He was under such distress that he likely

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<sup>20</sup>Joseph Prince. Choose to Bless the Lord. [www.josephprince.com/meditate-devo/choose-to-bless-the-lord](http://www.josephprince.com/meditate-devo/choose-to-bless-the-lord)

couldn't even speak his prayers aloud—he prayed silently, and God still heard him. Perhaps that's why David later wrote in Psalm 139:4, "Before a word is on my tongue, you, Lord, know it completely." He had learned to trust that God listens, even in the quietest cries of the heart.

So, what kind of trouble was David in? You can read the wild story in 1 Samuel 21. David—once a national hero—was now on the run. King Saul, fueled by jealousy over David's rising fame: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" (1 Samuel 18:7), was hunting him down. With nowhere safe to turn in Israel, David fled to enemy territory—the city of Gath, home of the Philistines. Ironically, this was the hometown of Goliath, the giant David had famously defeated. And yes, David was carrying Goliath's sword.



<sup>21</sup>Holman Concise Bible Commentary.  
[www.content.swncdn.com/biblestudytools/library/commentaries/holman-concise/images/HolConBibleComm-7.png](http://www.content.swncdn.com/biblestudytools/library/commentaries/holman-concise/images/HolConBibleComm-7.png)

When the Philistine servants recognized him, David knew he was in danger. So, he pretended to be insane to escape. It was in the aftermath of this bizarre and terrifying episode that David wrote Psalm 34—a song of praise for a God who hears, delivers, and saves, even when words fail.

David arrives at the city of Nob, where the priest Ahimelech is serving at the Tabernacle. When Ahimelech sees David coming alone, he is understandably concerned and asks why he is by himself and not with his men (1 Samuel 21:1–2). In a moment of fear and urgency, David lies to Ahimelech, telling him that he is on a secret mission from the king and that he needs food and a weapon (1 Samuel 21:2–4). Ahimelech gives David the consecrated bread—the showbread typically reserved for priests—since no other bread was available (1 Samuel 21:6). Still feeling unsafe and vulnerable, David asks if there is a sword or spear he can take. Ahimelech tells him the only weapon available is the sword of Goliath, which had been kept there behind the ephod. David gratefully takes it, gathering whatever he can to survive while on the run (1 Samuel 21:8–9).

With nowhere else to turn in Israel, David made a surprising move: he fled to the enemy territory of the Philistines. Specifically, he sought refuge in Gath, the city of Goliath, the giant he had famously defeated. However, once the servants of King Achish of Gath recognized David as the one who killed Goliath, David found himself in danger. Realizing the threat he was in, David responded in a moment of intense fear, not by relying on his strength, but by seeking God's help. In this life-or-death situation, David did the best thing he could: he turned to God in prayer.

The journey from Nob to Gath to Adullam mirrors David's spiritual path—and offers a striking parallel to our own journey as believers in Christ.

### **Nob (נוב): "High Place"<sup>22</sup>**

David began in Nob, a place that symbolizes spiritual height or significance. For us, this could represent seasons where we're resting in grace, confident in our identity in Christ, and walking in spiritual strength. But even in these "high places," fear and pressure can creep in. When that happens, we may compromise, retreat, or question truths we once held firmly. Yet even in failure, Jesus doesn't abandon us—He gently calls us back to Himself, back to the firm foundation of His finished work.

### **Gath (גת): "Winepress"<sup>23</sup>**

Gath was the land of the Philistines, but its name means "winepress"—a place of crushing. After fleeing Nob, David found himself desperate and afraid in Gath. Spiritually, we all experience seasons of pressing times when the weight of life feels overwhelming. Yet it's in those very moments that transformation can occur. Jesus knows the winepress, too. He entered Gethsemane—literally "oil press"—and prayed in agony, fully aware that He was about to be crushed for our sins. His surrender in the place of pressing released the anointing that would bring salvation to the world. In our lives, the crushing doesn't mean defeat. In Christ, it means refining, surrender, and the beginning of something new.

### **Adullam (עדולם): "Refuge"<sup>24</sup>**

Finally, David arrives at the cave of Adullam—a place

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<sup>22</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5011/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5011/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>23</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1661/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1661/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>24</sup>Abarim Publications. Adullam Meaning. [www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Adullam.html](http://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Adullam.html)

of shelter and refuge. But this was more than just a hiding place. It became a place of recovery, where broken people gathered with David, and where leadership and vision were birthed. Spiritually, after seasons of pressure, God often leads us into a place of restoration. It's in these "caves" that character is formed, faith is deepened, and purpose begins to emerge.

This journey—from Nob to Gath to Adullam—isn't just David's story. It reflects our spiritual growth. We may begin in strength and stumble under pressure, but by God's grace, we're never left there. He transforms our mistakes and struggles into deeper trust, clearer purpose, and a more intimate walk with Him. The path may be rugged, but He walks with us, and every step leads us closer to becoming who we're meant to be in Him.

### **Did David Pray When He Faced King Achish?**

In the narrative of 1 Samuel 21, it does not explicitly say that David prayed at that moment, either before or after he acted insane. The story gives us only the facts of the situation:

- David is afraid.
- He hears the servants' words.
- He becomes "very much afraid of Achish."
- He pretends to be insane. He scratched at the doors, let saliva run down his beard, and acted completely out of his mind.
- He escapes. King Achish, seeing this wild-eyed man before him, said, "Why bring him to me? Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring

this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house" (1 Samuel 21:15)?

There is no direct mention of prayer in 1 Samuel 21.

But here's the important part:

We know from Psalm 34, which David wrote after this event, that he did pray, and that prayer played a central role in his experience. David reflects on what happened and writes:

"I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears" (Psalm 34:4).

This suggests that at some point during this intense, fearful moment, David was praying. Even if it was silent, desperate, or wordless, he reached out to God.

So, while the historical record in 1 Samuel doesn't mention prayer, the spiritual reflection in Psalm 34 confirms that David saw God's deliverance as an answer to his prayer.

David's situation was dire, but his instinct was to pray, and God answered him. This story reminds us that prayer isn't always about asking for something specific. Sometimes, it's simply about trusting that God will meet us in our fear and lead us through the storm. When you face bad news or when you're consumed with fear, remember David's response:

### **Bad News = Time to Pray!**

God hears your prayers, even when they're silent, and He will free you from your fears.

**Psalm 34:8 → 1 Peter 2:3**

"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!"



- In 1 Peter 2:3, Peter uses this verse to encourage believers to experience the goodness of the Lord, particularly through their relationship with Christ, who is the Living Stone. The verse expresses the need for spiritual nourishment and satisfaction found in God.

God's grace is seen in how He hears our cries, rescues us from trouble, and surrounds us with His protection. He is near to the brokenhearted and saves those crushed in spirit (v. 18), proving that His grace meets us in our deepest struggles. Though the righteous may face afflictions, the Lord delivers them from them all (v. 19), showing that grace is not the absence of trials but God's presence through them.

Psalm 34 reminds us that those who seek the Lord lack no good thing (v. 10) because grace provides everything we need—His provision, His presence, and His peace.

"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18, ESV).

This short but powerful verse from Psalm 34 offers one of the most comforting assurances in Scripture. God's grace is intimately tied to His nearness to those who are suffering. When the psalmist declares that God is "near to the brokenhearted," it's a reminder that, in times of sorrow, we are not abandoned. God's grace comes in the form of His closeness, offering comfort, companionship, and a listening ear to those who are crushed in spirit. Sufferings can cause us to lean into God's presence in a way like nothing else.

The promise that God is near to the brokenhearted doesn't simply mean that God is aware of our pain—it means that He is present in it, actively working to bring healing. His grace is not distant or detached, but deeply involved, offering solace and support to those who are hurting. For the person whose heart has been torn apart by loss, betrayal, or deep sorrow, this truth can be a lifeline: God is close, and His grace is sufficient to heal and restore.

### **Psalm 34:20 → John 19:36**

“He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.”

- John applies this to Jesus' crucifixion, where His legs were not broken, fulfilling Scripture.

In addition to the fulfillment of prophecy and the perfect sacrifice, the detail that Jesus' bones were not broken carries deeper theological significance, especially in light of the great exchange—the transfer of our sin and brokenness to Jesus, and His righteousness and wholeness to us.

The Passover lamb, without broken bones, symbolized completeness, purity, and wholeness. When Jesus, our Passover Lamb, was crucified, the fact that His bones were not broken highlighted His sinlessness and His full, unblemished offering for our sins. This is reflected in John 19:31-33, where we read, “The Jewish leaders, because it was the day of preparation, and the bodies would not remain on the cross during the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and

saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.”

Jesus’ unbroken bones fulfilled the prophetic picture of the spotless Lamb, emphasizing His perfection and His sacrifice that was entirely sufficient for our redemption. This act of His body remaining whole reflects the integrity of His sacrifice—Jesus’ life was given fully and perfectly for us, without any imperfection or defect.

The great exchange, where Jesus took our place, offers us His wholeness in return. He took on the brokenness of humanity—our sin, shame, and separation from God—and in exchange, He gives us His completeness. As the spotless and unbroken Lamb, Jesus offers us spiritual healing, peace, and restoration through His sacrifice. His perfect life, sinless nature, and unbroken body form the foundation of our wholeness before God.

In light of Psalm 34:18, which speaks of God’s protection and the preservation of the righteous, we see that Jesus’ unbroken bones symbolize the wholeness He now offers us. Through His sacrifice on the cross, He makes us whole, inviting us into a restored relationship with God. In Him, we are made complete, no longer broken by sin, but made whole through His grace.

### **Psalm 38: A Cry for Forgiveness and Healing**

“O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your anger,  
nor discipline me in Your wrath!  
For Your arrows have sunk deep into me,  
and Your hand has come down on me.

There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.

My wounds stink and fester because of my foolishness, I am utterly bowed down and prostrate; all the day I go about mourning. For my sides are filled with burning, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and crushed;

I groan because of the tumult of my heart.

O Lord, all my longing is before You;  
my sighing is not hidden from You”

(Psalm 38:1–9, ESV).

Psalm 38 is a powerful psalm of repentance and sorrow. Here, the psalmist is deeply aware of the weight of his sin and its consequences. His brokenness is both emotional and spiritual. Yet, in his pain, the psalmist does not turn away from God but cries out for mercy and grace. His confession is raw and vulnerable, acknowledging the burden of sin and the need for forgiveness. The only solution is to call upon the name of the Lord and to receive forgiveness, protection, and healing.

God’s grace is evident even in discipline. The psalmist is aware that God’s correction is for his good, and he hopes in the mercy of God to heal and restore him. This psalm teaches us that God’s grace operates through repentance (a change of mind).

It is in the honest acknowledgment of David’s brokenness that he experiences the healing touch of God’s forgiveness.

Under the New Covenant, we have the wholeness of the Lord through Christ's finished work, and repentance (metanoia) means changing our minds<sup>25</sup>, and aligning our thinking with God's truth rather than merely feeling sorrowful over sin.

This psalm teaches us that God's grace is experienced as we change our minds to align with His truth. When we honestly acknowledge our need for His grace, we receive the healing touch of His forgiveness, not as something we must earn, but as something already accomplished in Christ.

### **Psalm 51: The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness**

“Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to Your steadfast love;  
according to Your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin!  
For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.

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<sup>25</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3341/niv/mgnt/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3341/niv/mgnt/0-1/)

Against You, You only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in Your sight,  
so that You may be justified in Your words  
and blameless in Your judgment.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, You  
delight in truth in the inward being,  
and You teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge  
me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that You have broken rejoice.

Hide Your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from Your presence,  
and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,  
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,  
and sinners will return to You"

(Psalm 51:1–13, ESV).

Psalm 51 is perhaps the most well-known psalm of repentance, written by David after his sin with Bathsheba was exposed. David's cry for mercy is a profound example of the grace that accompanies genuine repentance. His acknowledgment of sin is complete and heartfelt, and he turns to God for the cleansing only He can provide.

God's grace is revealed in the act of forgiveness, blotting out transgressions and cleansing the heart.

Psalm 51 teaches us that true repentance brings the grace of restoration. David asks for a “clean heart” and a “right spirit,” desiring more than just external forgiveness. He longs for inner renewal, for the joy of salvation to be restored to him. This restoration of joy is one of the sweetest gifts of God’s grace, for it is the joy of knowing that we are forgiven, loved, and made whole.

### **Psalm 147 Healing Through God’s Grace**

Psalm 147:4 says, “He determines the number of the stars; He gives to all of them their names” (ESV). It is awe-inspiring to consider how many stars exist, with scientists estimating over 200 billion trillion in the observable universe.<sup>26</sup> Yet, God not only created every star but also knows each one by name. This verse highlights God’s infinite knowledge and power, as He intimately knows and names each star in the vast expanse of the cosmos.

Now, compare this to what Jesus says in Luke 12:7:

“Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

Here, Jesus highlights God’s intimate knowledge of each person. If He numbers the stars in the vast cosmos, He also numbers something as personal and ever-changing as the hairs on our heads. This shows that:

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<sup>26</sup>Ailsa Harvey, Elizabeth Howell. How Many Stars Are in the Universe? February 11, 2022. Space.com [www.space.com/26078-how-many-stars-are-there.html](http://www.space.com/26078-how-many-stars-are-there.html)

1. God's knowledge is both unlimited and intimate  
– He not only governs the universe but cares deeply for the smallest details of our lives.
2. Personal value – While the stars display His grandeur, His knowledge of every hair on our heads emphasizes how much He treasures us individually.

This contrast beautifully illustrates that the same God who orchestrates the cosmos is intimately involved in our lives.

This perspective shifts how we view challenges, decisions, and even the mundane moments of life. We can live with the assurance that the God who created everything also cares about us personally and deeply, guiding us with wisdom in both the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life.

“For He strengthens the bars of your gates;  
He blesses your children within you.  
He makes peace in your borders;  
He fills you with the finest of the wheat.”  
(Psalm 147:13, ESV)

Psalm 147:13 speaks of God's grace as a restorative force. While this verse focuses on the peace and strength God gives to His people, it highlights a broader truth: God's grace has a healing effect on both individuals and communities. The psalmist reminds us that God strengthens us and restores what is broken. For those who are brokenhearted, God's grace provides a way to heal and rebuild from the inside out.



The Psalms speak directly to the brokenhearted, reminding us that God's grace is most profoundly felt in our pain. Whether we are grieving a loss, devastated by sin, or weighed down by life's hardships, God is near to us, ready to heal, restore, and forgive. Through repentance, we find grace—not just for forgiveness, but for the deep healing of our hearts. God's grace is the balm that soothes our wounds, the hope that lifts us from despair, and the power that transforms us from brokenness to wholeness. As we learn to come to God with our cares, we find that His grace is sufficient to meet us exactly where we are and bring us the healing we so desperately need.

## **Small Groups Week 1: Introduction & The Grace of God's Presence**

- Introduction: Different Types of Psalms & Their Uses (Pages 21-30)
- Chapter 1: The Grace of God's Presence (Psalm 23, 46, 139)
- Chapter 2: Grace for the Brokenhearted (Psalm 6, 34, 38, 51, 147)

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

Question #1: How does knowing that God's presence is with you in both the peaceful "green pastures" and the darkest valleys shape the way you respond to fear, uncertainty, or challenges in your life today? Can you think of a time when you experienced His presence in a difficult season? What was your response to the presence of the Lord, and what was the outcome of your difficult season?

Question #2: When life feels chaotic, how can we shift our focus from our troubles to the truth of God's unwavering presence?

- Psalm 46 describes a world in turmoil—mountains shaking, waters roaring, and nations raging—yet affirms that God remains a refuge and strength. How can we practically remind ourselves of this truth when we feel overwhelmed?

Question #3: What does it mean to “Be still and know that I am God” in the context of Psalm 46?

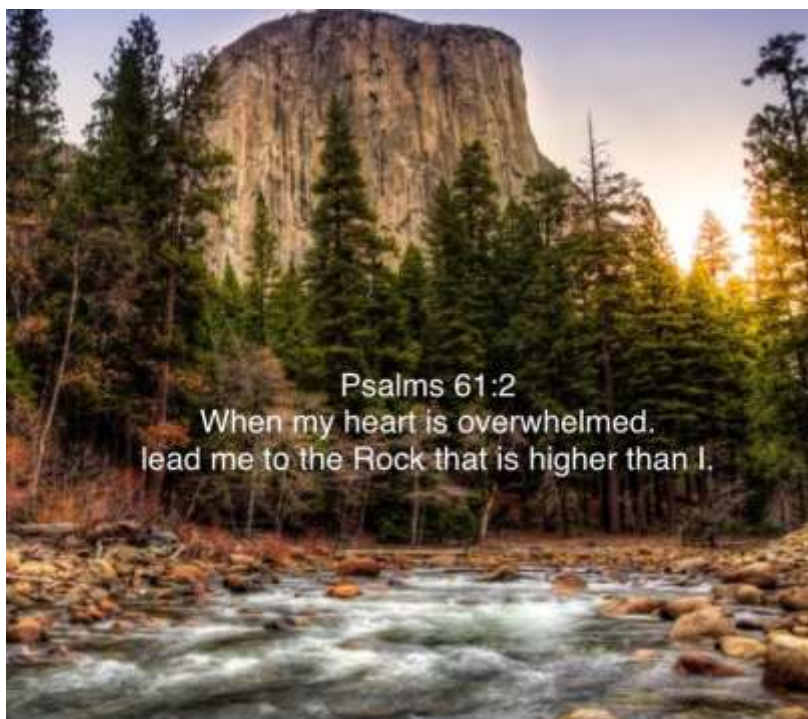
- Often, we see this phrase in isolation, but the full verse continues with God declaring, “I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the Earth.” How does understanding the entire verse deepen our ability to trust in God’s sovereignty, especially in difficult circumstances?

Question #4: How does Psalm 34:18 challenge our understanding of God’s presence in times of sorrow? When we feel brokenhearted, we often long for relief, yet this verse promises that God is near rather than necessarily removing the pain. How does this shape the way we view grace in suffering?

Question #5: Psalm 51 highlights the power of repentance and God's grace in restoring a broken heart. In Christ, we have complete forgiveness, as His sacrifice has washed us clean. David prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). How does knowing that we are fully forgiven in Jesus transform the way we approach repentance? Can you share a time when you experienced the freedom and restoration of God's grace through His forgiveness?

Additional Questions/Comments/Notes:

**Chapter 3:**  
**Grace in Times of Trouble**  
**Psalm 4, Psalm 31, Psalm 43, Psalm 46,**  
**Psalm 56, Psalm 61, Psalm 62, Psalm 91,**  
**Psalm 121**



## **Chapter 3: Grace in Times of Trouble**

Life is filled with moments of distress, fear, and hardship. Whether we face the threat of physical danger, emotional pain, or spiritual turmoil, there are seasons when we feel overwhelmed and uncertain. In these times, the Psalms offer a powerful reminder of God's grace as a refuge, a shield, and a source of deliverance. The psalmists repeatedly call on God for protection, seeking His help during troubling circumstances. They invite us to trust in God's grace, not as a distant concept, but as an ever-present, real source of comfort and deliverance in times of crisis.

Throughout the Psalms, God's grace is portrayed as a shield around those who seek refuge in Him. It is a grace that provides not only physical protection but also emotional and spiritual security. As we journey through the Psalms in this chapter, we will explore how God's grace is a constant source of strength, deliverance, and protection during times of trouble.

### **Grace for Protection, Deliverance, and Refuge During Seasons of Distress**

The psalms are replete with prayers that cry out for protection, deliverance, and refuge. In times of trouble, the psalmists often found themselves surrounded by enemies, facing personal crises, or experiencing deep sorrow. Yet, in these very circumstances, they repeatedly turn to God for help, finding grace in His steadfast love and faithfulness.

In Psalm 4, David cries out to God in personal distress and trouble, seeking peace amid confusion and fear. He writes, "Answer me when I call to You, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer" (Psalm 4:1). Here, we see grace as God's willingness to listen and intervene, even when the psalmist is overwhelmed by anxiety. God's response to our distress is not indifferent but intimate and compassionate.

In Psalm 31, David again seeks God's refuge in the face of danger, declaring, "Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief" (Psalm 31:9). He knows that in his weakest moment, God's grace provides the strength to endure. As he continues, David pleads, "Into Your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, Lord, my faithful God" (Psalm 31:5). This act of surrender is an acknowledgment that God's protection is not just a physical shield but a deeper, spiritual refuge. It is in God's grace that we find true safety, a refuge in chaos.

Psalm 43 further demonstrates grace in times of trouble, as the psalmist questions why God seems distant in the face of adversity. Yet, even in uncertainty, there is a strong call to hope in God's grace: "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God" (Psalm 43:5). This psalm exemplifies the power of grace to restore hope, even when circumstances seem overwhelming. God's grace is the anchor for our souls, bringing us back to a place of trust and worship.

## **Understanding Grace as a Shield in Times of Danger or Fear**

In times of fear and danger, the psalmists do not simply ask for relief—they find grace in the assurance of God’s protection and presence. Psalm 46 powerfully declares God’s faithfulness in times of fear: “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the Earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea” (Psalm 46:1-2). This Psalm is a declaration of trust in God’s grace as a shield in times of overwhelming distress. The psalmist acknowledges the chaotic and dangerous realities of life but also affirms that God’s grace is more powerful than any earthly turmoil.

In Ephesians 6:16, Paul writes, “In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.” The shield of faith is described as something that not only protects but actively defends against the attacks of the enemy, symbolizing trust in God and His promises. Faith in God acts as a shield, protecting believers from the spiritual dangers and fears that threaten to overwhelm them. “The Shield of Faith is rooted in Christ’s faithfulness. Think of faith in Christ’s faithfulness as a powerful, invincible shield. When you raise it high, it has the power to extinguish any attack that comes against you. No matter how many challenges you face, they will be overcome because the shield is already victorious.”<sup>27</sup>

This idea parallels the grace of God as described in the Psalms, especially in Psalm 46.

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<sup>27</sup>Dr. Matthew Webster. *Equipped for Victory: Put on the Full Armor of God*. Kindle Direct Publishing. 2027. Pages 96-97.



“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” Here, the psalmist declares a powerful truth about God’s presence and faithfulness, which is a grace-filled protection in the chaos and turmoil of life. Just as the psalmist finds refuge in God’s presence, believers in Christ find refuge in the grace that God extends to them, which shields them from spiritual danger, fear, and distress.

Similarly, Psalm 56 offers a profound reflection on God’s protection in the face of fear. Psalm 56 was written when David was captured by the Philistines in Gath, as recorded in 1 Samuel 21, and it was referenced in the previous chapter.

David, amid his fears of being pursued by enemies, declares, “When I am afraid, I put my trust in You. In God, whose Word I praise— in God I trust and am not afraid” (Psalm 56:3-4). This statement reflects the grace that provides peace in fear, a peace that surpasses understanding. God’s grace, in this context, shields against the paralyzing effects of fear. The psalmist’s confidence is rooted not in his circumstances but in the unfailing presence of God.

Psalm 61 presents a similar theme of grace as protection. Here, David prays, “Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the Earth I call to You, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the Rock that is higher than I” (Psalm 61:1-2).

In this plea, David acknowledges his vulnerability and the need for a refuge beyond himself. David seeks a refuge that is higher than himself, a symbol of protection and stability during times of distress.

In the New Testament, this rock is revealed as Jesus Christ, the ultimate refuge for believers. Just as David longed to be led to a rock that would provide shelter, believers today are led to Christ, who offers grace, protection, and a firm foundation during life's storms.

### **Scriptural Support for Christ as the Rock:**

1. **Psalm 61:1-2:** "Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the Earth I call to You, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."
  - David's cry for refuge and shelter from the "rock" can be seen as a foreshadowing of the ultimate refuge found in Christ.
2. **1 Corinthians 10:4:** "And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ."
  - Here, Paul explicitly identifies Jesus as the spiritual Rock that the Israelites encountered during their wilderness journey. This passage connects the concept of the Rock, found in the Old Testament, directly to Christ in the New Testament.
3. **Matthew 7:24-25:** "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock."
  - Jesus Himself uses the image of a rock to describe the stability that comes from

building one's life on His teachings. The rock here is a metaphor for Christ's foundational truth that protects and sustains believers through life's trials.

4. **Ephesians 2:20:** "Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone."

- While this passage uses "cornerstone" rather than "rock," it still reinforces the concept that Jesus is the unshakable foundation of the church, a vital and stable foundation upon which our faith is built, just as a rock provides stability and shelter.

5. **Isaiah 26:4:** "Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting Rock."

- This Old Testament reference to God as a "rock" foreshadows the eternal stability that is found in Christ, who is God incarnate.

### **Grace as a Strong Tower: A Source of Refuge**

Psalm 62 emphasizes God as the ultimate source of refuge, where grace becomes a stronghold in times of distress. The psalmist says, "Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from Him. He is my rock, my salvation, my fortress; I will never be shaken" (Psalm 62:1-2).

The grace of God is not just a feeling of peace; it is a strong tower—a place of protection that offers unwavering security when everything around us feels unstable.

The psalmist rests in the knowledge that God's grace is sufficient to keep him safe and secure, regardless of the threats he faces.

"Surely You will reward each person according to what he has done" (Psalm 62:12). "Psalm 62 is a psalm of rest, not labor. "Truly my soul finds rest in God... Yes, my soul, find rest in God" (v.1,5). Underline the doing words in this psalm, and you will see that it is exhorting us to trust the Lord:

"Truly He is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will not be shaken... Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge" (Psalm 62:6).

According to David, what do we need to do to be rewarded by God? Trust Him, rest in Him, and find refuge in Him."<sup>28</sup>

Psalm 91 offers one of the most well-known affirmations of God's protection, often quoted in times of danger or distress. It speaks of God's sheltering grace: "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust'" (Psalm 91:1-2).

The imagery of God as a shelter and fortress in this psalm emphasizes the security and peace found in His grace.

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<sup>28</sup>Paul Ellis. Rewarded For What We've Done: What Does Matthew 16:27 Mean? Escape to Reality. September 16, 2015.  
[www.escapetoreality.org/2015/09/16/rewarded-for-deeds-matthew-16v27/](http://www.escapetoreality.org/2015/09/16/rewarded-for-deeds-matthew-16v27/)

His presence becomes a shield from the storms of life, offering protection from both physical and spiritual threats.

## **The Grace of God in Our Daily Journey: Psalm 121**

Psalm 121 is a beautiful reminder that God's grace is not only for times of extreme crisis but for our daily lives. The psalmist declares, "I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and Earth" (Psalm 121:1-2). The grace of God is a constant presence, available to us in every moment, whether in times of great distress or ordinary circumstances. As we look to God for help, His grace is sufficient to meet our needs, providing the protection and strength we require each day. The psalmist assures us that God does not slumber or sleep, but is always attentive and present, watching over us with grace and love: "The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore" (Psalm 121:8).

## **Grace in Times of Trouble: A Divine Refuge and Shield**

The Psalms unveil a rich and intricate portrait of God's grace—a grace that meets us not just in peaceful moments, but especially in the turbulence of life. In seasons of danger, fear, and uncertainty, the psalmists cry out—not only with pleas for help but with bold declarations of a grace that shields, delivers, and renews.

This grace is not passive. It is living, active, and powerful. When trouble surrounds us, God's grace becomes our refuge.

When fear threatens to overwhelm us, His grace stands guard over our hearts and minds with supernatural peace. When we face the unknown, grace gives us the courage to trust in God's sovereignty and unfailing love.

God's grace is more than a concept—it is a tangible, present force in our lives. The Psalms give voice to our fears while also anchoring us in the assurance that God will never leave us or forsake us. In every cry and every praise, we are reminded that His grace is a shield, a shelter, and a strength that never fails.

In our most fragile moments, grace doesn't step back—it leans in. And in the sacred poetry of the Psalms, we find not just words of comfort, but an invitation to experience that grace as our ever-present help in time of need.

In Psalm 42, the psalmist is deeply distressed, feeling spiritually dry and distant from God: "My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember You" (Psalm 42:6). This moment of despair reveals the raw, human experience of spiritual drought, yet it is in this darkness that the psalmist remembers God's grace and the hope that flows from it. God's grace does not merely soothe in the moment of crisis—it brings remembrance and renewal, even when all seems lost. The psalmist acknowledges that God is the source of hope, and in calling on His grace, there is the restoration of faith and trust.

Psalm 130 expands on this idea of grace as both a refuge and a reminder of God's steadfast love: "Out of the depths I cry to You, Lord; Lord, hear my voice. Let Your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy" (Psalm 130:1-2).

## **Experiencing Grace During Emotional Pain**

While the Psalms often speak of physical protection and deliverance from external enemies, they also offer solace for emotional wounds. The psalmists regularly cry out not only for deliverance from physical danger but for relief from sorrow, guilt, and loneliness. In Psalm 34, David writes, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18). This is grace extended to those who are emotionally wounded, showing that God's compassion is not reserved only for physical crises but for the deep, unseen pain of the soul.

This aspect of grace in the Psalms highlights the comprehensive nature of God's love. His grace reaches us where we are most vulnerable—whether we are battling external adversities or suffering silently from emotional wounds. The psalmist knows that in emotional turmoil, grace comes to heal and restore. Grace does not bypass our suffering; it brings the presence of God into it, offering restoration and hope where brokenness once reigned.

Psalm 147:3 provides a similar reminder: "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." This grace is a reality that touches the deepest parts of our humanity. When our spirits are shattered, God's grace moves in to bring healing.

This healing is not immediate or always miraculous in the way we might hope, but it is transformative. Over time, grace works within us, restoring what has been damaged and bringing to us the wholeness Jesus offers. In moments of grief and heartache, we can look to these psalms and know that God's grace is actively healing and restoring us.

## **The Fulfillment of Grace in Christ**

Throughout the Psalms, we find echoes of grace that are fully realized in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the psalmist's hopes, the embodiment of the grace they longed for. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection offer a fuller picture of grace that encompasses both the external and internal struggles we face. The grace the psalmists experienced as a shield and refuge is made manifest in Christ's sacrifice, providing not only temporal protection but eternal salvation.

Jesus, as the fulfillment of the Psalms, offers us a deeper understanding of grace. In Psalm 22, we find a poignant foreshadowing of Christ's suffering on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me" (Psalm 22:1)? These words, spoken by Jesus on the cross, link the suffering of the psalmist with the suffering of Christ. Through Jesus, we see that grace does not exempt us from suffering but meets us in the depths of it. Jesus' cry on the cross, in His abandonment, speaks to the deepest despair, yet it also reveals the grace that would later lead to the triumph of the resurrection.

Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to be a refuge in times of trouble. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus invites us to come to Him for rest: "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." This rest is not just a physical reprieve but a spiritual renewal that echoes the themes of grace in the Psalms. Jesus offers a grace that transforms our burdens into rest, our trials into peace, and our fears into trust.



Through Jesus, we experience the ultimate deliverance. He becomes our refuge, not just from temporary struggles but from the eternal consequences of sin. He is the rock upon which we stand, the fortress that cannot be shaken. Jesus is grace made flesh, and in Him, we find the grace promised in the Psalms fully realized.

### **Embracing Grace: Our Response to God's Refuge**

The psalmists call us to trust in God's grace, to find refuge in His protection, and to surrender our troubles to His care. Their songs are a reminder that even in the darkest times, we can experience God's grace as a shield, a refuge, and a deliverance. Yet, there is a personal response required from us: to trust, to seek refuge, and to surrender our burdens to God.

In Psalm 91, the psalmist says, "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91:1). To dwell in God's shelter requires a conscious choice to rest in His grace. It is not simply a passive act but a decision to place our trust in His sovereignty. In times of trouble, we are called to surrender our fear and anxiety to Him, knowing that He will protect and deliver us.

This call to embrace grace is not just for those in crisis—it is for everyone. Every day we face challenges, whether large or small, and each challenge provides an opportunity to experience God's grace more fully. The grace of God, as revealed in the Psalms and embodied in Jesus, is an invitation to live in constant dependence on Him. It calls us to find our refuge, strength, and peace not in ourselves or the fleeting comforts of the world, but in the eternal security of God's grace.

In John 14:27, Jesus offers this promise: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." This peace, like the grace of the Psalms, is a shelter that guards us during life's storms. It is a peace that transcends understanding (Philippians 4:7) and holds us firm, no matter what troubles we face.

Through the Psalms, we are invited into a deeper understanding of grace—one that is active, transformative, and all-encompassing. Jesus, as the ultimate fulfillment of that grace, invites us to rest in Him and experience the peace and protection that only He can provide. Whether we are facing external dangers or internal struggles, the grace of God is sufficient, and in Christ, we find our ultimate refuge.

**Chapter 4:**  
**The Grace of Forgiveness**  
**Psalm 32, Psalm 51, Psalm 103, Psalm 106,**  
**Psalm 130, Psalm 141**



BUT WITH YOU  
THERE IS  
FORGIVENESS,  
SO THAT YOU  
MAY BE  
REVERED.

PSALM 130:4

## **Chapter 4: The Grace of Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is one of the most profound expressions of grace in the Bible, and nowhere is it more powerfully illustrated than in the Psalms. The psalmists often cried out to God for mercy and forgiveness, fully aware of their sin and its consequences. David, in particular, provides a poignant example of the struggle with guilt and the longing for restoration. However, as believers in the New Covenant, we have been given a unique and more complete understanding of forgiveness through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

In the Old Covenant, forgiveness was sought through the sacrificial system, where sacrifices were made to atone for sin. But in the New Covenant, Jesus Christ is the ultimate sacrifice, and through His death and resurrection, we experience forgiveness not merely as a temporary covering of sin but as a permanent, once-and-for-all cleansing. This New Covenant forgiveness offers freedom from guilt and shame in a way that psalmists like David could only hope for. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

In this chapter, we will reflect on the grace of forgiveness found in key psalms, considering how God’s grace was experienced by the psalmists and how the forgiveness we receive through Christ is uniquely different. Through Christ, we experience forgiveness that is complete and eternal—a grace that not only removes the penalty of sin but also empowers us to live in freedom, no longer bound by guilt and shame.

## **God's Grace in Forgiving Sins and Cleansing the Soul**

The grace of forgiveness is one of the clearest expressions of God's love in the Psalms. The psalmists frequently sought forgiveness for their sins, acknowledging that only God could cleanse them and restore their relationship with Him. David's prayer in Psalm 51 after his sin with Bathsheba is one of the most powerful examples of seeking forgiveness. He writes, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin" (Psalm 51:1-2).

David's plea for mercy reveals his deep awareness of his sin and the consequences it had not only on his relationship with God but also on his soul. His understanding of forgiveness, however, was still based on the Old Covenant system, where forgiveness was sought through repentance and sacrifice. Yet even within this system, David experienced the grace of God's forgiveness, acknowledging that God's mercy was the key to his restoration.

For the believer in the New Covenant, the forgiveness we receive is far greater because it is founded on the finished work of Jesus Christ. Unlike the temporary forgiveness under the Old Covenant, where sacrifices had to be repeated, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross has once and for all atoned for our sins (Hebrews 10:10). "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). This cleansing from sin is permanent and complete in Christ.

## **Grace in Forgiveness**

1 John 1:9 is often misunderstood as conditional forgiveness, suggesting we must confess every sin to be forgiven. However, “confess” (homologeō) means “to agree with God.”<sup>29</sup> When we agree that Jesus’ blood purifies us from all sin (1 John 1:7), we embrace the forgiveness already secured for us in Him (1 John 2:12).

Psalm 32:5, referenced in 1 John 1:9, affirms this: “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and You forgave the guilt of my sin.” Forgiveness is not about listing sins but trusting in Jesus’ finished work. When we live as forgiven people, we are free from guilt and empowered to extend grace to others.

Like the paralyzed man in Mark 2, sometimes our breakthrough comes when we recognize we are already forgiven. Jesus’ words, “Your sins are forgiven you,” were the key to his healing. When we receive God’s forgiveness, we walk in wholeness, unburdened by the past, and ready for the life of grace He has prepared for us ahead.

## **The Freedom from Guilt and Shame**

Forgiveness in Christ is not just about the removal of sin’s penalty; it is also about the freedom we experience from the guilt and shame that often accompany sin. In the Psalms, there is a repeated recognition of how sin burdens the soul. Psalm 32 is a beautiful example of how the psalmist describes the heavy weight of unconfessed sin:

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<sup>29</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3670/niv/mgnt/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3670/niv/mgnt/0-1/)

"When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer" (Psalm 32:3-4). The psalmist vividly portrays the spiritual, emotional, and physical toll that guilt takes on a person. But then, after confessing his sin, he experiences the release of forgiveness: "Then I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.' And You forgave the guilt of my sin" (Psalm 32:5).

In the Old Covenant, the resolution for guilt was through the practice of repentance and sacrifices, but these were always temporary. They didn't bring lasting peace. David longed for the cleansing of his soul and the restoration of his joy and peace. He found a measure of that peace in God's forgiveness, but it was incomplete, as the sacrifices could not fully remove sin's stain.

In the New Covenant, however, we experience freedom from guilt and shame in a way that the psalmists could only dream of. Through Jesus, we have not only forgiveness but also the power to live free from the condemnation of our past (Romans 8:1). Jesus removes our guilt permanently, and His grace empowers us to walk in the newness of life, free from the shame that once held us captive.

This is the very message Jesus said would go out into the world—the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins in His name. And that's exactly what Peter, Paul, and the other apostles boldly declared (see Acts 5:31; 13:38).

They didn't preach forgiveness as something we must earn or repeatedly ask for, but as a finished work—forgiveness as a noun, a gift already given. Their invitation was simple yet profound: believe the good news and receive the gift Jesus paid for in full.<sup>30</sup>

Forgiveness as a noun emphasizes that forgiveness is a completed reality—a gift that already exists—rather than an ongoing action we're trying to obtain ("forgiveness as a verb").

► Forgiveness as a verb (Old Covenant mindset):

- "Lord, please forgive me."
- This implies forgiveness is something not yet given—something that must be asked for again and again.
- It keeps people in a cycle of guilt, confession, and uncertainty.

► Forgiveness as a noun (New Covenant reality in Christ):

- "I have forgiveness through Jesus."
- This sees forgiveness as a gift already given (Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14).
- It's a state of being rather than a transaction in progress.
- You're not chasing forgiveness—you're living from it.

This is what the apostles proclaimed: a once-for-all forgiveness through Jesus (Hebrews 10:10, 14). They weren't inviting people into a ritual of repeatedly

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<sup>30</sup>Paul Ellis. *Is Forgiveness Something God Does or Gives? How the Cross Redefined Forgiveness*. *Escape to Reality*. June 20, 2012.  
[www.escape toreality.org/2012/06/20/is-forgiveness-something-god-does-or-gives/](http://www.escape toreality.org/2012/06/20/is-forgiveness-something-god-does-or-gives/).



asking—they were inviting them to believe in what had already been done and to live from that assurance.

"Forgiveness isn't a verb we perform—it's a noun we possess.

In Christ, it's already ours." — Romans 8:1 • Acts 13:38

## **What Do We Do When We Sin in the New Covenant?**

### **1. We remember who we are.**

When we sin, we don't run away from God in guilt—we run to Him in grace. We remind ourselves:

"I am forgiven, I am righteous in Christ, and this behavior doesn't define me" (Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 5:21)

### **2. We trust in what Jesus has already done.**

We don't beg for forgiveness—we rest in it.

We don't try to get clean—we remember that in Christ, we are clean (Hebrews 10:14).

We say, "Thank you, Jesus, that this sin is already forgiven. Teach me to walk in the freedom You've given me."

### **3. We let grace empower transformation.**

Titus 2:11-12 says grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness.

We don't change SO God will accept us—we change because we already are accepted.

We let the Spirit renew our thinking (Romans 12:2) and walk by the Spirit, not the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

## **Think of it like this:**

Old Covenant:

Sin → guilt → sacrifice → forgiveness (temporarily)

New Covenant:

Sin → remind yourself of the cross → receive grace → walk in newness.

Sin in the New Covenant isn't ignored—it's defeated. Not by punishment, but by the power of grace working within us.

Psalm 32:1: "Happy are those whose sins are forgiven, whose wrongs are pardoned" (GNB).

The grace of forgiveness in Christ means that we no longer have to live with the burden of sin weighing down on us. Psalm 103 beautifully expresses the reality of God's forgiveness as it declares, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). This is the power of God's grace—we are forgiven completely, and the burden of guilt is lifted. In Christ, we are no longer defined by our past mistakes; we are defined by His righteousness and His forgiveness.

### **The Fullness of Forgiveness in Christ**

The psalmists longed for a complete restoration, for the removal of their sins, and the return of their joy in God's presence. But even in their deepest cries for mercy, they did not have the full revelation of God's ultimate plan of redemption in Christ.

Despite their desperate pleas, the Israelites often struggled to remember the depth of God's saving power, which was fully revealed in Christ. As the psalmist reflects, "They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt" (Psalm 106:21).

Whenever we are tempted to doubt God's love and His plans for us, look to the cross and remember Jesus. Psalm 106 reflects on Israel's repeated sins and God's continual mercy, yet there remains a longing for something greater. "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, 'Amen!' Praise the Lord" (Psalm 106:48). This psalm acknowledges God's mercy but also highlights the ongoing need for forgiveness—a need that would only be fully met in Jesus.

Through Christ's sacrifice, our forgiveness is not a temporary covering, as it was under the Old Covenant. It is permanent. When Jesus cried out, "It is finished" (John 19:30), He completed the work necessary for us to be fully forgiven and restored. We no longer have to rely on animal sacrifices or repeated acts of repentance for forgiveness. Through Christ, forgiveness is offered freely and fully, once and for all.

Consider the following two Scripture verses:

1. "If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matthew 6:14).
2. "Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13).

At first glance, these seem to send different messages. The first implies that our forgiveness from God is conditional—it starts with us. The second reveals that our forgiveness of others flows from forgiveness already received—it starts with God. So, which is it?

The answer is found in Jesus Christ.

Matthew 6:14 was spoken before the cross, during a time when the Mosaic Law was still in effect. Jesus was addressing people under the Old Covenant, where forgiveness was conditional and incomplete. But at the cross, Jesus fulfilled the Law and established the New Covenant—one where forgiveness is a finished work, not a reward for our behavior.

Colossians 3:13 reflects this New Covenant truth. As members of the Body of Christ, we forgive because we've been forgiven. The cross changed everything. Forgiveness is no longer something we earn—it's something we receive freely, and then extend to others out of the overflow of God's grace.

In Matthew 18:23, Jesus said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. One servant owed an enormous debt that he could not pay." The first servant owes the master "ten thousand talents" (Matthew 18:24). A "talent" in biblical times was a massive unit of currency—roughly equivalent to 6,000 denarii, with one denarius being a typical day's wage for a laborer. That means one talent equals about 20 years of work for the average person. So when Jesus said the man owed ten thousand talents, He was describing a debt of 200,000 years' worth of wages—an absolutely unimaginable amount.

The point? The debt was humanly unpayable, and that's exactly what makes the forgiveness so astounding.<sup>31</sup>

As we step into this parable, we're invited to see ourselves in the shoes of the servant, crushed under the weight of a debt far beyond what we could ever repay. The king demands payment and prepares to sell the servant, his family, and all his possessions. Desperate, the man falls to his knees and pleads for mercy. And then, in a stunning act of compassion, the king does the unimaginable—he cancels the entire debt.

Now imagine being that man. You're standing at the edge of total ruin. Your family, your future—gone. There's no way out. And suddenly, mercy meets you. Not only are you spared, but your life is completely restored. How would you respond? Wouldn't your heart overflow with gratitude? Wouldn't you run home and embrace your loved ones, boasting of the king's goodness to everyone you met?

That kind of mercy changes everything.

Paul captures this spirit in Ephesians 4:32: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

To live forgiven is to become a forgiver. Yet too often, we withhold grace and let bitterness fester. As Emmet Fox wisely said, "Hoping to hurt someone by hating them is like drinking poison and expecting them to suffer."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>[www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2018&version=NIV#en-NIV-23752](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2018&version=NIV#en-NIV-23752)

<sup>32</sup>Emmet Fox. *The Sermon on the Mount*. Aroha Publishing. March 6, 2025.

Unforgiveness harms us more than anyone else. If we refuse to forgive, we remain imprisoned by bitterness and pain.

But here's the shocking twist in the parable. The servant in the story, despite being forgiven such a tremendous debt, left the king's presence unchanged. He immediately encountered someone who owed him a small sum. The second servant owes the first servant "a hundred denarii" (Matthew 18:28). Since a denarius was the wage for a day's labor, this would be roughly equivalent to 100 days of work.<sup>33</sup> When the man couldn't pay, the unmerciful servant threw him into prison. When the king heard of this, he reversed his mercy and handed the unforgiving servant over to tormentors.

Many people view this story as a moral lesson, but Jesus described it as a picture of the Kingdom of Heaven. Each of us has a debt we could never repay, and God, in His mercy, paid it on our behalf. The Law that stood against us was fully satisfied through Christ's sacrifice. Had the first servant extended the same grace he had received, both could have walked free. Instead, both ended up in bondage—one to his debt and the other to his unforgiveness. This parable underscores that forgiveness is not about fairness but about grace.

There are two possible responses to God's generosity. One is to say, "Thank You, Jesus! What amazing grace! I will be forever grateful and share Your mercy with others." The other is to be like the servant, unrepentant and unchanged by God's goodness.

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<sup>33</sup>[www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2018&version=NIV#en-NIV-23752](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2018&version=NIV#en-NIV-23752)

The greatest motivation to forgive is the Gospel itself. We forgive not because the person deserves it, but because we have been forgiven so much more.

The forgiveness Paul speaks of in Ephesians 4:32 is supernatural. To “be kind and compassionate” as the Greek implies means we can forgive those who have wronged us deeply, and it is only possible when we remember how greatly we’ve been forgiven in Christ. It’s a forgiveness that comes not from our strength, but from the wellspring of grace in which we live.

### **Forgiveness and the New Covenant: A New Way to Live**

In the New Covenant, forgiveness is not just an act that frees us from the penalty of sin; it transforms our very way of life. Psalm 130 speaks to the hope of redemption: “Out of the depths I cry to You, Lord; Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy” (Psalm 130:1-2). The psalmist expresses a longing for God’s mercy and forgiveness. In Christ, we can cry out with even greater assurance, knowing that God’s mercy is abundant and available to us through the cross. “Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

Furthermore, in Christ, forgiveness leads to a transformed heart. Psalm 141 reflects on the need for purity and godliness in the heart: “Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips” (Psalm 141:3).

In the New Covenant, the grace of forgiveness is not just about cleansing our past but also empowering us to live in holiness moving forward. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, we are equipped to live in a way that reflects the grace we have received, walking in freedom from sin and guilt.

## **Living in the Grace of Forgiveness**

The grace of forgiveness is one of the most beautiful aspects of God's love for us, and it is uniquely revealed in Christ. While the psalmists longed for forgiveness and restoration, we, as believers in the New Covenant, experience it in its fullest and most complete form. Through Jesus, our sins are forgiven—not temporarily, but permanently. We are cleansed, made new, and freed from the guilt and shame that once held us captive.

As we reflect on God's grace of forgiveness, we are invited to live in the freedom it brings. We no longer need to carry the weight of our past mistakes, nor do we need to fear that our sins will be held against us. In Christ, we are fully forgiven, and in that forgiveness, we are free to live a life that honors God and reflects His grace to the world.

## **Forgiveness Under the Law**

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Matthew 6:14-15).

To many, these words do not sound like good news. They seem to place forgiveness on a conditional basis—if I forgive others, then I will be forgiven.



That thought alone can be overwhelming, as forgiveness is not always easy. In some cases, it may seem nearly impossible.

However, it is crucial to remember that this message was given to people who were still living under the Law. The Law was designed to reveal humanity's inability to measure up to God's perfect standard. Perfect and constant forgiveness is impossible in human strength—who among us can forgive flawlessly, every time? The only one who ever did was Jesus Himself.

Imagine being in that crowd, hearing Jesus say that you must forgive everyone to be forgiven. What question would immediately come to your mind? Perhaps it would be the same question Peter asked Jesus in Matthew 18:21-22: "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus responded, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

Peter, thinking he was being generous, suggested seven times, more than double what was required by Jewish law, which mandated forgiveness three times for the same offense (Amos 1:3-13). Jesus, however, pointed to a level of forgiveness beyond human comprehension. Some debate whether "seventy-seven times" means exactly 77 or 490 (seventy times seven). Regardless, the spirit of Jesus' answer is clear—true forgiveness under grace is unlimited.

### **The Old Testament Connection**

Jesus' response echoes Genesis 4:24, where Lamech, a descendant of Cain, boasted, "If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."

Lamech represents the fallen human nature of revenge and unforgiveness, while Jesus flips the script, calling His followers to radical, grace-filled forgiveness.

This raises a critical question: What if I struggle to forgive? Does that mean I am unforgivable? Some may worry about passages like Revelation 21:27, which says nothing impure will enter Heaven. Thankfully, our salvation rests not on our ability to forgive but on the perfect and complete forgiveness we have through Jesus' blood. This is what makes us pure and righteous and grants us access to the Kingdom. Keep in mind that everyone who believes in Jesus is already a citizen of the Kingdom (Philippians 3:20).

### **Jesus, the Ultimate Example of Forgiveness**

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, suffering for the sins of the world, He was mocked, spat upon, and tortured. Yet His response was, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). This is perfect forgiveness, and it is only possible through Jesus.

We often carry grievances, believing no one understands the depth of our pain. But our Good Shepherd does. He calls us to cast our burdens upon Him (1 Peter 5:7) because unforgiveness weighs us down. He wants us to be free.

### **Forgiven on Account of His Name**

Our forgiveness is not based on our ability to forgive but on Jesus alone. "I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of His name" (1 John 2:12).

If forgiveness were dependent on our actions, no one would be saved.

This truth also brings hope to those grieving the loss of a loved one, especially in cases of suicide. Some fear that because their loved one did not confess their final sin, they are lost. But salvation is not based on confessing every individual sin—it is based on Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice. "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Thank God, our salvation does not depend on remembering every sin, but on His grace.

### **Living Under the Waterfall of Grace**

A story is told of a young boy who found a polished stone he treasured. Not wanting to lose it, he buried it in the dirt each night. The next day, he would retrieve it, only to find it covered in mud, requiring him to wash it in a nearby stream. This cycle continued until one day, he placed the stone under a waterfall, where it was continuously cleansed.

As believers, we are like that stone. When we receive Christ, we are placed under the waterfall of His blood, which constantly cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). We do not need to earn forgiveness—it is ours through Jesus. Living with this awareness allows us to extend grace freely to others.

### **A Legacy of Mercy in the Psalms: Psalms 103, 106, 130, & 141**

The Psalms are a treasure trove of reflections on God's forgiveness, rich with emotion and reverence for His mercy. Psalm 103 declares the greatness of God's grace with these comforting words: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12).

This vivid image portrays total separation from our sin—complete, divine removal made possible in Christ. In the New Covenant, this promise finds its fullest expression through Jesus, who bore our sins so we could be made clean forever.

Psalms 106 offers a historical lens, recounting Israel's repeated failures and God's unrelenting mercy: "They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt" (Psalm 106:21).

Even in their forgetfulness and rebellion, God showed compassion time and again. This mirrors our own stories—times we've drifted or doubted—yet God's grace always reaches farther than our failures. The psalm closes with hope and praise, looking ahead to the restoration that Christ would ultimately fulfill: "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, 'Amen!' Praise the Lord" (Psalm 106:48).

Psalms 130 captures the heart-cry of the repentant soul: "If You, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve You" (Psalm 130:3–4). Forgiveness isn't just a transaction—it's an invitation into a reverent relationship. The psalmist waits in hope for the Lord, just as we now rest in the finished work of Christ, confident that our sins are not counted against us.

Finally, Psalm 141 shows the transformative nature of forgiveness and the desire it stirs in us to live righteously: "Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3). True forgiveness not only cleanses our past but compels us toward a life of purity. Under grace, we

are not just forgiven—we are empowered to live differently, a life led by the Spirit.

Together, these psalms reveal the full arc of forgiveness: God's mercy in our past, His grace in our present, and His transformation for our future. What the psalmists longed for, we now live in—a forgiveness that is eternal, complete, and freely given in Christ.

### **A Prayer of Gratitude for the Forgiveness We Receive Through Jesus**

Heavenly Father, thank You for the immeasurable grace You have given me through Jesus Christ. Help me to rest in the truth that my forgiveness is found in Your Son, not in my ability to forgive perfectly. Soften my heart, and help me release any bitterness I may be holding. I choose to forgive because You have forgiven me. Teach me to walk in the freedom of Your grace, extending love and mercy to those around me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

**Chapter 5:**  
**The Grace of God's Mercy**  
**Psalm 41, Psalm 86, Psalm 103, Psalm 136,**  
**Psalm 145**

**Psalm 103:8 KJV**

**The LORD is merciful  
and gracious, slow  
to anger, and plenteous  
in mercy.**

## **Chapter 5: The Grace of God's Mercy**

**Psalm 103:8** – “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.”

### **The Lord is Merciful: So What is Mercy?**

Mercy and grace are closely related concepts in the Bible, but each highlights a different aspect of God's character. To understand the distinction, imagine a coin: mercy and grace are two sides of the same coin, yet they are not identical.

### **Mercy: The Side That Withholds Judgment**

Mercy is when God does not give us the punishment we rightfully deserve. Because of sin, humanity stands guilty before a holy God (Romans 3:23), and the just consequence of sin is death (Romans 6:23). God's justice demands that sin be punished, but in His mercy, He chooses to withhold that punishment. This isn't because sin is overlooked—it's because Jesus took the punishment on our behalf. Jesus bore the full weight of our sin and its consequences, absorbing the wrath of God that was rightfully ours. In doing so, God's justice was fully satisfied, and we were spared from the punishment we deserved.

♦ Example of Mercy: Imagine a judge who finds someone guilty but chooses to cancel their sentence instead of sentencing them to prison. That's mercy. The person deserves punishment, but the judge shows compassion by withholding it.

### **Grace: The Side That Gives Undeserved Blessing**

Grace takes it a step further. While mercy withholds punishment, grace gives blessings and favor that we do not deserve. It's God's generosity, offering us

salvation, righteousness, and eternal life as a gift through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). Grace is not merely the absence of punishment; it is the overflowing generosity of God, granting us blessings we could never deserve or earn.

♦ Example of Grace: Not only does the judge cancel the sentence (mercy), but he also offers the person a new job and helps them rebuild their life, giving them resources and opportunities they don't deserve. That's grace.

### **The Cross: Where Both Sides Meet**

The ultimate demonstration of both mercy and grace is found at the cross of Jesus Christ.

- Mercy is seen in that God did not pour out His wrath on us but instead placed it on Jesus, sparing us from the punishment we deserved.
- Grace is seen in that through Christ, God gives us salvation, sonship, and eternal life—gifts we could never earn.

At the cross, God's justice was fully satisfied. Sin demanded punishment, and Jesus willingly took that punishment on our behalf. Mercy withheld the wrath we deserved, and grace gave us the blessings we didn't deserve—all because of what Christ did for us.

In short, mercy withholds what we do deserve (punishment), while grace gives what we do not deserve (blessings and favor). Two sides of the same glorious coin of God's love!

In Hebrew, the words for grace and mercy are:



## Grace (חֵן - *Chen*)

- Meaning: Favor, kindness, goodwill, or grace<sup>34</sup>
- Biblical Usage: Found in Psalm 84:11—  
"For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows grace (chen) and honor; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly."
- Chen conveys the idea of unearned favor or a gift freely given, much like the New Testament concept of grace (charis in Greek).

## Mercy (רַחֲמִים - *Racham*)

- Meaning: Compassion, tender mercy, deep love<sup>35</sup>
- Biblical Usage: Found in Psalm 103:13— "As a father has compassion (racham) on his children, so the LORD has compassion (racham) on those who fear Him."
- Racham (רָחַם) means "womb," which conveys a deep, motherly compassion and care.

## Another Word for Mercy: חֶסֶד (*Chesed*)

- Meaning: Loyal love, covenantal kindness, steadfast mercy<sup>36</sup>
- Biblical Usage: Found in Psalm 136:1— "His mercy (chesed) endures forever."
- Chesed is often translated as "lovingkindness" because it describes God's steadfast, faithful love toward His people.

<sup>34</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2580/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2580/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>35</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7355/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7355/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>36</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2617/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2617/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

While *racham* emphasizes compassion and deep emotional mercy, *chesed* speaks of God's steadfast, covenantal mercy and love—love that remains even when undeserved.

Both *chen* (grace) and *chesed* (mercy/lovingkindness) beautifully describe God's character in the Old Testament and align with the New Testament revelation of His grace through Jesus Christ.

In a world where mercy often feels in short supply, the Scriptures repeatedly remind us of the vast and abundant mercy of God. Mercy, as an essential aspect of God's character, is deeply intertwined with His grace. In this chapter, we will explore the grace of God's mercy as expressed in the Psalms. Mercy is God's compassionate response to human brokenness, need, and sin. It is God's loving-kindness extended to us, even when we do not deserve it. In the Psalms, God's mercy is a recurring theme that paints a vivid picture of His tenderhearted care for His people.

Throughout the Psalms, God's mercy is not just an occasional or temporary act, but a constant, steadfast, and enduring reality. We see this reflected in the repeated refrain, "His love endures forever". This declaration speaks to the eternal nature of God's mercy and grace—an enduring mercy that never fails, never gives up, and never runs out. As we reflect on God's mercy in the Psalms, we will discover how it points to the ultimate display of mercy in Jesus Christ, who is the fulfillment of God's compassionate love and mercy for all who believe.

## **The Abundant Mercy of God as an Expression of His Grace**

In Psalm 41, David calls out for mercy as he faces personal illness and betrayal. He writes, "Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the Lord delivers them in times of trouble. The Lord protects and preserves them; they are counted among the blessed in the land" (Psalm 41:1-2). David recognizes that God's mercy is not limited to grandiose acts of deliverance but is also expressed in His compassion for the weak, the sick, and those in desperate need. Here, mercy is depicted as God's loving concern for the vulnerable and His readiness to deliver them in their time of trouble.

In the Old Covenant, mercy was often experienced in times of personal crisis, whether it was physical illness, societal oppression, or emotional distress. The Psalmist often cried out for mercy, trusting in God's character as one who would not abandon His people but would respond with grace and mercy. But through the New Covenant in Christ, we experience an even greater expression of mercy, not just in our moments of physical distress but in our deepest need for salvation. Christ's mercy through His death and resurrection is the ultimate expression of God's grace to us.

This same Psalm, however, also highlights the painful realities people face in a broken world—not only physical suffering but also betrayal and the sting of careless words. Psalm 41 turns our attention to the damage caused by gossip: "When he comes to see me, he speaks empty words, while his heart gathers slander; then he goes out and spreads it abroad" (Psalm 41:6).

"Gossip is not necessarily spreading untruths. It is

revealing information that should be kept confidential (Proverbs 11:13, 20:19). It is giving news about a person intended to lower him or her in the regard of the listener.”<sup>37</sup>

The theme of betrayal deepens in verse 9, pointing to an even more personal wound:

### **Psalm 41:9 → John 13:18**

“Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.”

- David was betrayed by his close advisor, Ahithophel (2 Samuel 15:12, 16:20-23). Jesus applies this prophecy to Judas Iscariot’s betrayal.

### **God’s Mercy in Psalm 86: A Cry for Compassion**

Psalm 86 is a heartfelt prayer from David, crying out to God for mercy in the face of personal hardship and enemies who seek to harm him. David writes, “Hear me, Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Guard my life, for I am faithful to You; save Your servant who trusts in You. You are my God; have mercy on me, Lord, for I call to You all day long” (Psalm 86:1-3).

David’s plea for mercy is an acknowledgment of his dependence on God. In his brokenness, he calls on the mercy of God, recognizing that without God’s intervention, he would be lost. David addresses God as “Adonai,” meaning “Lord,”<sup>38</sup> the sovereign One.

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<sup>37</sup>Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller. *A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms: The Songs of Jesus*. P.86. Viking Publication. 2015.

<sup>38</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h136/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h136/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

God is in control, and this is the truth that we need to call to our minds when we find ourselves in trouble.

What is significant in this psalm is the way David appeals to God's nature. He does not come to God as one who is entitled, but as one who understands that God's mercy is not earned—it is a gift. David appeals to God's loving-kindness, saying, "You, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness" (Psalm 86:15). This is the heart of God's mercy: it is not based on our worthiness but on His loving character. God's mercy flows from His deep compassion, His desire to be near His people, and His readiness to forgive and restore.

For us, as New Covenant believers, we see this mercy fulfilled perfectly in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus' life and ministry were full of acts of mercy, reaching out to the broken, the hurting, and the lost. In His death on the cross, He took the penalty for our sins upon Himself, offering us the ultimate act of mercy. Through His sacrifice, we are forgiven, cleansed, and reconciled to God.

"Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Psalm 103:2). "Biblical meditation is not a relaxation technique for emptying the mind but rather one that fills it with truth, using thought and memory to set your heart on fire."<sup>39</sup>

### **The Ever-Present Mercy of God: Psalm 103:8-12**

Psalm 103:8-12 beautifully captures the essence of God's mercy, describing how it is not only abundant but also eternal.

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<sup>39</sup>Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller. *A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms: The Songs of Jesus*. P.253. Viking Publication. 2015.

The psalmist writes, "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will He harbor His anger forever; He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103:8-10). Here, we see that God's mercy is not merely an act of kindness but a deep, abiding quality of His character.

The psalmist emphasizes that God's mercy is extended to us even though we deserve judgment. "For as high as the heavens are above the Earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:11-12). This verse underscores the complete and utter forgiveness that God's mercy provides. It is not a temporary or partial mercy but a total removal of sin, giving us freedom and peace.

In Christ, this mercy reaches its pinnacle. Jesus, through His atoning sacrifice, has removed our transgressions "as far as the east is from the west." His mercy provides the perfect reconciliation between God and humanity, and through Him, we experience forgiveness that is total and unending.

### **Exploring the Recurring Refrain: "His Love Endures Forever"**

One of the most enduring refrains, a declaration of the unchanging, eternal nature of God's mercy and grace, is found in Psalm 136, "His love endures forever". This phrase is repeated over and over, and every verse ends with this declaration.

In Psalm 136, the psalmist recounts God's acts of mercy throughout history, including the creation of the world, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and His protection and provision for His people.

After each act, the psalmist declares, “His love endures forever.” The repetition emphasizes that God’s mercy is not a fleeting emotion, but an enduring characteristic of His nature. His mercy has been shown to His people through all generations and will continue to be extended throughout time.

This refrain highlights the eternal aspect of God’s mercy. His love is not momentary or based on human effort—it endures forever, unchanged by the circumstances of our lives. Through Christ, we have access to an enduring mercy that is not dependent on our performance but on the grace of God. His mercy is a constant, unshakable foundation for our lives.

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever” — Psalm 136:1 (ESV).

### **The Universal Mercy of God: Psalm 145:8-9**

In Psalm 145:8-9, we are reminded of the universal scope of God’s mercy: “The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made.” This passage emphasizes that God’s mercy is not limited to specific people or groups but is extended to all of creation. His grace is available to everyone who calls on His name, regardless of their past or present circumstances. God’s mercy is not selective; it is all-encompassing. It is available to all who are willing to receive it. In the New Covenant, this is made even more clear through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross opened the door for all people—Jew and Gentile alike—to receive God’s mercy and grace. As believers, we are called to extend this same mercy to others, reflecting God’s compassion and love in our relationships.

## **Small Groups Week 2: Grace in Times of Trouble & Forgiveness**

- Introduction: Psalms and Jewish Feasts (Pages 30-32, 45)
- Chapter 3: Grace in Times of Trouble (Psalm 4, 31, 43, 46, 56, 61, 62, 91, 121)
- Chapter 4: The Grace of Forgiveness (Psalm 32, 51, 103, 106, 130, 141)
- Chapter 5: The Grace of God's Mercy (Psalm 41, 86, 103, 136, 145)

Question #1: In times of trouble, we often pray for God's deliverance, yet the Psalms show us that God's grace is not only about removing difficulties but also about sustaining us through them. How do the Psalms illustrate this truth, and what does that reveal about the nature of God's grace?

Question #2: The Weight of Unforgiveness vs. the Freedom of Grace. Psalm 32 describes the burden of unconfessed sin as feeling like "bones wasting away" and strength being "sapped as in the heat of summer."



Why do you think guilt and unforgiveness weigh so heavily on the soul? How does the complete and permanent forgiveness found in Christ bring true freedom from guilt and shame?

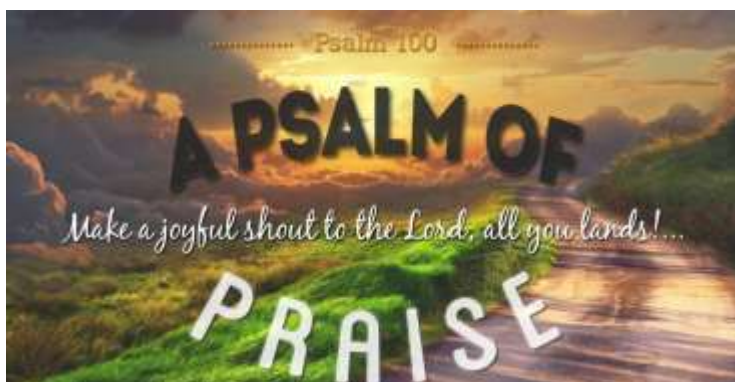
Question #3: Forgiving Others Through the Grace We've Received. In Matthew 18:23-35, Jesus shares a parable about a servant who was forgiven an enormous debt but struggled to extend that same forgiveness to others. How does understanding the depth of God's grace toward us empower us to forgive others? What role does our identity in Christ play in helping us extend forgiveness, even when it feels difficult?

Question #4: Experiencing God's Mercy. Psalm 103:8-12 describes God as compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and rich in mercy. How does understanding that God does not treat us as our sins deserve, impact the way we see Him? How does this truth change the way we approach Him in our times of failure or need?

Question #5: Extending Mercy to Others. Jesus teaches in Matthew 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." In what ways can we reflect God's mercy in our daily lives? How does experiencing God's mercy personally empower us to show mercy to those who have wronged us?

Additional Questions/Comments/Notes:

**Chapter 6:**  
**Grace in Worship and Praise**  
**Psalm 50, Psalm 68, Psalm 81, Psalm 95, Psalm**  
**96, Psalm 98, Psalm 99, Psalm 100, Psalm 113,**  
**Psalm 115, Psalm 117, Psalm 122, Psalm 134,**  
**Psalm 135, Psalm 148, Psalm 150**



## **Chapter 6: Grace in Worship and Praise**

Worship is the natural response of the heart to the grace of God. Throughout the Psalms, we see that the experience of God's grace—His loving kindness, mercy, and favor—compels the Psalmists to offer their praise and devotion. Worship, in its truest form, is not just an outward act, but an inner response to God's overwhelming grace. It is through grace that we are invited into a relationship with God, and it is through grace that our hearts are moved to worship and praise Him.

In this chapter, we will explore how the grace of God invites us to offer our worship, praise, and thanksgiving. We will consider key psalms that showcase the psalmists' heart of gratitude and adoration, and how grace is the central motivation behind their devotion. Grace is not only the reason for worship, but it is the very power that enables us to worship God in spirit and in truth. As we reflect on these psalms, we will see how God's grace fuels our acts of worship, whether in private moments of adoration or corporate gatherings of praise.

### **Grace: The Invitation to Praise and Worship**

In Psalm 50, the psalmist highlights the greatness of God and the need for genuine worship. God speaks to His people, saying, "I do not rebuke you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, which are ever before Me. I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills" (Psalm 50:8-10).

This powerful reminder emphasizes that God does not need our sacrifices for His benefit, but rather, He desires the worship of our hearts. Worship is for our benefit. The true worship that God seeks flows from a heart that has experienced His grace and is filled with gratitude. Psalm 50 reveals that God's invitation to worship is not based on our ability to offer sacrifices, but rather, it is a response to His grace.

Psalm 51:16-17 echoes that God is not after our sacrifices but a transformation of the heart, "For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise."

His love and mercy are the motivators for true worship. We do not come to God because He needs us, but because He has graciously made a way for us to approach Him. Our worship, then, is a natural response to the grace that He has freely given us.

Hillsong wrote a song years ago called "*When I Think About the Lord*," and the lyrics are so powerful: "How He has saved me, how He raised me, how He filled me with the Holy Ghost, how He healed me to the uttermost. It makes me want to shout, Hallelujah, thank you, Jesus, Lord, you're worthy of all the glory, and all the honor, and all the praise..."<sup>40</sup> It's a beautiful song that leads us to reflect on the Lord's goodness—His incredible act of salvation—and it should awaken a sense of joy in us, prompting us to rejoice and lift our voices in praise.

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<sup>40</sup>Hillsong Worship. *When I Think About the Lord*. 1999. *You Are My World*, Hillsong Music Australia.

Psalm 50 introduces a courtroom scene, where the roof is the heavens above, and the Earth is the floor beneath. God Himself stands as the judge, and the case is about to begin. In this divine court drama, Asaph, one of David's choir leaders (from 1 Chronicles 6:39), serves as the witness, delivering God's message to the people.

As we delve into Psalm 50:14-15, we enter a crucial moment in the psalm. God's courtroom is in session, and the charge is being presented. The key question is this: "What should we do when we fall into the worldly mindset that treats our possessions as if they belong solely to us, or worse, that suggests God needs our help—as if He is somehow lacking or incomplete without us?"

The answer from God is clear in verses 14-15: "Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, and call on Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor Me."

There are three things to do when we are tempted to believe that we own our possessions or that God needs them:

- 1. Sacrifice thank offerings to God**
- 2. Fulfill your vows**
- 3. Call on God in the day of trouble**

In return, God promises: "I will deliver you, and you will honor me." These aren't just actions for Old Testament Law followers—they still apply to us today, under the New Covenant. Let's break these down.

### **1) Sacrifice Thank Offerings to God (Praise the Judge)**

The Hebrew word for “sacrifice” here indicates giving praise to God.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, the word used for God in this verse is 'Elohiym, which means “true God,” but also can mean “Judge.”<sup>42</sup>

Why should we praise the Judge? It’s not because God is distant or intimidating, but because He is a Righteous Judge. Through Christ, we have been made righteous, so we don’t fear Him as we would an unjust judge. We have no fear because, as a just Judge, He will not punish us for our sins. Christ has already taken that punishment on our behalf. This verse invites us to recognize that everything we have comes from God—our possessions, our talents, our desire to give—everything belongs to Him. When we give, we’re simply returning what God has graciously entrusted to us. Therefore, our giving and acts of praise are truly thank offerings to God.

## **2) Fulfill Your Vows (Have Faith, Be at Peace)**

Fulfilling vows doesn’t mean paying your dues or making empty promises to God. The Hebrew word for “pay” or “fulfill”, “shalam”, speaks to being at peace, being in a covenant of peace.<sup>43</sup> The corrected mindset is recognizing that everything we have, including our possessions, is a gift from God. When things are lost, stolen, or threatened, we can have peace. Why? Because God gave us everything to begin with, and He can restore all that is needed. Trusting in Him helps us rest in His provision. No matter what we face, our peace comes from knowing that God, the ultimate Provider, is in control.

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<sup>41</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8426/niv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8426/niv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>42</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h430/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h430/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>43</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7999/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7999/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

### **3) Call on God in the Day of Trouble (Depend on and Honor Him)**

When trouble comes, we are to call on God, for He is our deliverer. God is never in trouble Himself, which means that He is always the One ready to save. Psalm 50:15 says, "Call on Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor Me." Calling on God in times of trouble is an act of honor. It shows that we acknowledge He is the source of our salvation and deliverance.

#### **The Promise of Deliverance and Honor**

God promises that when we honor Him by offering thank offerings "praise", fulfilling our vows, being at peace because we are in a covenant relationship with God, and calling on Him in times of trouble, He will deliver us. The word "deliver" (chalats) means to draw out, to rescue, to equip for battle, or to remove us from a toxic situation.<sup>44</sup> Sometimes God pulls us out of harmful environments, and other times He walks with us through them, empowering us to stand strong. But in both cases, the key is calling on Him for help. And as we call on God in our trouble, we honor Him by giving Him more weight in our lives than the challenges we face. We affirm His supremacy and trust in His deliverance.

#### **What Does God Want in the Courtroom?**

So, what is God's goal in this divine courtroom? Verse 15 gives us the answer: "I will deliver you, and you will honor Me." God wants to deliver us from our troubles, which gives Him glory.

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<sup>44</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2502/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2502/kjv/wlc/0-1/)



This promise of deliverance finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who not only secures our rescue but also represents us before the Father. Christ stands as our Advocate, pleading our case before the Father (1 John 2:1). Through Him, we are delivered from judgment and set free. Our salvation is secured by His intercession, and in response, we honor Him with our praise. His ultimate aim is our good and His glory. We get the salvation; He gets the praise.

### **Four Applications from Psalm 50:14-15**

1. **Keep God Great in Your Eyes-** Never let your view of God shrink. He is unstoppable, all-powerful, and infinitely gracious. Keep Him great in your mind, especially when facing big obstacles. The bigger the problem, the greater the opportunity to praise God for who He is and what He will do.
2. **Believe His Promises-** Believe God when He says, "Call on Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you." Trust in His word, His promises, and His faithfulness.
3. **Call on the Lord (Pray)-** Never stop praying, and never lose heart. Call on God in times of need. He will deliver, rescue, and equip you at the right time.
4. **Glorify God and Sing a Song of Salvation-** When God delivers you, don't forget to sing His praises. Keep your hope in God's provision and let your heart overflow with gratitude and song.

As we think about how the Lord has saved us—how He has raised us, filled us with His Holy Spirit, and healed us to the uttermost—let it move our hearts to rejoice and sing. “Hallelujah! Thank you, Jesus! You are worthy of all the glory, all the honor, and all the praise.”<sup>45</sup>

## **Celebrating God’s Mighty Acts: Praise, Provision, and Protection in Psalm 68**

In Psalm 68, David celebrates God’s mighty acts and His role as the protector and provider for His people, David writes, “Sing to God, sing in praise of His name, extol Him who rides on the clouds; rejoice before Him—His name is the Lord” (Psalm 68:4). This psalm reveals how the recognition of God’s powerful grace in our lives should lead us to praise Him with joy. The psalmist calls us to lift our voices in worship because of who God is and what He has done. When we grasp the extent of God’s grace—His saving power, His protection, and His faithfulness—it stirs within us a desire to praise and thank Him.

**Key Verse: “God settles the solitary in families; He leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land” (Psalm 68:6).**

Family is where we live out our faith and encounter the presence of Jesus. If you’re seeking love, grace, and healing, you’ll find it in God’s family.

**This sense of belonging and blessing in God’s family is made possible through Christ’s victorious work. Psalm 68:18 points us to a deeper truth fulfilled in Jesus...**

## **Psalm 68:18 → Ephesians 4:8**

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<sup>45</sup>Maurette Brown Clark. “I Just Want to Praise You”. Atlanta International Records. August 6, 2002.

"When He ascended on high, He led a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men."

- Ephesians 4:8 applies this verse to Christ's Ascension, illustrating how Jesus, having ascended to Heaven, has distributed spiritual gifts to His followers. This is seen as a victorious action, showing Jesus' authority and triumph over all powers.

### **Grace as the Motivation Behind Our Devotion**

Worship in the Psalms is often a response to the specific acts of grace God has shown to His people. Psalm 81 is a perfect example of this. It recounts God's faithfulness to Israel and His desire for their wholehearted worship: "Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob! Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre" (Psalm 81:1-2). In this psalm, the psalmist emphasizes that God's grace—His deliverance and provision—is the reason for our devotion. We do not worship out of obligation or duty, but because of the joy and gratitude that overflow from our hearts as we remember all that God has done for us.

### **A Call to Worship: Reverence, Thanksgiving, and the Foundation of God's Grace in Psalm 95**

In Psalm 95, we see a call to worship with a heart of reverence and thanksgiving: "Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song" (Psalm 95:1-2).

This psalm highlights how our worship is not a performance or a ritual, but a heartfelt response to God's grace. As we recognize Him as the "Rock of our salvation," our hearts naturally overflow with praise. The grace of God, which saves and sustains us, is the foundation of our worship.

### **Psalm 95:7-11 → Hebrews 3:7-11, 4:3-7**

"Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."

- Hebrews warns believers against unbelief, using Israel's past rebellion as an example.

### **Psalm 96: A Call to Universal Praise – God's Grace for All**

One of the recurring themes in the Psalms is that praise is not just for a select few, but for all creation. Psalm 96 calls the entire world to worship God: "Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise His name; proclaim His salvation day after day" (Psalm 96:1-2). This invitation to worship is universal. It is not only for the people of Israel but for all people, all nations, and all creation. The grace of God, in its fullness, is extended to all. Therefore, all creation is invited to participate in worship. In Luke 19:40, Jesus says, "I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." This echoes the idea that all creation is designed to worship and honor God. The rocks, trees, mountains, and oceans—all of nature—declare His glory, often without words but through their very existence. Psalm 96 and Psalm 19 remind us that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the Earth is filled with His praise.

The natural world, in its beauty and order, continually sings God's praises, offering a silent but powerful testimony to His greatness.

The psalmist urges us to proclaim God's salvation day after day because His grace is not a one-time act but a continual outpouring. God's mercy and love are extended to all people, and our worship should reflect this inclusivity. Psalm 98 echoes this same theme, saying, "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music" (Psalm 98:4). Just as God's grace reaches beyond Israel to all nations, so too should our worship reflect this grace. The psalmist encourages us to sing and shout for joy because God's grace is available to all. We are given the imagery of nature praising God (Psalm 98:7-9), see also (Psalm 96:11-12), could it be more than poetry? Absolutely! Once we are given our glorified new bodies and reign with Jesus in the Millennial Kingdom, this will be our new experience!

### **Grace and the Beauty of God's Holiness**

As we worship God in spirit and truth, we are also drawn into awe and reverence for His holiness. In Psalm 99, the psalmist exalts the holiness of God: "The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble; He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the Earth shake. Great is the Lord in Zion; He is exalted over all the nations" (Psalm 99:1-2). This psalm calls us to worship with a sense of awe, recognizing God's majesty and holiness. The grace of God, in calling us into His presence, is all the more remarkable when we remember His perfect holiness. We come before God not because we deserve it, but because His grace has made a way for us to approach His throne.

"Let them praise Your great and awesome name—He is holy" (Psalm 99:3). Holiness is a term often misunderstood and distorted by religious language. We've been taught that holiness means simply avoiding sin or being set apart, but that doesn't capture the true essence of what holiness is.

Defining holiness as the ability to avoid sin or as merely being set apart is like defining wealth as the absence of poverty—we haven't truly defined what wealth is in its fullness. Similarly, this narrow understanding doesn't grasp the richness of God's holiness.

So, what does holiness mean?

Holiness means wholeness. To say "God is holy" is to speak of the wholeness, fullness, beauty, and abundant life that overflows within the Trinity. God lacks nothing. He is unbroken, undamaged, unfallen—completely complete and entire within Himself. He is the indivisible One, wholly self-sufficient, and the picture of perfection.

In Isaiah 6:3, when the angels declare, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole Earth is full of His glory," they are not simply admiring God's ability to follow rules or avoid sin; they are marveling at the transcendent totality of His perfection.

Holiness is not just one aspect of God's character; it encompasses all that He is in glorious unity. It is the adjective that precedes all of His other attributes. Therefore, the love of God is a holy love, and His

righteousness is a holy righteousness. Holiness is the essence from which all of God's attributes flow.<sup>46</sup>

### **The Call to Worship: Celebrating God's Grace, Sovereignty, and Faithfulness in Psalms 100, 113, 115, 117, 122, 134, and 135**

In Psalm 100, the call to worship is both joyful and reverent: "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs" (Psalm 100:1-2). This psalm invites us to come before God with thanksgiving, recognizing that He is good, His love endures forever, and His faithfulness continues through all generations (Psalm 100:5). Access to God in prayer through Jesus' blood (Hebrews 9:5, 11-14, 10:19-25) is one of the greatest gift God has given us.

As we reflect on God's grace—His goodness and faithfulness—we are moved to offer our worship not just as a duty, but as an outpouring of gratitude for His merciful love. "There is nothing more evangelistic, nothing that will win the world more than glorious worship" (Psalm 100, 105:1-2).<sup>47</sup>

Psalm 113 begins with a powerful call to praise the Lord for His exalted nature, highlighting that God is far above all creation yet chooses to care for the humble and lowly. The psalm celebrates God's grace in lifting the poor and needy, showing that He is not distant or detached but actively involved in the lives of His people. The call to praise extends from the heavens to the Earth, recognizing God's sovereignty and grace that encompasses all creation.

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<sup>46</sup>Paul Ellis. What is Holiness? (It is Better Than You Think!). Escape to Reality Blog. May 23, 2012. [www.escapetoreality.org/2012/05/23/what-is-holiness/](http://www.escapetoreality.org/2012/05/23/what-is-holiness/)

<sup>47</sup>Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller. A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms: The Songs of Jesus. P.142. Viking Publication. 2015.

**Key Verse:** “The Lord is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens” — Psalm 113:4 (ESV).

This psalm is a hymn of praise that magnifies God’s greatness, His compassion for the lowly, and His sovereignty over all things. The psalmist invites praise from every corner of the Earth, acknowledging that while God is enthroned above all nations, He tenderly lifts the poor and needy. It emphasizes the holiness and majesty of God, who, despite His exalted position, remains deeply compassionate toward the humble and broken-hearted.

Psalm 115 contrasts the living God with idols, which are powerless and empty. While people may put their trust in idols made of silver and gold, God is the Creator, and His grace is shown through His ability to save and bless His people. The psalmist encourages the people of Israel to trust in God, for He is their help and shield (v.9-11). It concludes by proclaiming that God will bless His people, further highlighting His grace in guiding, providing, and protecting them.

**Key Verse:** “Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory, for the sake of Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness” — Psalm 115:1 (ESV)!

Psalm 115 is a declaration of trust in God alone, contrasting the vanity of idols with the greatness of the Lord. The psalmist emphasizes that only God is worthy of glory and praise, rejecting the worship of lifeless idols that cannot help or save. The psalm reminds the people of Israel to trust in God, who is faithful and sovereign over all.



This psalm highlights God's grace in deserving all glory and honor, pointing to His steadfast love and faithfulness as the ultimate foundation for the believer's hope and trust.

Psalm 117 is the shortest psalm in the book but with a universal invitation to praise God. It calls on all nations and peoples to join in worship, recognizing God's steadfast love and faithfulness. Despite its brevity, it reveals the expansive nature of God's grace, as His love and mercy extend beyond Israel to all people. It emphasizes that God's grace is available to everyone, regardless of nationality, highlighting the global scope of His salvation.

**Key Verse:** "Praise the Lord, all you nations; extol Him, all you peoples" — Psalm 117:1 (ESV).

Psalm 122: A song of ascents, where the psalmist expresses joy and longing for the peace and unity of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is portrayed as a city where God's people gather to worship, and the psalmist celebrates the grace of fellowship and peace found in the city. The psalm acknowledges that true peace comes from God, and the worshipers come together in harmony to honor Him. It emphasizes the grace of community and the blessings that come with being part of God's people in His holy city. "What Jerusalem was to the ancient Jews, the Church is to believers. When we come to faith in Christ, we become citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22–24, Philippians 3:20).<sup>48</sup>

**Key Verse:** "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'" — Psalm 122:1 (ESV)!

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<sup>48</sup>Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller. A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms: The Songs of Jesus. P.328. Viking Publication. 2015.

David made Jerusalem his capital and brought the Ark of the Covenant there (2 Samuel 5-6). Many psalms celebrate Zion and the presence of God in His holy city (e.g., Psalm 24, Psalm 46, Psalm 122).

Psalm 134: A short but powerful psalm of praise for the Temple workers. It is an encouragement to those who serve in God's house to bless the Lord as an act of worship. This psalm shows how worship is not only about personal praise but also about serving God in the community of believers. It emphasizes the grace of service, where those who serve the Lord are invited to bless Him continually, reflecting God's ongoing grace in their lives.

**Key Verse:** "Lift up your hands to the holy place and bless the Lord" — Psalm 134:2 (ESV).

Psalm 135 is a call to praise God for His sovereignty over all the Earth, His mighty deeds, and His faithfulness to His people. It recalls God's redemptive acts, such as His deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and invites worship because of His justice and mercy. The psalmist stresses that God alone is worthy of worship and contrasts the worthless idols of the nations with the living God. It emphasizes the grace of God's sovereignty, where His control over all things ensures that He blesses His people and protects them from evil.

Psalm 135 serves as a powerful reminder of the call to praise God for His greatness, sovereignty, and unshakable faithfulness. This psalm invites God's people to offer worship and gratitude for His mighty works, His justice, and His steadfast love. It underscores that God alone is worthy of worship, standing in stark contrast to the powerless idols created by man.

The psalm emphasizes that praise is an appropriate response to God's grace, especially in light of His covenant with Israel, His deliverance, and His ongoing care. Worship becomes an act of recognizing and responding to God's grace in every area of life.

**Key Verse:** "For the Lord has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel as his own possession" — Psalm 135:4 (ESV).

This verse highlights God's grace in choosing Israel as His people and sets the tone for understanding that worship is a response to God's unmerited favor. It challenges believers to offer their hearts in praise for God's active involvement in their lives, inviting all to join in the joy of recognizing His divine presence. This psalm calls the reader to acknowledge that true worship flows from recognizing God's grace and responding with heartfelt praise and adoration.

### **The Praise of All Creation: Psalms 148 and 150**

The Psalms emphasize that worship is not limited to human beings alone. In Psalm 148, all of creation is called to praise God: "Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the heights above... Let them praise the name of the Lord, for at His command they were created" (Psalm 148:1,5). This psalm depicts how everything in creation—from the angels to the sun and moon, from the mountains to the animals—praises God. The grace of God extends to all of creation, and in response, all of creation worships its Creator.

**Key Verse:** "Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted; His majesty is above Earth and Heaven" — Psalm 148:13 (ESV).

Psalm 148 is a grand call for all of creation to praise the Lord. From the heavens to the Earth, the psalmist calls on every part of the universe—sun, moon, stars, animals, and humans—to join in worshiping God. The psalm emphasizes the greatness of God’s name and His exalted majesty above all creation.

In Psalm 150, the psalmist calls for a joyful, exuberant celebration of God’s greatness: “Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise Him with the harp and lyre, praise Him with timbrel and dancing, praise Him with the strings and pipe” (Psalm 150:3-4). This psalm paints a picture of worship that is full of energy, joy, and thanksgiving. It is the response of a heart that recognizes the greatness of God and the overwhelming grace He has shown.

**Key Verse:** “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord” — Psalm 150:6 (ESV)!

Psalm 150 is a jubilant call to praise God with every possible form of musical expression. The psalm encourages worship with instruments, dance, and vocal praise, inviting everything that has breath to join in exalting the Lord. It is a celebration of God’s greatness and the joy of worship.

This psalm highlights God’s grace in inviting all creation, especially His people, to worship Him, reminding believers of the privilege and joy of praising God in every moment of life.

The New Heavens and the New Earth will be a place of perfect harmony, where everyone and everything fully glorifies God and experiences the joy of His presence forever. Therefore, let us praise Him everywhere (Psalm 150:1), for all He has done (Psalm 150:2), and in every possible way (Psalm 150:3-5). As the final

call of the Psalter declares: "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6)!

### **Grace as the Heart of Worship**

The grace of God is the foundation and motivation for all worship and praise. In the Psalms, we see that worship is not a mere ritual or duty; it is the outpouring of a heart that has been touched by God's grace. Whether we are celebrating God's salvation, rejoicing in His mercy, or expressing our awe at His holiness, worship flows from the grace that He has freely given us.

As New Covenant believers, we have been given the ultimate gift of grace through Jesus Christ. He is the perfect sacrifice that makes our worship possible, and it is through Him that we have access to God's presence. Our worship, then, is not just a response to God's actions but a response to His very nature—a nature full of grace, mercy, and love.

Grace invites us to worship. It is the motivation behind our devotion and the power that enables us to offer our praise. As we reflect on God's grace in the Psalms, let us respond with hearts full of gratitude, singing, and shouting for joy, knowing that our worship is an expression of the boundless grace of God.

**Chapter 7:**  
**The Grace of God's Provision**  
**Psalm 23, Psalm 65, Psalm 104, Psalm 127,**  
**Psalm 128**



*The LORD is my shepherd,  
I shall not be in want.  
- Psalm 23:1 -*

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## **Chapter 7: The Grace of God's Provision**

There is a unique comfort and peace that comes when we acknowledge that God is our Provider. The Psalms, rich with expressions of gratitude, continually point us to God's abundant grace in providing for His people. From the food we eat to the shelter we have, from the protection we experience in times of danger to the blessings of abundance, God's provision is a constant theme throughout the Psalms. The very air we breathe, each breath a gift of life, is also a testament to His unfailing care and provision. We are invited not only to receive His provision but also to partake in the grandeur of His creation, marveling at the beauty of the world around us as a reflection of His generous heart. The psalmists frequently express gratitude for God's generosity, seeing every provision, great and small, as a gift of His grace.

In this chapter, we will explore how God's grace is evident in His provision for our daily needs, His protection, and the abundant blessings He bestows upon His people. We will delve into key psalms that reveal the psalmists' deep sense of thankfulness for God's provision, as well as their understanding that God's grace is not just about material needs but encompasses His care for every area of life.

### **Grace in God's Provision of Daily Needs**

Psalms 23, perhaps one of the most beloved Psalms, begins with the powerful declaration, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).

Here, David, the psalmist, conveys the deep trust he has in God as his Shepherd—the One who provides everything he needs. In this psalm, the provision of God is both physical and spiritual. He makes David lie down in green pastures, leads him beside still waters, and restores his soul. These provisions are a reflection of God's grace: they are not earned or deserved, but given out of His loving kindness and care.

David's use of the metaphor of a shepherd emphasizes God's active role in caring for His people, not just as a passive observer but as one who is deeply involved in every aspect of life. The shepherd's care is consistent, vigilant, and tender, ensuring that His sheep are nourished, protected, and guided. In the New Covenant, we see this provision fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who calls Himself the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). Jesus, as our Shepherd, provides not only for our physical needs but also for our souls, offering living water and the bread of life.

God's provision in Psalm 23 speaks to the very essence of grace: that God provides for us out of His goodness, without us needing to earn it. This grace is seen in the abundance of God's provision, from the necessities of life to the comfort and peace He grants in times of difficulty.

### **Grace in the Provision of Abundant Blessings**

Psalm 65 is another psalm that highlights the lavish grace of God in His provision. The psalmist exclaims, "You care for the land and water it; You enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so You have ordained it" (Psalm 65:9).



In this psalm, the imagery of fertile fields, flowing rivers, and abundant harvests is used to convey God's generous provision. The land is not only sustained but enriched by God's care, resulting in abundance.

The provision of food and water is a sign of God's grace to His people. The psalmist recognizes that it is God who causes the Earth to yield its fruit and brings the rain that nourishes the crops. This grace is not given begrudgingly, but abundantly, reflecting God's desire to bless His people with all that they need. The psalmist's response to God's abundant provision is one of awe and worship, for such blessings are evidence of God's goodness and generosity.

In the New Covenant, we experience God's provision not only in the physical realm but also in the spiritual. Jesus teaches that God knows our every need and will provide for us—"But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33). God's provision, both in material blessings and spiritual abundance, flows from His grace.

### **Grace in Protection and Provision**

In Psalm 104, the psalmist celebrates God as the Creator who has provided for every living creature: "The Lord is the One who made the Earth firm upon its foundations, and it will never move. He waters the mountains from His chambers; the Earth is satisfied by the fruit of His work" (Psalm 104:5-13). The entire psalm is a hymn of praise to God for His provision of the Earth's resources and His constant care for creation. We discover that God set in motion the principles of physics, biology, chemistry, and mathematics.

God's provision is not just about physical needs like food and water; it also encompasses protection and sustenance. The psalmist emphasizes that God's hand sustains all creation, and every living thing depends on God's grace to survive. The imagery of God covering the Earth with water and filling the Earth with food highlights the extent of God's provision, which is vast and unending. God's grace sustains not just human life but all of creation, providing for every need with a generous hand. God provides all the good things we have (James 1:17) and we are called to be good stewards/caretakers of all that He has entrusted to us (Genesis 2:15, 1 Peter 4:10). Do you know that there are over 30,000 known species of fish in the ocean<sup>49</sup>, each uniquely designed by God. He is the Master Creator, and we are invited to explore the depths of His creation and sing His praises for the wonders He has made.

In the New Covenant, this provision of God's protection is exemplified in Christ, who offers the ultimate protection through His sacrifice. In Jesus, we are given not only spiritual protection from sin and death but also the peace of knowing that our Father provides for us in every circumstance.

### **Grace in the Blessings of Family and Home**

Psalm 127 speaks to God's provision in the realm of family life: "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

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<sup>49</sup>How Many Different Species of Ocean Fish Exist? Enviroliteracy Team. October 5, 2024. [www.enviroliteracy.org/how-many-different-species-of-ocean-fish-exist/](http://www.enviroliteracy.org/how-many-different-species-of-ocean-fish-exist/)

We learn that all of the wonderful blessings, the “good gifts” come to us by way of God’s grace (James 1:17). This psalm is a reflection on the fact that all our efforts—whether in building a home, raising a family, or securing our future—are ultimately dependent on God’s grace. The psalmist acknowledges that without God’s blessing and provision, our efforts are futile.

The psalm goes on to emphasize the blessings of children, saying, “Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from Him” (Psalm 127:3). Here, the psalmist expresses gratitude for the gift of family, understanding that children are not simply the result of human effort, but a provision from God. The grace of God is evident in the family relationships He establishes and the blessings He provides through them.

One of the most common questions I get asked is, “How can I rest when everything in my life feels chaotic?” This question often represents the greatest stumbling block to receiving rest. The answer is simple: You can rest because you’ve received His love for you (Psalm 127:2).

Did you know that Psalm 127 is the only psalm ascribed to Solomon? It’s remarkable because this psalm speaks about the Lord building the house—a direct reference to Solomon’s completion of the Temple. David desired to build the Temple for the Lord, but God chose Solomon to carry out this monumental task. In verse 2, when it says that God grants sleep to those He loves, we see a beautiful image of God giving Solomon rest, even as he undertook this massive responsibility.

It's as if God granted Solomon wisdom and peace, even in Solomon's sleep, as he rested in God's love. God's wisdom often comes in our moments of rest, not in our striving.

What is it that keeps you up at night? Is it the endless to-do list or the stress of what's happening in your life or the world around you? Jesus Himself said, "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?" (Luke 12:25-26). Worrying doesn't help—it makes things worse.

Rest isn't about inactivity; it's about finding peace in God, which then leads to purposeful, Spirit-directed activity. When we recognize God's provision, we can rest in Him, trusting that He will supply what we need for everything He has called us to. "Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain." If you're toiling and striving without trusting Him, it's all in vain.

The key question in Psalm 127:1-2 is this: Who are the ones God loves? Solomon says that God grants sleep to His beloved. The answer is simple: In Christ, you and I are His beloved (Ephesians 1:6, 2 Thessalonians 2:13). When you rest in His love, He works for you.

Let God be the one who builds your career, watches over your financial investments, and guards your health, your marriage, and your children. Don't worry or stay up late as if you are the source of everything that happens. God is the one in control. And He says to you, "My beloved child, cast your cares on Me and go to sleep." As you rest, know that He is working on your behalf.

To experience success as a believer, you must depend on Jesus alone. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Success is found in Jesus. When you recognize His love and rest in it, you'll find peace and clarity, no matter the circumstances.

Nighttime can be particularly tough when overwhelming thoughts flood our minds. Questions like, "How will I manage everything tomorrow?" But just like Daniel, who was thrown into the lion's den at night, we can trust God in the darkest of times. What did Daniel do when faced with an impossible situation? He believed in God (Daniel 6:23), and the lions couldn't harm him. The truth is, you may find yourself in difficult situations—even when you've done everything right—but the key is believing that God will carry you through.

Solomon was given wisdom while he slept (1 Kings 3:5-15)—God speaks to us even in our moments of rest. The Bible encourages us to meditate on God's Word, even at night. "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Joshua 1:8). When the enemy tries to keep you awake, use that time to meditate on God's Word and trust that He will lead you to success.

Solomon's request for wisdom shows that sometimes, what we need most is not more money or answers but God's wisdom.

When we receive wisdom, especially in our times of rest, it's a reflection of God's deep love for us. Solomon could rest because he knew he was loved by God, and so can you.

Psalm 127:2, which speaks about toiling for food, is a picture of worry. "To eat the bread of sorrows" is to live in constant anxiety. Waking up early or staying up late due to worry won't lead to fulfillment. God often changes our souls (mind and emotions)<sup>50</sup> before He changes our circumstances. "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 1:2). As your soul prospers, everything else follows.

Solomon knew he was God's beloved, and this gave him the peace to rest, even amid massive projects and responsibilities. And just like Solomon, when you rest in the knowledge of God's love for you, He provides more than just physical rest—He gives you peace, wisdom, and the ability to thrive.

When you sleep, God is working on your behalf. His favor is upon you because you are in Christ. So, be established in His love and rest in the knowledge that He is working for you, even while you sleep.

### **The Fruit of Reverence: Provision, Worship, and the Grace-Filled Life**

In Psalm 128, we see another celebration of God's provision for the family: "Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in obedience to Him. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours" (Psalm 128:1-2).

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<sup>50</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5590/kjv/tr/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5590/kjv/tr/0-1/)

The psalmist expresses gratitude for the fruit of labor, family life, and the security that comes through God's blessings. Here, grace is evident in both the physical provision of food and the relational provision of a loving family. God's grace is seen in the joy and contentment that come when we walk in His ways.

But what does it mean to "fear the Lord"? This phrase, which appears often in the Old Testament, might sound strange to modern ears. Jesus gives us insight into its meaning during His confrontation with Satan in the wilderness.

In Matthew 4:10, Jesus said, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only'" (Matthew 4:10).

Unless you're studying the verse Jesus quoted from the Old Testament, you might not notice the difference. Jesus was quoting Scripture but also making a change under the coming New Covenant. The verse He references is from Deuteronomy 6:13, which says, "Fear the LORD your God, serve Him only" (Deuteronomy 6:13a). Yet, what Jesus says is: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only" (Matthew 4:10).

So, "Worship the Lord your God" compared to "Fear the Lord your God"—did Jesus misquote Deuteronomy 6:13 when He said "it is written"? No, Jesus is revealing something important to us. When we worship the Lord, we are truly "fearing the Lord." And by fear, He doesn't mean being afraid; it's a reverence and veneration toward God.

“Fearing the Lord” (yir’âh) - is to revere God<sup>51</sup>, to be filled with joyful awe of His magnificence.

### **Living in Gratitude for God’s Provision**

Throughout the Psalms, we see a recurring theme: God’s provision is an expression of His abundant and faithful grace. The psalmists respond with heartfelt gratitude, recognizing that every blessing—from food and shelter to family, security, and peace—is a gift from God.

As New Covenant believers, we experience God’s ultimate provision through Jesus Christ. In Him, we have eternal life, spiritual abundance, and the assurance that God will meet our needs. Just as He provided for the Israelites in the wilderness, He continues to provide for us on our journey of faith.

God’s provision points us to a deeper truth: all we have is a gift from His hand. Whether through quiet restoration, the joy of family, or the fruit of our labor, His grace is evident in every area of life. The appropriate response is worship, gratitude, and trust in His ongoing care.

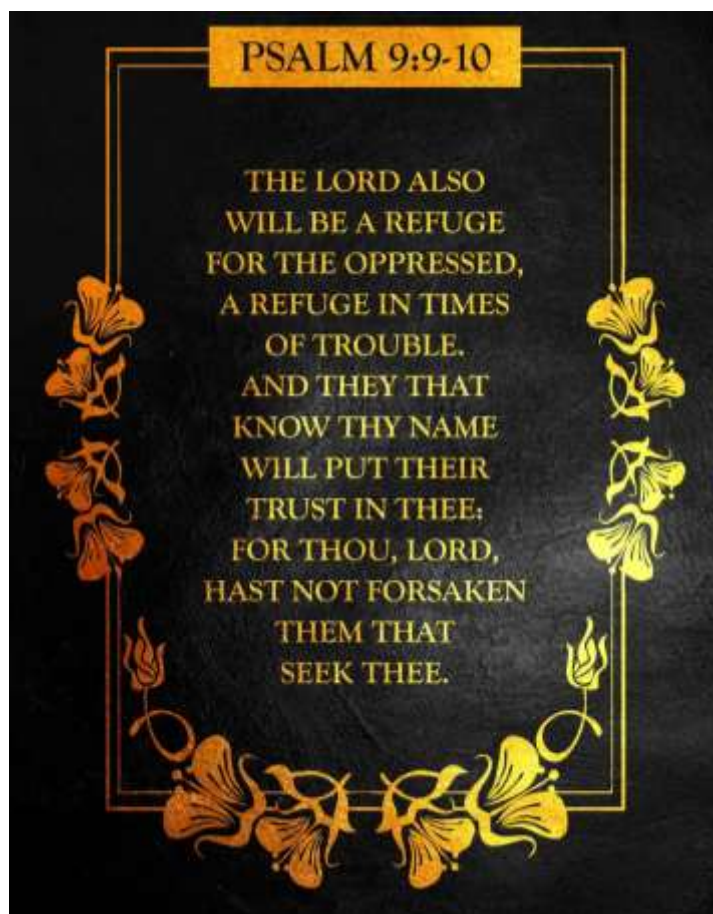
As we reflect on His goodness, we are called to live with hearts full of thanksgiving, acknowledging God’s provision in every season and walking forward in the confidence that His grace will never fail.

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<sup>51</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3374/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3374/kjv/wlc/0-1/)



**Chapter 8:**  
**Grace for the Oppressed and the Marginalized**  
**Psalm 9, Psalm 10, Psalm 12, Psalm 34, Psalm**  
**123, Psalm 146**



## **Chapter 8: Grace for the Oppressed and the Marginalized**

God's grace is particularly evident in His care for those who are oppressed, forgotten, and marginalized in society. Throughout the Psalms, we find a consistent theme: God hears the cries of the afflicted, stands up for the poor, and delivers those who are suffering from injustice. The psalmists frequently bring their laments and pleas before God, calling on Him to intervene on behalf of the oppressed. These psalms are filled with a powerful reminder that God's grace is not only for the righteous or the powerful but for those who are most vulnerable and in need of His justice. This truth is echoed in Acts 10:34-35, where Peter declares that God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation, anyone who reveres Him and does what is right is accepted by Him. God's impartiality assures us that His grace reaches beyond social status, ethnicity, or background, extending His love and acceptance to all who seek Him, especially those whom the world has overlooked.

In this chapter, we will explore the grace God extends to the oppressed and marginalized, reflecting on key psalms that highlight His care for the poor and downtrodden. We will see how God's justice is intricately woven into His grace and how He acts on behalf of those who are mistreated or overlooked by society. As we reflect on these psalms, we will discover the profound connection between God's grace and His desire to bring justice to the oppressed.

### **Jesus and the Marginalized: A Reflection of God's Grace and Justice**

Throughout His ministry, Jesus consistently reached out to those whom society often ignored or rejected. His actions and teachings provide a powerful example of God's grace toward the marginalized, echoing the themes found in the Psalms.

**1. Jesus Heals a Leper (Matthew 8:1-3):**

Lepers were considered unclean and isolated from society. Yet, when a leper approached Jesus, asking to be healed, Jesus didn't turn him away. He touched him—an act that was both compassionate and culturally shocking. Jesus' grace transcended social boundaries, healing not just the body but offering restoration to the leper's place in society.

- "Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' He said. 'Be clean!' Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy" (Matthew 8:3).

**2. The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:1-11):**

In a society where women caught in adultery were often condemned to be stoned to death, as prescribed in the Law of Moses (see Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22-24), this woman faced certain judgment. Yet, instead of joining the crowd in condemnation, Jesus extended grace and compassion. He challenged the accusers, saying, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone," and one by one, they walked away. In doing so, Jesus not only upheld justice but also revealed the heart of God, one that extends mercy in the face of judgment and offers hope instead of humiliation. He protected her dignity and pointed her toward a new way of life, saying, "Go, and sin no more." His words

lifted her out of condemnation, offering forgiveness and a second chance.

- “Then neither do I condemn you... Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:11).

3. **Jesus and Zacchaeus, the Tax Collector (Luke 19:1-10):** Tax collectors were despised and seen as traitors who collaborated with the Roman authorities. But Jesus intentionally sought out Zacchaeus, a man considered a corrupt outcast. By dining with him, Jesus demonstrated the inclusiveness of God’s grace, offering salvation to even the most marginalized.

- “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today” (Luke 19:5).

4. **Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52):** In a society where physical ailments were often linked to sin, and the disabled were pushed to the margins, Bartimaeus—a blind beggar—cried out to Jesus as He passed by. The name given to this blind beggar, “Bartimaeus,” carries layered significance. While it identifies him as the “son of Timaeus,” some scholars suggest an allegorical interpretation rooted in the linguistic elements of the name—BAR meaning “son of” and “Tim’ai” possibly linked to a term meaning “unclean.” In this view, Bartimaeus represents more than just physical blindness; he symbolizes spiritual blindness and uncleanness, often associated with Gentiles in Jewish thought. His healing, then, becomes a

powerful sign of Jesus' grace extending to those deemed spiritually distant or unworthy.<sup>52</sup>

**The Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4:1-26):** In first-century Jewish society, Samaritans were viewed with deep prejudice and hostility, and women were often devalued, especially those with a morally questionable past. The Samaritan woman Jesus encountered at the well embodied multiple layers of marginalization—she was a Samaritan, a woman, and someone living in relational brokenness. Yet Jesus intentionally spoke with her, breaking multiple cultural taboos. He engaged her with respect, revealed her deepest need, and offered her the living water of eternal life. Instead of shaming her, Jesus complimented her, saying, “You have truly said...” (John 4:17), and offered her a new sense of purpose. He entrusted her with the revelation of His true identity as the Messiah, empowering her to become a witness. With this newfound purpose, she left her water jar behind and immediately went to share her encounter with Jesus. Her testimony sparked curiosity in her community, and many came to see Jesus for themselves. As she boldly shared her story of transformation, her words became a powerful invitation to others. This encounter reveals God's grace, breaking through ethnic, gender, and moral boundaries to restore and empower.

o “Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah’” (John 4:28-29)?

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<sup>52</sup>Dr. Matthew Webster. *Following the Footsteps of Jesus: An Epic Expedition through the Holy Land*. Kindle Direct Publishing. 2024. Page 90.

Just as God's grace is poured out on the marginalized in the Psalms, Jesus actively sought those who were overlooked, demonstrating that His Kingdom is for all, especially those who society pushes aside. Through these examples, we can see that Jesus not only proclaimed the good news to the marginalized but actively engaged with them, offering healing, forgiveness, and restoration.

## **Psalm 9 – Grace in God's Justice**

Psalm 9 is a song of praise for God's righteousness and justice. David celebrates how God defends the oppressed, judges the wicked, and remains a refuge for those in need. This psalm reminds us that grace is not just about personal blessings—it is about God's unwavering commitment to uphold justice and protect His people. Even when injustice seems to prevail, God's grace assures us that He reigns forever and will make all things right in His perfect timing.

"I will give thanks to You, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonderful deeds" (Psalm 9:1). Acknowledge and share God's daily wonders, and you'll discover a melody of joyful gratitude echoing throughout your life.

The interesting thing about Psalm 9 is that it quickly pivots from thanksgiving to crying out to God for help in suffering. This is a great reflection of life and how things can change quickly for all of us. In Psalm 9, the psalmist cries out for justice on behalf of the oppressed: "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know Your name trust in You, for You, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek You" (Psalm 9:9-10). Here, the psalmist affirms that God is a refuge for those who are oppressed—those who are being wronged, abused, or

mistreated by the powerful. This psalm acknowledges that God's justice will ultimately prevail, and those who suffer injustice can take refuge in Him.

The psalmist calls on God to rise and judge the nations, bringing justice to those who have been wronged: "Arise, Lord, do not let mortals triumph; let the nations be judged in Your presence" (Psalm 9:19). This cry for justice demonstrates the intersection of grace and justice—God's grace toward the oppressed is seen in His commitment to bring justice to their plight. For those who have been marginalized, God's grace is not only comfort but also the assurance that He will act on their behalf and bring about justice.

This theme of justice for the oppressed is echoed throughout the Psalms, reminding us that God sees the suffering of His people and will not allow evil to prevail indefinitely.

### **Psalm 10: God's Care for the Poor and Needy**

Psalm 10 wrestles with a difficult question: "Why does God seem distant when the wicked prosper?" The psalmist laments the oppression of the helpless but ultimately affirms that God sees, hears, and acts on behalf of the afflicted. God's grace is revealed in His deep concern for the vulnerable and His promise to bring justice. This psalm encourages us to trust that God's grace is active, even when we do not yet see His hand at work.

In Psalm 10, the psalmist addresses the arrogance of the wicked and the suffering of the poor: "Why, Lord, do You stand far off? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble? The wicked man... crushes the poor" (Psalm 10:1-2).

Here, the psalmist voices the deep frustration and confusion of the oppressed, feeling as though God is distant or silent in their suffering. Yet, despite the apparent absence of God, the psalmist ultimately trusts that God sees and will act: "You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; You encourage them, and You listen to their cry" (Psalm 10:17).

This psalm provides an example of how God's grace works through His commitment to justice and His attention to the plight of the poor and needy. Even in moments of doubt and despair, the psalmist clings to the assurance that God hears the cries of the afflicted and will deliver them. The grace of God is evident in His willingness to listen, to encourage, and to act on behalf of those who have been overlooked or oppressed.

## **Psalm 12 – Grace in a Corrupt World**

In a world filled with lies, deception, and oppression, Psalm 12 highlights the contrast between human corruption and God's unchanging truth. The psalmist cries out for deliverance, and God responds with the assurance that He will guard His people forever. His grace is seen in the power of His pure and flawless words, which stand as a refuge in falsehood and injustice.

Psalm 12:5 highlights God's response to the oppression of the marginalized: "Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan, I will now arise," says the Lord. I will protect them from those who malign them" (Psalm 12:5). This verse is a powerful reminder that God will not sit idly by while the poor are exploited or mistreated. In His grace, He promises to arise and protect them from those who seek to harm them.



This verse also underscores the deep connection between God's grace and His justice. His grace is not passive or merely comforting; it is active and transformative. When God acts on behalf of the oppressed, He does so out of His love for justice and His desire to see the wrongs of the world made right. God's grace is a shield for the vulnerable, and His justice is the means through which He brings about healing and restoration.

In the New Covenant, this promise is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, who came to bring justice and deliverance to the oppressed. Jesus' ministry, marked by compassion for the poor, the marginalized, and the outcast, shows us that God's grace is deeply intertwined with His desire to restore justice and lift the downtrodden.

### **Psalm 34 – Grace That Delivers**

Psalm 34 is a testimony of God's goodness and faithfulness. David invites us to "taste and see that the Lord is good" and assures us that those who take refuge in Him will never be forsaken. God's grace is evident in His nearness to the brokenhearted, His provision for those who seek Him, and His ultimate deliverance from trouble. This psalm calls us to trust in God's grace, knowing He surrounds and saves those who fear/revere Him.

Psalm 34:6 beautifully captures God's response to those who are in distress: "This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; He saved him out of all his troubles."

This verse is an affirmation that God hears the cries of the marginalized and oppressed. The “poor man” represents not just financial poverty, but also the emotional, social, and spiritual poverty that comes with being mistreated and overlooked by society. The psalmist’s declaration that God “heard him” reminds us that God’s grace is extended to all who are in need, especially those who are in positions of powerlessness.

In the context of oppression and marginalization, this verse offers a message of hope: God sees, hears, and responds to the cries of the oppressed. His grace is not only for those who are well off, but for those who have been cast aside, forgotten, or mistreated. His ear is attentive to their pain, and His heart is moved by their suffering.

### **Psalm 123 – Grace in the Waiting**

A psalm of humble dependence, Psalm 123 expresses a longing for God’s mercy amid suffering and contempt. The psalmist lifts his eyes to the Lord, much like a servant looking to a master for provision. This psalm teaches us that grace sustains us as we wait on God, trusting in His timing and His mercy even when we feel overwhelmed by the scorn of the world.

In Psalm 123, the psalmist offers a poignant prayer for deliverance, saying, “I lift up my eyes to You, to You who sit enthroned in Heaven. As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a female slave look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till He shows us His mercy” (Psalm 123:1-2).

This psalm speaks to the longing for God's mercy and grace in times of oppression. The psalmist uses the image of servants looking to their masters for mercy, expressing the vulnerability of those who are dependent on God's grace for deliverance.

This cry is one of hope and trust. The oppressed wait for God's mercy, knowing that only He can provide the relief they need. This psalm demonstrates that God's grace is always available to those who seek Him, even when their situation seems dire. In their waiting, they trust that God's justice will prevail and that He will act on their behalf.

In Christ, this truth is even more powerful. Where the psalmists once waited for God's justice, we now live in the assurance that God has already acted on our behalf through Christ's sacrifice. His justice has been fulfilled, and His mercy is freely given to all who seek Him. In Christ, our hope is no longer just in what God will do, but in what He has already done. The waiting is transformed into a confident trust that His grace, justice, and mercy are already at work in our lives.

### **Psalm 146 – Grace from the Everlasting King, the Protector of the Oppressed**

Psalm 146 is a call to put our trust not in earthly leaders but in God, the eternal and faithful King. It highlights His grace through His care for the oppressed, the hungry, the blind, and the broken. Unlike human rulers who fail, God reigns forever, upholding justice and showing mercy. His grace is not temporary—it is an everlasting promise that He will remain faithful to His people for all generations.

The final five Psalms (Psalms 146–150) are often called the “Hallelujah Psalms” because they are filled with unrestrained praise and joy, each beginning and ending with “Praise the Lord” (Hallelujah). These Psalms reflect the ultimate destiny of God’s people—eternal worship, victory, and delight in His presence.

In Psalm 146, the psalmist declares, “The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but He frustrates the ways of the wicked” (Psalm 146:9). Here, the psalmist identifies three groups who are often marginalized and vulnerable in society—the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow—and affirms that God’s grace is especially directed toward them. These individuals had little to no social standing in the ancient world, and their survival often depended on the kindness of others. Yet, the psalmist assures us that God is their protector and sustainer. The psalmist’s declaration that God “frustrates the ways of the wicked” is a reminder that God’s justice will ultimately prevail over all oppression and injustice.

**Key Verse:** “The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous” — Psalm 146:7–8 (ESV).

Who are the righteous? The righteous are not those who achieve perfection by their efforts but those who put their trust in the Lord. Throughout Scripture, righteousness is tied to faith, not works. Abraham, for example, was declared righteous because he believed God (Genesis 15:6).

In the same way, those who rely on the Lord's grace and provision are counted as righteous in His sight. The righteous are those who are in Christ—those who have received His righteousness through faith (see 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 3:22, Philippians 3:9). To be righteous is to be in Christ. It means standing before God not in our own merits but in the perfect righteousness of Jesus, given freely to all who trust in Him. This is the heart of the Gospel—grace that makes us righteous through faith, securing our place in God's love forever.

Psalm 146:7-8 beautifully illustrates what it means to be among the righteous. It is the Lord who sets prisoners free, opens blind eyes, and lifts the weary. The righteous are not those who save themselves but those who recognize their need for God's saving power. They trust in His mercy, lean on His strength, and walk by faith.

This passage is also a foreshadowing of Jesus' ministry. He declared in Luke 4:18-19 that He came to proclaim liberty to the captives and give sight to the blind, fulfilling the promises of Psalm 146. The ultimate fulfillment of righteousness is found in Christ, who became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

To be righteous, then, is not about striving but surrendering. It is about placing full confidence in the Lord, trusting that He is the one who rescues, heals, and restores. And as Psalm 146 assures us, the Lord loves the righteous—those who trust in the finished work of His Son.

## **God's Justice and Grace for the Oppressed: A Psalmist's Witness**

In the Psalms, we find a powerful witness to the grace of God for the oppressed and marginalized. God's justice and grace are intricately intertwined. His grace is not passive, but active in delivering and protecting the vulnerable. Whether it is the poor, the widow, the foreigner, or the orphan, God's heart is especially drawn to those who suffer injustice. He hears their cries, responds to their needs, and acts to bring about justice on their behalf.

Just as the Psalms testify to God's heart for the poor, the widow, the foreigner, and the orphan—those who face societal rejection and mistreatment—this same grace extends to those persecuted for their faith. Christians who endure persecution are often among the most vulnerable in society, suffering for their beliefs and facing oppression, isolation, and injustice.

In the face of such persecution, God's grace is not passive; it is actively at work. He hears the cries of His people, just as He listens to the cries of the oppressed in the Psalms. His justice is not delayed but is a powerful force that steps in to deliver and protect those who are suffering.

God responds to the needs of His persecuted children, providing comfort, strength, and even miraculous deliverance when necessary. Just as God's grace lifted the marginalized in the Psalms, His grace lifted those who face suffering for His name's sake.

The persecution of Christians mirrors the suffering of the vulnerable described in Scripture. When Christians face unjust treatment, they are participating in the fellowship of Christ's suffering. As the Apostle Paul writes, "I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death" (Philippians 3:10).

Jesus, as revealed in the New Testament, embodies divine compassion and strength. He encourages His followers to persevere through suffering for the sake of righteousness, assuring them that God's sustaining grace and righteous judgment will ultimately triumph. Just as God's heart is especially drawn to those who suffer injustice, His heart is particularly near to those persecuted for their faith, offering them grace amid trials and ultimate victory through His justice.

For those who are oppressed, forgotten, or marginalized in society, the Psalms offer a message of hope: God sees their suffering, and His grace is abundant, faithful, and transformative. In the New Covenant, the grace of God is most clearly seen in Jesus Christ, who came to proclaim good news to the poor, bind up the brokenhearted, and set the captives free (Luke 4:18). As we follow Christ, we are called to reflect His heart for the oppressed and to participate in God's work of justice and grace in the world.

### **Small Group Week 3: Worship, Provision, & Justice for the Oppressed**

- Introduction: Authorship and Dates of Psalms (Pages 32-51)
  - Chapter 6: Grace in Worship and Praise (Psalm 50, 68, 81, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 113, 115, 117, 122, 134, 135, 148, 150)
  - Chapter 7: The Grace of God's Provision (Psalm 23, 65, 104, 127, 128)
  - Chapter 8: Grace for the Oppressed and the Marginalized (Psalm 9, 10, 12, 34, 123, 146)

Question #1: How does understanding God's holiness as His complete wholeness and perfection change the way you approach worship? Does it make you see worship as more of a joyful response rather than an obligation?

Question #2: Psalm 23 describes God as our Shepherd, providing for our needs. What does this reveal about God's character? How does recognizing His provision deepen your trust in His grace?



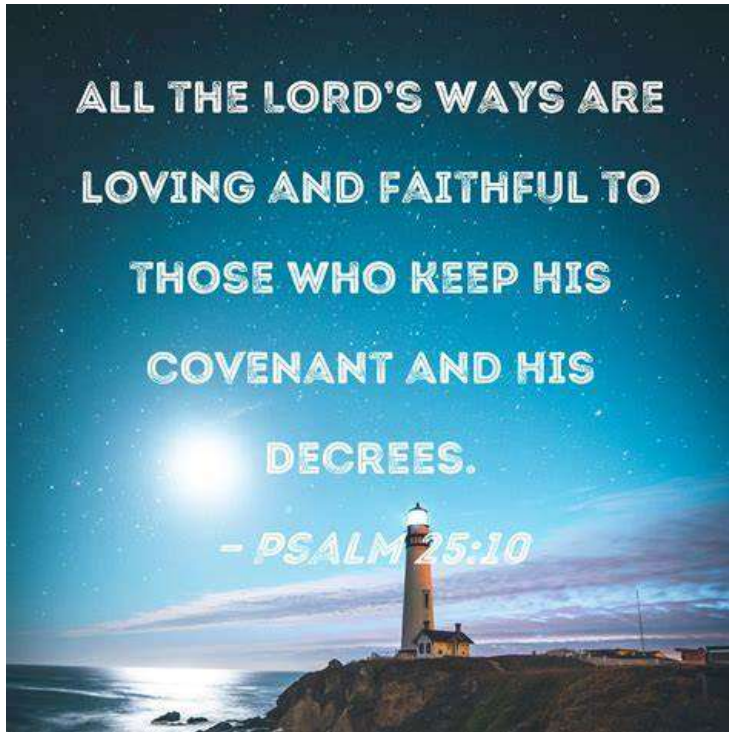
Question #3: Psalm 127:1 states, "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain." What does this verse teach us about relying on God's provision rather than our own efforts? How can you shift your mindset to embrace the peace that comes from trusting in His grace?

Question #4: How do the Psalms illustrate the connection between God's grace and His justice? How does God's commitment to justice offer hope to those who experience oppression and marginalization today?

Question #5: Psalm 146 highlights God's care for the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow. In what ways does this challenge us to reflect God's grace in our interactions with marginalized groups in our communities?

Additional Questions/Comments/Notes:

**Chapter 9:**  
**The Grace of God's Covenant Faithfulness**  
**Psalm 15, Psalm 24, Psalm 45, Psalm 89,**  
**Psalm 105**



ALL THE LORD'S WAYS ARE  
LOVING AND FAITHFUL TO  
THOSE WHO KEEP HIS  
COVENANT AND HIS  
DECREES.

*- PSALM 25:10*

## **Chapter 9: The Grace of God's Covenant Faithfulness**

In the Psalms, we encounter the profound grace of God through His covenant faithfulness. God's covenant with His people is a central theme in Scripture, and His grace is made manifest through His steadfast commitment to His promises. The psalmists frequently celebrate the unbreakable nature of God's covenant, recounting how God has been faithful to His people throughout history. From the covenant with Abraham to the promises given to David, to the enduring faithfulness that extends to all of Israel, God's covenant faithfulness is a testament to His unchanging character and His grace.

In this chapter, we will explore how God's grace is intricately connected to His covenant faithfulness. By looking at key psalms, we will reflect on God's promises, the assurance of His grace through these promises, and the covenantal relationship between God and His people. We will discover how God's faithfulness is not only a historical reality but an ongoing source of hope and security for His people, even today.

### **God's Covenant as the Foundation of His Faithfulness**

Psalm 15 provides a powerful reflection on the conditions for dwelling in God's presence, yet it also points to the broader reality of God's covenant with His people. The psalm begins with the question, "Lord, who may dwell in Your sacred tent? Who may live on Your holy mountain" (Psalm 15:1)?

The psalmist answers this question by outlining the characteristics of those who (on their own merits) are in right relationship with God: those who walk blamelessly, who speak truth, who do not slander, and who honor their covenant commitments. These conditions are not meant to imply that anyone can earn God's presence, but rather that those who live in the light of God's covenant—those who walk faithfully according to His word—are blessed by His grace. However, the reality is that all have fallen short of these standards. None of us can claim to fully meet the conditions outlined in Psalm 15 through our efforts. This is precisely why grace is so essential. While this psalm speaks to the covenant relationship God had with His people in the Old Testament, we recognize that in the New Covenant, it is through Jesus Christ that we are made right with God. His grace, through His sacrifice and resurrection, is what enables us to dwell in God's presence, not our works or merit. Yet, the call to live according to God's Word and faithfully honor our relationship with Him remains central, even under the New Covenant.

God's covenant with His people is a demonstration of His unmerited grace. The psalmist's focus on the qualities of those who live in covenant with God underscores the reciprocal nature of God's faithfulness—though God's people are called to live in obedience, it is ultimately God's grace that empowers them to do so. This covenant relationship is rooted not in human merit but in God's unwavering faithfulness to His promises. The psalmist reflects this understanding by reminding us that God's people are called to live in righteousness as a response to His grace.

## **The Unbreakable Nature of God's Covenant: A Foundation of Grace**

Psalm 24th is like the Sunday after Resurrection Sunday. It doesn't get the attention it deserves because of the psalm that precedes it. Yet, it deserves far more attention than it typically receives. Psalm 24 is a magnificent declaration of the greatness of God as King, inviting us to recognize the sacredness of His covenant and His grace. It begins with the bold proclamation, "The Earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Psalm 24:1). This psalm focuses on the holiness of God and the need for purity in His presence, but it also emphasizes that God's Kingdom is established by His covenant faithfulness.

In the context of covenant, this psalm affirms that God's ownership of the Earth and His reign are not dependent on human effort but on His sovereign grace. The people of God are invited to ascend to His holy hill, not because they have earned the right to be in His presence, but because of God's grace and His covenant promises. This grace is ultimately expressed through Jesus Christ, who ushered in the New Covenant. Through His sacrifice, we are granted access to the Father, not by our merit, but through the perfect fulfillment of God's covenant promises fulfilled in Christ. In Him, we find the ultimate expression of God's faithfulness and grace, securing our place in His presence forever.

The psalm concludes with a call to welcome the King of Glory, the Lord of hosts, who comes to establish His Kingdom with grace and righteousness.

God's covenant faithfulness is seen in His willingness to dwell with His people and to bring them into His eternal presence, based not on their worth but on His unchanging grace.

"The Earth belongs to the Lord, and everything in it—the world, and all who live in it." This powerful declaration sets the stage for a profound reflection on creation. David begins with a simple yet profound truth: the planet we call home belongs to God. Everything—the trees, the lakes, the mountains, and even the stars—everything belongs to Him. He breathed this universe into existence, and it was His alone to create. The Earth, and all who inhabit it, are God's unique design, and He has made everything with purpose and intention.

Why did God create the Earth? The answer lies in His overflowing joy. He was so full of happiness that it naturally spilled over into the creation of this beautiful world, which He declared "good" (Genesis 1:31). He wanted to share that joy, that beauty, that brilliance, with us, the crown jewel of His creation: humanity.

The Earth was not made because God lacked anything; rather, He created it out of fullness—He was complete and overflowing with a desire to share Himself with His creation. The Earth is a gift, a place for humanity to know God, to experience His beauty, and to live in a relationship with Him. This isn't just a thing of the past; it's still happening today, even in a fallen world.

Some might think that because the Earth will eventually pass away (2 Peter 3:10), we shouldn't care about it—the animals, the trees, recycling, and caring for our environment. But God cares deeply. He calls the Earth and everything in it His possession. The

Earth is His masterpiece, a work of art, and He loves it. He loves the mountains, the oceans, and the valleys. God deeply loves this Earth and continues to desire a relationship with us. His love, joy, and beauty are still being poured out for us today, inviting us to experience His presence in our lives.

Psalm 24 begins with this foundational truth, declaring the sovereignty of God. "For He laid the Earth's foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths." In David's time, this was a bold declaration of God's supremacy. To tame the oceans was seen as something only the supreme God could do. If you could control the seas, you were the highest of all gods. But David proclaims that God is the ultimate One—He takes chaos and brings order, beauty, and majesty out of it. God is not just a god among others; He is the only God, the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth. This isn't just a distant past reality; it's still happening. If you find yourself in the middle of chaos, God can take your confusion and bring clarity, order, and peace—just as He did when He created the world.

After declaring God's majesty and sovereignty, David asks a poignant question: "Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place?" It's a question that we might still ask today, albeit in different ways. Who can stand in the presence of such a mighty God? David answers the question for us:

"Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies" (Psalm 24:4).

It sounds simple enough, doesn't it? To be in God's presence, we need clean hands, blameless deeds, and a pure heart—perfect motives. No idols, no deceit. Just pure, undivided devotion. It's a tall order, and

truth be told, it's one that none of us can fulfill 100% of the time. If we are honest, we all fall short (Romans 3:23).

Yet, David gives us the solution in verse 5. "They will receive the Lord's blessing and have a right relationship with God their Savior." These requirements may seem impossible, but David is showing us something deeper. Even though we fail, God's desire is still to bless us and to be in a relationship with us. He wants to offer us friendship, righteousness, and the gift of His presence. This is what God has always desired: to share Himself with us, despite our imperfections.

But here's the twist: David doesn't stop there. After laying out this impossible standard, he calls for a break, a pause, with the word "Selah". It's as if David is telling us to stop and reflect. It's a moment of realization: we can't do it on our own. We fail at the very first step. But that doesn't mean all is lost. This is where David turns to a profound declaration of hope.

"Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in" (Psalm 24:7).

David was looking forward to a future moment—one that would fulfill all of humanity's deepest needs. Even amid our inability to measure up, there is a Savior who is coming to meet us. "King of Glory" is not just a title; it's a prophetic declaration about the Messiah. Though David spoke these words a thousand years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, he was already prophesying about the One who would come to rescue, save, and enter our lives with glory and power.



"Who is this King of Glory?" David asks. "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle" (Psalm 24:8).

David's question is not just a historical one—it's a question for all of us. Who is this Savior, this superhero, who can enter our lives and bring transformation? It's a question that resounds in our world today, where we constantly search for someone greater than ourselves to rescue us.

And the answer is clear: "The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory." Jesus is the One we have been waiting for, the One who fulfills every requirement that we could never meet. His deeds were blameless, His motives pure, He never lied, and He always kept His promises. He did for us what we could never do for ourselves.

This is the Gospel David was foreshadowing: Jesus, the King of glory, came to live the life we could not live and die the death we deserved, offering us the blessing of a right relationship with God so that we might ascend God's Holy Mountain and be with Him forever.

How does this understanding of God's sovereignty and Jesus' sacrifice impact how we live? It changes everything. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." Whatever we do, we do it with a firm conviction that we are right with God and eternally secure through Jesus. We can approach everything with a heart of consideration for others, putting their needs before our own. And we do it with gratitude, knowing that everything we have is a gift from God.

Whether you're eating a meal or performing life-saving surgery, whether you're raising your kids or doing a simple task at work, do it for the glory of God. Everything we do is an opportunity to reflect His goodness, His grace, and His glory.

### **The Promise of a Davidic Kingdom: God's Covenant with David**

Psalms 45 is a royal psalm that celebrates God's covenant promise to the Davidic king. The psalmist speaks of the king's righteousness and majesty, but it is clear that the king's reign is not the result of his achievements but of God's covenant faithfulness. The psalm points to a future king who will rule with justice and righteousness, fulfilling the promises God made to David: "Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of Your Kingdom" (Psalm 45:6). This is ultimately fulfilled in Christ, whose Kingdom is eternal: "He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will never end" (Luke 1:33).

This psalm is a reflection of the covenant God made with David, a covenant that promised an eternal Kingdom and a line of kings that would reign forever. The grace of God is evident in His faithfulness to this covenant, even when the kings of Israel failed. While David's descendants, such as Solomon and later kings, would falter and fall short, God's promise to David remains unbroken. Ultimately, this promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the descendant of David, who reigns forever and ever as the King of kings.

The unbreakable nature of God's covenant with David is a reminder of the grace extended to His people. God's covenant faithfulness is not dependent on human ability to keep the Law or fulfill promises but is founded on His unchanging love and commitment to His people.

### **God's Faithfulness to His People Through History**

Psalm 89 is one of the most significant psalms in understanding God's covenant faithfulness. It begins with a celebration of God's great love: "I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make Your faithfulness known through all generations" (Psalm 89:1). The psalmist recounts God's covenant with David, recalling how God established His Kingdom through David's line and promised to preserve it forever. God's covenant faithfulness is presented as an enduring reality, transcending generations.

Have you ever considered giving theological reasons in prayer for what we ask of God, such as how our request fits God's character, displays His salvation, and brings Him glory? This Psalm models this as one way to pray.

For example, in verses 1–2, the psalmist begins with praise, declaring God's steadfast love and faithfulness, which are central to the request for God's continued care and protection. The psalmist is not only asking for help but is also emphasizing God's previous acts of faithfulness as a reason for trusting God to act again. The psalmist's prayer is rooted in God's unchanging nature and the promises made to David, ensuring that the request aligns with God's character and plan for salvation.

In verse 15, the psalmist prays that God's people will be blessed by His presence and His salvation. This is a prayer that asks for God's glory to be revealed and for His salvation to be experienced by His people, further linking the request to God's glory and the purpose of salvation.

Through this psalm, we learn to incorporate theological reasoning into our prayers: reminding ourselves and God of His character, recalling His previous acts of salvation, and seeking to bring glory to Him through our requests. This approach helps align our prayers with God's will and ensures that our requests are framed in the context of His eternal purposes.

In addition, we are not alone in our prayers. The Holy Spirit helps us when we do not know what to pray or how to pray. Romans 8:26-27 reminds us of this divine assistance: "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God." The Holy Spirit not only assists in our weaknesses but ensures that our prayers align with God's will, even when we are unsure of what to ask for.

Moreover, as believers, we have Jesus Christ as our High Priest, who purifies and perfects our prayers. Hebrews 7:25 says, "Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them."

Jesus stands before God on our behalf, making our prayers acceptable and perfect in the eyes of the Father. His sacrifice on the cross has cleansed us from sin, and through Him, our prayers are purified and sanctified. This means that even as we pray with our human imperfections, Jesus makes our prayers holy and effective.

By remembering the Holy Spirit's help and Jesus' intercession, we can pray with confidence, knowing that our requests are aligned with God's will and purified through Christ's mediation. This understanding deepens our trust in God as we pray, knowing that He hears and responds according to His perfect plan and purposes.

Psalm 89 also acknowledges times of hardship and struggle, when it seemed that God's promises were delayed or unfulfilled. The psalmist wrestles with the tension between God's promises and the current state of affairs, yet the overarching theme remains that God's covenant is sure. Even when it seems that God has turned away, His covenant is unbreakable. The psalmist affirms that God's grace remains active through every trial: "I will maintain My love to him forever, and My covenant with him will never fail" (Psalm 89:28). This reminds us that God's grace is not only evident in times of blessing but also in seasons of hardship, where His faithfulness continues to shine. Though God promised David an everlasting kingdom, his earthly reign eventually faced such disaster that had befallen his kingdom. Similarly, when Jesus entered Jerusalem and didn't overthrow Roman rule, many were disillusioned, especially as His journey led to crucifixion and death on the cross. Yet, God always keeps His promises—though often in ways we don't expect. The eternal Kingdom promised to David was

ultimately fulfilled not through political power, but through his lineage, in the person of Jesus Christ. Christ's death and resurrection secure for all believers the unbreakable bond of God's grace, offering a new and everlasting covenant that guarantees God's faithfulness for all who trust in Him.

## **God's Covenant and His Actions in History**

Psalm 105 recounts the history of God's covenant faithfulness to Israel. The psalmist remembers how God called Abraham and made a covenant with him, promising to bless his descendants. The psalm recounts God's actions in delivering Israel from Egypt, providing for them in the wilderness, and fulfilling His promises to the patriarchs. The psalmist declares, "He remembers His covenant forever, the promise He made, for a thousand generations" (Psalm 105:8).

This psalm reflects on God's historical faithfulness to His covenant, showing how He continually acts in history to fulfill His promises. The grace of God is evident in the way He never forgets His covenant, even when His people are unfaithful. God's actions throughout history, as recounted in this psalm, are a testimony to His grace, as He consistently intervenes on behalf of His people, bringing them back into a relationship with Himself.

The rock that was struck brought forth life-giving water (Psalm 105:41). Paul reveals that this rock symbolized Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4-6). Just as the rock was struck to provide water for Israel, Christ was struck and bore judgment in our place. From His suffering flowed both sorrow and love, offering us the gift of eternal life.

As New Covenant believers, we see the ultimate fulfillment of God's covenant faithfulness in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel and all of humanity, and through Him, God's grace is poured out to all who trust in His promises.

### **Living in the Assurance of God's Covenant Grace**

The Psalms offer us a rich understanding of God's covenant faithfulness, reminding us that God's grace is not based on our ability to keep promises, but on His unbreakable commitment to His people.

Throughout the Psalms, we see that God's grace is demonstrated through His faithfulness to His covenants—from His promise to Abraham to His covenant with David, and ultimately to the New Covenant in Christ. These covenants are unbreakable because they are grounded in God's unchanging nature and His infinite grace.

As believers in the New Covenant, we can take great comfort in knowing that God's promises are sure. Even when we struggle or stumble, God remains steadfast. As Paul writes, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13). The grace extended to us through Christ is a continuation of God's faithful covenant love. We are invited to respond to this grace with trust, gratitude, and obedience, knowing that God will never abandon His people. The assurance of God's covenant faithfulness is a foundation for our hope, our peace, and our confidence in His grace.

## **Do the Psalms Ever Point to the New Covenant?**

The Psalms frequently point to the New Covenant, often foreshadowing the grace, righteousness, and redemption that are fully realized in Jesus Christ. While the Psalms were written under the Old Covenant, many passages anticipate the coming Messiah, the righteousness by faith, and the intimate relationship with God that the New Covenant brings. Here are a few key ways the Psalms point to the New Covenant:

### **1. Righteousness by Faith, Not Works**

#### **Psalm 32:1-2 (ESV):**

“Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.”

Paul quotes this Psalm in Romans 4:6-8, showing that righteousness is a gift from God, not earned by works—just as the New Covenant declares.

### **2. A New Heart and Spirit**

#### **Psalm 51:10 (ESV):**

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

David’s plea for a new heart mirrors Ezekiel 36:26, where God promises to give His people a new heart and a new spirit under the New Covenant.

### **3. The Coming Messiah and His Sacrifice**

**Psalm 22:16-18 (ESV)** (A direct prophecy of Jesus’ crucifixion):



"For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."

Jesus fulfilled this prophecy at the cross (Matthew 27:35), showing how the Psalms pointed directly to His atoning sacrifice—the foundation of the New Covenant.

#### **4. The Priesthood of Jesus**

##### **Psalm 110:4 (ESV):**

"The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.'"

The New Testament reveals that this refers to Jesus, our eternal High Priest, who mediates the New Covenant (Hebrews 7:17).

#### **5. God's Steadfast Love and Grace**

##### **Psalm 103:10-12 (ESV):**

"He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the Earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."

This echoes the promise of the New Covenant in Hebrews 8:12, where God declares, "I will remember their sins no more."

## **The Psalms as a Bridge to the New Covenant**

Though written under the Old Covenant, the Psalms prophetically point to the grace, mercy, and salvation found in Christ. They reveal humanity's need for a Savior, God's plan for redemption, and the promise of a relationship with Him based on His righteousness, not ours. The Psalms are rich with glimpses of the Gospel, preparing hearts for the New Covenant that Jesus would establish.

## **Chapter 10:**

### **Grace: The Triumph of Deliverance**

**Psalm 3, Psalm 5, Psalm 7, Psalm 11, Psalm 12,  
Psalm 17, Psalm 23, Psalm 27, Psalm 35, Psalm  
54, Psalm 57, Psalm 59, Psalm 64, Psalm 83,  
Psalm 109, Psalm 129, Psalm 140**



## **Chapter 10: Grace: The Triumph of Deliverance**

Throughout the Psalms, we find the psalmists consistently crying out to God for deliverance from their enemies, both physical and spiritual. Whether faced with literal adversaries seeking to harm them or battling the forces of darkness, the psalmists turn to God in trust, seeking His protection, strength, and grace. In the face of enemies, God's grace becomes a source of hope and confidence, enabling His people to stand firm and trust in His ultimate victory over their foes. Through Christ, the enemy has been defeated: "Having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Colossians 2:15). Because of His victory, we are not just survivors but conquerors: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).

This chapter explores how grace empowers believers to trust in God's protection and deliverance from enemies, offering a profound understanding of God's grace in the context of victory over both spiritual and earthly foes. As we reflect on key psalms, we witness God's grace at work—not only in times of struggle, but also in the comfort, peace, and hope that He brings through His faithfulness.

Did you know that the word "conqueror" is the same as "overcomer"? This powerful theme of victory, achieved not through human strength but through dependence on God, is woven throughout the Psalms.

Years ago, when I was serving as an adjunct professor at Ottawa University, I had the privilege not only of teaching but also of contributing as a subject matter expert, writing online courses in Christian theology. One of the most thought-provoking questions a student ever asked me was this:

"What's the difference between a conqueror and someone more than a conqueror?"

How would you answer that? Most of my students thought in terms of a ranking system. At the bottom, they placed generals who had won battles here and there. At the top, they put world conquerors like Genghis Khan, Napoleon, and Alexander the Great. But is more than a conqueror simply someone who conquers more? Not at all. There is a profound difference.

A conqueror has to fight for victory. Every military leader in history had to struggle, plan, and battle to achieve their success. Many in the early church at Ephesus had this same mindset. They thought being conquerors meant they had to fight to win, striving to earn victory in their strength. But they missed the deeper truth—they were already more than conquerors through Christ (Romans 8:37).

We, too, are more than conquerors because Christ has already won the war. His victory is our inheritance, secured through His death and resurrection. Unlike earthly conquerors who must fight for their spoils, we simply receive the treasures of Christ's triumph. As Psalm 44:3 declares, "It was not by their sword that they won the land, nor did their arm bring them victory; it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your face, for You loved them."

Jesus, the true Overcomer, has done the hard work. Our part is to rest in His finished work and say, "Thank You, Lord!" This is what it means to be more than a conqueror. The Greek word "hypernikaō" means to gain a surpassing victory.<sup>53</sup> Overcoming isn't about striving—it's about depending on the Overcomer who lives in you: "For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 5:4-5).

We all have spiritual battles ahead—"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12). But being strong in the Lord means relying on His strength, not our own—"Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power" (Ephesians 6:10). It means standing firm in the victory Christ has already won, putting on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:13-17), and trusting that "The Lord will fight for you" (Exodus 14:14a). For more information on spiritual warfare check out the book, *"Equipped for Victory: Put on the Full Armor of God"*.<sup>54</sup>

## **Grace Amid Threats and Persecution**

Psalms 3 is one of the most personal psalms of David, written when he was fleeing from his son Absalom. David's life is under threat, yet he begins with a bold declaration of faith:

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<sup>53</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5245/kjv/tr/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5245/kjv/tr/0-1/)

<sup>54</sup>Dr. Matthew Webster. *Equipped for Victory: Put on the Full Armor of God*. Kindle Publishing. 2027.

"But You, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high" (Psalm 3:3).

In the face of his enemies, David does not rely on his strength but on God's grace and protection. Even when his enemies seemed to have the upper hand, David rested in the assurance that God was his shield, his protector.

God's grace in danger empowered David—and empowers us—to trust in His deliverance. It's not passive; God's grace actively protects and defends His people. David describes this grace as a shield, lifting the believer's head high even in the face of fear and uncertainty.

In the presence of enemies, God's grace instills strength and confidence. Just as a warrior lifts his head when his shield is raised, signaling both defense and determination, so too does God's grace enable us to stand firm. The shield doesn't just block attacks—it declares the warrior's readiness and resilience. In the same way, God's grace equips us to face life's battles with courage, knowing He is our protector and strength, our heads are lifted high.

In the same way, when David speaks of God's grace as a shield, he is conveying that God's protection does not just keep us safe from harm—it also gives us courage and confidence amid fear and danger. The shield of God's grace lifts the believer's head because it assures them of God's presence and victory, even in the face of overwhelming circumstances. When we know we are protected by God's grace, we can face trials and adversity with a sense of honor, strength, and hope, just as a warrior stands tall with his shield raised.

This is the powerful way that God's grace empowers us to rise above fear and uncertainty, maintaining our integrity and confidence in His ability to deliver.

**Key Verse:** "I wake again, because the LORD sustains me" (Psalm 3:5b). Every breath you take is a gift of God's grace. He is the one who sustains us and gives us our breath.

### **The Assurance of Divine Justice**

God is never the source of evil. "For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You" (Psalm 5:4). God is righteous and our deliverer against evil. Augustine once incorrectly said, "Evil is punishment for evil." In other words, do bad, get bad. Every time there is a natural disaster, bad news prophets are quick to say, "God is judging this city." Except He is not. The cross, not earthquakes, is God's once and for all solution to sin."<sup>55</sup>

In Psalm 5, David prays for deliverance from his enemies while seeking refuge in God's justice: "Lead me, Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies—make Your way straight before me" (Psalm 5:8). The psalmist calls upon God's grace to lead him through a world filled with opposition and deceit, trusting that God's justice will prevail over those who oppose Him.

You will notice that many of the Psalms that are written include grace in the midst of threats and persecution or grace in the face of enemies.

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<sup>55</sup>Paul Ellis. Is God the Author of Evil. Escape to Reality. July 6, 2018.  
[www.escape toreality.org/2018/07/06/is-god-the-author-of-evil/](http://www.escape toreality.org/2018/07/06/is-god-the-author-of-evil/)



This is because ancient kings were always in danger from those who would seek to kill them. They have enemies on the outside and enemies from within, too.

The grace of God is not only about personal protection; it is also about trusting in God's justice.

David acknowledges that God will deal with the wicked in His time, and this assurance allows him to stand firm. God's grace gives us confidence that, although enemies may seem to prosper for a time, God's justice will ultimately prevail. The psalmist's plea is for God to act with grace and justice, not just in his own life, but in the broader context of His eternal Kingdom. This trust in God's justice and grace leads the believer to respond in faith, knowing that God will defend His people.

### **Grace in the Face of Spiritual Warfare**

Psalm 7 is a psalm of David in which he pleads for God to deliver him from his enemies and vindicate him from false accusations. David faces not just physical enemies but spiritual foes as well, as he is falsely accused of wrongdoing. During this spiritual battle, David calls on God's grace: "O Lord my God, I take refuge in You; save and deliver me from all who pursue me" (Psalm 7:1). He also declares, "My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart" (Psalm 7:10).

In this psalm, grace becomes a shield against the lies and accusations of the enemy. David places his trust in God's ability to deliver him from the snares of deceit and slander.

Spiritual warfare is not only about the external battles we face, but also about the internal ones, where falsehoods, accusations, and fear seek to undermine our confidence in God. In the face of spiritual attack, God's grace acts as a shield, protecting the heart and mind of the believer, leading them to trust in God's ultimate victory over all spiritual foes.

### **Trusting in God's Protection in Times of Peril**

Psalm 11 speaks to the psalmist's trust in God's protection, even when the foundations of society seem to be crumbling: "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do" (Psalm 11:3)? The psalmist answers his own question, declaring that the righteous should trust in God, who is firmly established in Heaven: "The Lord is in His holy Temple; the Lord is on His heavenly throne" (Psalm 11:4).

In times of crisis or danger, the psalmist's confidence is rooted in the grace of God's presence. When everything around us seems unstable, we are invited to trust in God's faithfulness, knowing that His protection is not temporary but eternal. God's grace enables us to face times of peril with the assurance that He is in control, that He sees our struggle, and that He will act in His perfect timing to bring deliverance.

Psalm 12 is a heartfelt plea for God's intervention in a world filled with deceit and corruption. The psalmist laments the disappearance of the godly and the prevalence of flattering and boastful speech. Yet, in contrast to human falsehood, God's words are pure and trustworthy. He promises to arise and defend the oppressed, ensuring the safety of those who trust in Him.

**Key Verse:** “The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times” — Psalm 12:6 (ESV).

This psalm beautifully reveals God’s grace in preserving His people and His truth, even in a morally crumbling world.

In Psalm 17, the psalmist calls out to God for protection and justice, expressing confidence that God will hear and respond to his prayer. He asks God to deliver him from his enemies, who are described as wicked and deceitful. The psalmist affirms his innocence and commitment to God’s ways, seeking refuge in God’s faithfulness. David is not claiming to be sinless; rather, he is asserting that he is not corrupt as a ruler. In Christ, amazingly, God sees us as perfect (Philippians 3:9-10). So, whether you’ve been falsely accused or have made a mistake and repented (changed your mind about what you have done), you can walk with your head held high.

### **God’s Victory Over Enemies**

Psalm 27 is another psalm that beautifully illustrates the grace of God in the face of enemies. David writes, “The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid” (Psalm 27:1)? Amid threats and adversaries, David confidently declares that he will not fear, for God’s grace is his protection.

“One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life” (Psalm 27:4a).

Where is God? When you think of His presence, what picture comes to mind? A temple? A mountaintop? A

sanctuary? The incredible truth is this: you are now the house of the Lord. His presence isn't a place you visit—it's where you live because He lives in you (1 Corinthians 3:16, John 14:23, Colossians 1:27, Romans 8:11, Hebrews 13:5b, Psalm 139:7-10, Galatians 2:20).

You can dwell with Him for as long as you desire because there's truly no other place for those in Christ to be. Distance or separation is an illusion. Jesus made it plain: "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). That's not temporary. That's forever.

Intimacy with God isn't something we have to strive for or chase—it's already ours. We don't have to plead for heaven to break open and for God to come down. He already did. And He didn't come for a visit—He came to stay. He promised, "I will not leave you as orphans" (John 14:18).

The good news is this: you are in perfect union with the Lord—now and forevermore. His presence is not a future hope, it's your present reality.<sup>56</sup>

Psalm 27 also emphasizes that God will ultimately bring victory over the enemies of His people: "Hear my voice when I call, Lord; be merciful to me and answer me" (Psalm 27:7). The grace of God is not only a source of comfort during battle but a guarantee of victory. David trusts that God will act in His time to deliver him, and this trust in God's grace strengthens his resolve in the face of opposition.

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<sup>56</sup>Paul Ellis. No More Lonely Love Songs: Learning to Sing the New Songs of the New Covenant. Escape to Reality. February 18, 2016. [www.escape toreality.org/2016/02/18/no-more-lonely-love-songs/](http://www.escape toreality.org/2016/02/18/no-more-lonely-love-songs/).

In our own lives, God's grace assures us that we are not fighting alone—He is with us, providing the strength and victory we need.

### **Grace Amid Battle: God's Justice, Protection, and Presence in the Psalms**

Psalm 35 is a passionate plea for God's justice and deliverance. David cries out for the Lord to fight on his behalf against those who falsely accuse and seek to destroy him. He describes the cruelty of his enemies but remains steadfast in his trust that God will bring vindication. Despite suffering unjust attacks, David commits to praising the Lord, knowing that He delights in defending His people.

#### **Psalm 35:19 → John 15:25**

"They hated me without cause."

- Jesus applies this verse to Himself, showing the unjust hatred of the world.

**Key Verse:** "Let those who delight in my righteousness shout for joy and be glad and say evermore, 'Great is the Lord, who delights in the welfare of His servant'" — Psalm 35:27 (ESV)!

Psalm 35 reveals God's grace in standing as the defender of His people, assuring them that He sees their suffering and will ultimately bring justice and deliverance.

Psalm 54 is a cry for divine help in the face of betrayal. David calls upon God to save him from enemies who seek his life, trusting in the Lord's name and power. Though abandoned by men, he knows that God is his helper and sustainer. The psalm ends with a

confident declaration of praise, as David anticipates God's faithful deliverance.

**Key Verse:** "Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life" — Psalm 54:4 (ESV).

This psalm beautifully displays God's grace as the ever-present helper and protector of His people, assuring them that He will sustain and deliver those who trust in Him.

Psalm 57 is a heartfelt prayer of David, written during a time of distress when he was hiding from King Saul in a cave. The psalm reflects both David's deep personal anguish and his trust in God's protection. He begins by asking God for mercy, acknowledging that his soul takes refuge in God, and seeking deliverance from his enemies. David expresses his confidence in God's sovereignty, recognizing that God will save him despite the danger surrounding him. Even during this trial, he is determined to praise God for His faithfulness.

The psalm underscores the tension between distress and trust. David feels surrounded by enemies who are intent on his destruction, but instead of focusing solely on the peril, he seeks God's glory. He declares that his heart is steadfast, and he desires to glorify God above all else. His praise will be sung among the nations, as his trust in God's goodness will serve as a testimony to the watching world.

The psalm concludes with David affirming that God will send His steadfast love and faithfulness, which will uphold him during his trials.

In light of this, we are reminded that "Deeper than disaster, danger, and distress is the desire for God to

be glorified. If that can be accomplished by saving us from our circumstances, then praise God! If it is better accomplished by our circumstances remaining unchanged while we continue to show confidence in God before the watching world, praise God as well. Either way, God fulfills His purpose for you as you delight to honor Him.”<sup>57</sup> This quote highlights the core truth of Psalm 57: no matter the circumstances, our ultimate purpose is to bring glory to God, and in doing so, we find fulfillment and peace.

**Key Verse:** “Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let Your glory be over all the Earth” — Psalm 57:5 (ESV)!

Psalm 57 is a powerful declaration of trust in God’s protection amid danger. David, hiding from his enemies, cries out for mercy and takes refuge in the shadow of God’s wings. Despite the threats surrounding him, he remains steadfast in praising the Lord, confident that God’s love and faithfulness will prevail. This psalm beautifully highlights God’s grace as a refuge and source of unwavering hope for His people.

Psalm 59 is a desperate plea for deliverance from enemies who seek to harm David. Surrounded by those who lie in wait for his life, he cries out to God for protection and asks for His intervention. David acknowledges that God is his refuge and strength, even in threats. He confidently expresses his trust that God will deliver him and punish the wicked, all while committing to praise and proclaiming God’s steadfast love.

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<sup>57</sup>Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller. *A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms: The Songs of Jesus*. P.121. Viking Publication. 2015.

**Key Verse:** “But I will sing of Your strength; I will sing aloud of Your steadfast love in the morning. For You have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress” — Psalm 59:16 (ESV).

This psalm illustrates God’s grace in providing refuge and strength for those who trust in Him, assuring His people that He will deliver them from their enemies and remain their unwavering protector.

Psalm 64 is a prayer for protection against hidden enemies who plot evil and speak in secret to harm the righteous. David asks God to frustrate the wicked plans of his adversaries and bring them to ruin. He expresses confidence that God will defend the just, ensuring that the wicked will face their own consequences. The psalm ends with a declaration of praise, as David affirms that the righteous will rejoice in God’s justice and protection.

**Key Verse:** “But God shoots His arrow at them; they are wounded suddenly” — Psalm 64:7 (ESV).

This psalm showcases God’s grace in safeguarding His people from unseen dangers and assures that, in His perfect timing, He will bring justice to those who plot evil.

Psalm 83 is a prayer for God’s intervention against a coalition of nations that have conspired to destroy Israel. The psalmist calls on God to act as He has in the past, defending His people from their enemies. He pleads for God to make Himself known to the nations by defeating their plans and bringing them to shame. The psalm ends with a plea for God’s glory to be displayed and for His name to be exalted on the Earth.



**Key Verse:** “O my God, make them like whirling dust, like chaff before the wind” — Psalm 83:13 (ESV).

This psalm highlights God’s grace in defending His people and ensuring that His justice and glory are made known, even in the face of overwhelming opposition. It reminds believers that God will ultimately protect His people and defeat the enemies of righteousness.

### **Grace in the Midst of Slander and Deception**

Psalm 109 is a psalm of lament in which the psalmist faces intense slander and false accusations. He is falsely attacked by his enemies, and the weight of these accusations seems overwhelming. Yet, even in the face of these verbal and emotional assaults, the psalmist calls on God’s grace: “But You, Sovereign Lord, help me for Your name’s sake; out of the goodness of Your love, deliver me” (Psalm 109:21).

Similarly, in the New Testament, we see the principle of God’s justice and order applied through the words of Psalm 109:8. Peter, after the betrayal of Judas, references this verse to justify the necessity of replacing him with Matthias. This connection between the psalm and the New Testament demonstrates how the themes of divine justice and the restoration of righteousness continue to unfold throughout Scripture, reminding us that God’s plans are never thwarted by human betrayal or injustice.

### **Psalm 109:8 → Acts 1:20**

“May another take his office.”

- Peter applies this to Judas, explaining the need to replace him in the apostolic ministry. Two were considered—Joseph called Barsabbas and

Matthias—and the lot fell to Matthias (Acts 1:23-26).

In the face of slander and lies, the psalmist recognizes that it is only through God's grace that he can be delivered from the power of deceit.

God's grace provides the strength to endure when others speak falsely against us, and it assures us that God will defend our reputation and cause. In times of verbal and emotional attack, God's grace enables the believer to remain steadfast, trusting that God will vindicate and deliver.

Psalm 129 is a lament that reflects on the oppression and suffering God's people have faced throughout history, particularly at the hands of their enemies. The psalmist recalls how Israel has been attacked and oppressed from its earliest days, but despite all the pain and hardship, God has remained faithful and has not allowed His people to be utterly defeated (v.2-3). The psalmist trusts that God will vindicate His people and that their enemies will ultimately face judgment for their cruelty.

This psalm acknowledges the realities of suffering but also affirms that God's protection and justice will prevail. The psalmist calls on God to continue delivering His people, reflecting the strength that comes from trusting in God's sovereignty even when facing relentless opposition. It teaches that despite the struggles we may face from our enemies, God's grace will sustain and ultimately bring justice.

**Key Verse:** "Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me" — Psalm 129:2 (ESV).

In Psalm 140, the psalmist cries out for deliverance from wicked and violent men, saying, “Rescue me, Lord, from the evil man; protect me from the violent man” (Psalm 140:1).

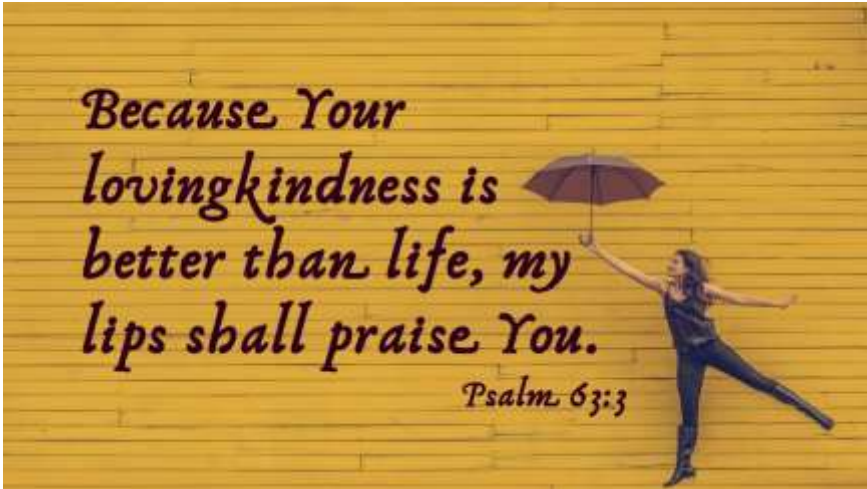
The psalmist recognizes that it is only God’s grace that can protect him from those who seek his harm. This assurance of grace, even in the face of evil, empowers the believer to trust in God’s deliverance and to face their enemies with confidence.

**Key Verse:** “I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and will execute justice for the needy” — Psalm 140:12 (ESV).

In the New Covenant, we see the ultimate fulfillment of God’s victory over all enemies in the person of Jesus Christ. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has triumphed over sin, death, and the powers of darkness. As believers in Christ, we can trust in God’s grace to protect and deliver us, knowing that Christ has already secured the victory. Let us, then, face our enemies—whether external or internal—with the confidence that God’s grace is greater than any foe. “Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

No matter the trials, slander, or betrayals we face, God’s grace triumphs, bringing us the strength and victory we need. As we rely on His grace, we are assured that He will deliver us, fulfilling His promises and ensuring our ultimate restoration. God’s grace is both a shield and a steadfast foundation, empowering us to overcome adversity and walk in the victory of the Lord.

**Chapter 11:**  
**The Overflowing Grace of God's Lovingkindness**  
**Psalm 36, Psalm 63**



## Chapter 11: The Overflowing Grace of God's Lovingkindness

One of the most profound expressions of God's grace in the Psalms is found in His lovingkindness. This word, often used in Scripture to describe God's covenant love, speaks of a deep, unchanging affection and commitment toward His people.<sup>58</sup> In the Psalms, we find numerous declarations of God's lovingkindness (127 verses), and these declarations are filled with a profound sense of grace—grace that overflows from God's heart to His people, regardless of their circumstances. His steadfast love, kindness, and goodness are an ever-present reality, freely given to all who trust in Him.

### Numerical Breakdown of 127 in Hebrew Thought

#### 1. **127 = 100 + 20 + 7**

- **100** – Often symbolizes fullness, maturity, or a completed generation.
- **20** – Associated with expectancy or redemption. For example, the age of military service in ancient Israel was 20, and 20 shekels was the price of redemption.
- **7** – The number of divine perfection, completion, and covenant. It appears constantly throughout Scripture (e.g., 7 days of creation, 7 feasts, etc.).

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<sup>58</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2617/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2617/kjv/wlc/0-1/)



Put together: 127 could symbolically reflect “the fullness (100) of God’s redemptive (20) lovingkindness in covenant perfection (7).”



## **Biblical Connection**

The most direct biblical mention of 127 is in Genesis 23:1, where it says:

“Sarah lived to be 127 years old; these were the years of the life of Sarah.”

Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age at death is recorded. Her life and legacy were foundational to the covenant promise to Abraham. This gives 127 a patriarchal or covenantal significance, possibly symbolizing the fruit of God’s lovingkindness across generations.

In this chapter, we will explore how the grace of God’s lovingkindness is revealed in the Psalms. We will examine how God’s love flows out toward His people in abundance, offering comfort, security, and hope. By looking at Psalm 36 and Psalm 63, we will see how this overflowing love shapes the psalmists’ understanding of grace and how it calls us into a deeper relationship with God.

## **Grace as a Reflection of God’s Steadfast Love**

Psalm 36 begins with a profound reflection on the nature of human wickedness, but it quickly shifts to the glorious revelation of God’s unfailing love: “Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, Your justice like the great deep. You, Lord, preserve both people and animals” (Psalm 36:5-6).

Here, the psalmist contrasts the sinfulness of humanity with the incredible majesty of God's love and righteousness. This love is not a fleeting emotion or a temporary feeling—it is steadfast, enduring, and unshakeable.

The grace of God's lovingkindness is described in these verses as boundless and limitless, reaching beyond the heavens and extending to all creation. This reflects the overwhelming grace that God offers to His people—grace that is not earned, but freely given. God's lovingkindness overflows, showering His people with undeserved favor and mercy.

God's grace, shown through His lovingkindness, is deeply personal. It is not merely a concept or theological truth but a living reality that impacts the daily lives of His people. The psalmist recognizes that it is only because of God's gracious love that humanity can experience any goodness at all. His love sustains us, shields us, and offers refuge for our souls.

### **God's Lovingkindness and the Depth of Relationship**

As the psalm continues, the psalmist reflects on the abundant life that comes from God's grace: "How priceless is Your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. They feast on the abundance of Your house; You give them drink from Your river of delights" (Psalm 36:7-8). Here, the psalmist uses rich, vivid imagery to describe the depth of relationship that grace allows. God's love is priceless—there is nothing in all creation that can compare to the joy and peace found in His presence.

The image of taking refuge in the shadow of God's wings is one of the most comforting and intimate metaphors in the Bible. It speaks of a safe haven, a place where we are protected and nurtured by God's grace. God's lovingkindness offers a refuge from the storms of life, a place where we can rest in His care and experience the full abundance of His grace.

The psalmist also speaks of God's love as a river of delights, flowing freely and offering refreshment to all who partake of it. This image of God's grace flowing like a river captures the uncontainable nature of His love. It is not a trickle or a small stream; it is a mighty, life-giving river that satisfies the deepest thirst of the soul. God's grace is not limited or sparing; it overflows abundantly, filling every need and refreshing every weary heart.

### **Grace as Sustenance and Joy**

In Psalm 63, David reflects on the deep longing for God's presence and the joy that comes from experiencing His love: "O God, You are my God, earnestly I seek You; I thirst for You, my whole being longs for You, in a dry and parched land where there is no water" (Psalm 63:1). David begins by expressing his hunger and thirst for God—a desire that is not merely physical but spiritual. He feels as though he is in a barren, dry land, longing for the refreshment only God can provide.

This deep yearning for God is rooted in the experience of His lovingkindness: "Because Your love is better than life, my lips will glorify You" (Psalm 63:3).



For David, God's love is more precious than anything life has to offer. It is better than any earthly possession, more satisfying than any human relationship, and more fulfilling than any material need. The grace of God's lovingkindness fills the deepest desires of the soul, leading to wholehearted praise and worship.

David continues, "I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise You" (Psalm 63:5). Here, he uses the imagery of a feast to describe the richness of God's grace. Just as a hungry person is satisfied with abundant food, so too are our souls satisfied by the overflow of God's grace. God's lovingkindness fills us to the brim, and in response, we offer praise and adoration.

This imagery of sustenance speaks to the profound way God's grace nourishes us. It is not just an external blessing; it becomes part of our very being, filling us with joy, peace, and hope. God's grace is what sustains us in difficult times and what nourishes our spirits in the seasons of plenty. It is grace that transcends circumstances and fills our hearts with unshakable joy.

Psalm 63, written by David during a time of deep personal crisis, is a powerful expression of his intense longing for God while fleeing from his son Absalom. David composed this psalm while he was in the wilderness of Judah, driven there by his own flesh and blood's rebellion.

**Psalm 63** may have been written specifically in the En Gedi, a desert oasis near the Dead Sea where David fled and hid from Saul (1 Samuel 24), expressing thirst for God in a dry land.

Here is a picture of the desert oasis known as En Gedi.

59



Absalom, David's son, had launched a coup to overthrow his father and seize the throne. David, faced with the imminent threat of war and realizing the immense bloodshed that would result from a confrontation with his son, made the heart-wrenching decision to temporarily abdicate the throne. His choice was driven by a desire to spare the lives of his people and, in particular, to avoid the bloodshed that would come from fighting his son. In his sleepless nights, David uses this time to sing God's praises as He reflects on God's love, goodness, and protection (Psalm 63:5-8).

As David fled, he found himself in a desolate and barren wilderness, physically exhausted, emotionally

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<sup>59</sup>Ein Gedi Israel – The Complete Guide. [www.deadsea.com/articles-tips/ein-gedi/](http://www.deadsea.com/articles-tips/ein-gedi/)

broken, and separated from the city of God. Despite the pain of this betrayal and the grief of losing his kingdom, his heart and soul longed for God more than anything else. The opening verses of the psalm express this profound thirst for God's presence: "O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh faints for You, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water." Even in the most dire circumstances, David's deepest need was not for food or rest, but for communion with God. After Absalom's forces gained strength and drove David out of Jerusalem, David fled across the Jordan River. Mahanaim was where David took refuge and regrouped, finding safety before he could eventually return to Jerusalem. The city is mentioned in 2 Samuel 17:24, where it is noted that David arrived there with his followers as they sought a safe haven from Absalom's pursuing army.<sup>60</sup>



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<sup>60</sup>Ferrell Jenkins. Ferrell's Travel Blog. Commenting on Biblical Studies Archaeology, Travel, and Photography. .June 19, 2020. [www.ferrelljenkins.blog/2020/06/19/the-wilderness-of-judea-a-hard-way-to-go/](http://www.ferrelljenkins.blog/2020/06/19/the-wilderness-of-judea-a-hard-way-to-go/)

Mahanaim was a city located on the east side of the Jordan River, in the region of Gilead. The name “Mahanaim” means “two camps” or “two armies,”<sup>61</sup> which is believed to reflect the idea of it being a place where two groups could assemble or find refuge.

While at Mahanaim, David received support from loyal allies such as Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai, who generously provided him with supplies and provisions. This moment marked a significant turning point in Absalom’s rebellion. Though David was still in exile, Mahanaim became a place of restoration where he began to regroup, rebuild his forces, and prepare for his eventual return to Jerusalem. In this way, Mahanaim came to represent a temporary refuge—a place of peace and divine provision—before the final resolution of the conflict.

David’s decision to step down temporarily from the throne to prevent the bloodshed that would inevitably follow in the conflict with Absalom speaks to his heart of mercy, his deep concern for the well-being of his people, and his willingness to sacrifice personal power for the greater good. In this moment, David exemplified a king who valued peace over violence, even at great personal cost. Just as David chose mercy over conflict, Jesus chose the path of sacrifice over retaliation.

Philippians 2:6-8 beautifully captures this parallel: “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

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<sup>61</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4266/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4266/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

Through Jesus’ sacrifice, He secured not just temporary peace but eternal redemption for His people. David’s act of humility points us to the perfect humility of Christ, the true King who laid down His life so that we might live.

Even while in exile, David trusted in God. He declared, “Because Your love is better than life, my lips will glorify You.” Despite the betrayal and uncertainty of his situation, David knew that God’s love and faithfulness were far greater than anything else, and he continued to seek God’s presence above all.

### **Overflowing Grace in the Lives of the Saints**

The psalms show us that God’s lovingkindness is not a mere theological concept but a lived experience. In Psalm 36, God’s grace leads the psalmist to praise and trust in God’s goodness. In Psalm 63, David’s longing for God’s presence is met with the overflowing grace of God’s love, which satisfies his soul and strengthens him. In both Psalms, God’s grace is the foundation of the psalmists’ faith and the reason for their joy.

For believers today, God’s overflowing grace is just as real. In Christ, we experience the fullness of God’s lovingkindness, and this grace calls us into a deeper, more intimate relationship with Him. We, too, are invited to rest in the shadow of His wings, to drink from His river of delights, and to be fully satisfied by His love. His grace is not distant or unattainable; it is near, available, and abundant for all who seek Him.

## **The Overflowing Grace of God's Lovingkindness**

The grace of God's lovingkindness is one of the most beautiful and transformative themes in the Psalms. It is a love that overflows, a grace that is not based on our merit but on God's unchanging character. God's love is steadfast and eternal, and it is poured out abundantly upon His people. In the face of adversity, in times of longing, and in seasons of peace, God's grace sustains, satisfies, and nourishes us.

As we reflect on the grace of God's lovingkindness, we are reminded that God's love is not something we can earn or deserve—it is a gift that flows from the heart of God. It is this grace that calls us into a relationship with Him, enabling us to trust, worship, and praise Him. May we, like the psalmists, find our refuge in God's lovingkindness and be filled with the joy and peace that come from His overflowing grace.

"Because You are my help, I sing in the shadow of Your wings" (Psalm 63:7). God doesn't assist those who rely on their strength. Instead, He extends His help to those who recognize their helplessness and place their trust in Him. He is the source of our aid, offering His support to those who depend on Him alone for the solutions to their challenges.

## **The Transforming Power of God's Lovingkindness**

God's lovingkindness is not just an abstract idea; it is a force that transforms lives. Throughout the Psalms, we see evidence of how encountering God's steadfast love reshapes the hearts, minds, and perspectives of those who trust in Him. His grace meets people in their deepest struggles, lifts them out of despair, and fills them with joy and confidence.

One of the most striking aspects of God's lovingkindness is its ability to turn sorrow into joy, fear into faith, and weakness into strength. David, in his trials, found security not in his circumstances but in the unshakable reality of God's love. Psalm 57, written when David was hiding from Saul in a cave, is a perfect example of this transformation. Instead of allowing fear to consume him, David lifts his voice in worship:

"Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in You I take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of Your wings until the disaster has passed... For great is Your love, reaching to the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the skies" (Psalm 57:1, 10).

Here, David does not simply acknowledge God's lovingkindness; he clings to it. He declares his trust in God's protection even as danger surrounds him. This is the power of grace—it allows the believer to rest in God's faithfulness, no matter how dire the situation.

### **A Love that Seeks and Saves**

One of the most beautiful expressions of God's grace in the Psalms is that His lovingkindness is not passive—it actively pursues His people. Psalm 23:6 profoundly captures this truth:

"Surely goodness and mercy (chesed) shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

The Hebrew word translated as "follow" (radaph) means "to pursue" or "chase after."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7291/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7291/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

This means that God's grace is not something we have to strive for or search out—it is something that relentlessly pursues us. No matter how far we may wander, His lovingkindness is always seeking to bless us in Christ.

This truth is beautifully reflected in the life of David. Despite his failures, sins, and shortcomings, God's grace never abandoned him. When David repented, he found restoration in the arms of his merciful Father. Psalm 51, his great psalm of repentance, demonstrates this so clearly:

"Have mercy (racham) on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love (chesed); according to Your great compassion (racham), blot out my transgressions" (Psalm 51:1).

Here we see how God's grace and mercy work together. Mercy (racham) is God's deep compassion that forgives and restores<sup>63</sup>, while lovingkindness (chesed) is His steadfast covenant love that never lets go.<sup>64</sup>

## **The Invitation to Dwell in God's Lovingkindness**

God's grace is not only something we experience in times of need, but it is also an invitation to a life of continual fellowship with Him. Psalm 92:2 says:

"It is good to proclaim Your unfailing love (chesed) in the morning, Your faithfulness in the evening."

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<sup>63</sup>[www.biblehub.com/hebrew/7356.htm](http://www.biblehub.com/hebrew/7356.htm)

<sup>64</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2617/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2617/kjv/wlc/0-1/)



This verse reminds us that God's grace is not just for moments of crisis—it is for every day, every morning, and every night. His lovingkindness is the foundation of a life lived in communion with Him.

The Psalms repeatedly invite us to respond to God's grace with praise, trust, and worship. Psalm 107 is a beautiful example, as it recounts the many ways God has delivered His people and then repeats this refrain:

"Let them give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love (chesed) and His wonderful deeds for mankind" (Psalm 107:8, 15, 21, 31).

God's grace calls for a response. When we truly grasp the depth of His lovingkindness, we cannot help but worship, give thanks, and live in a way that reflects His love to the world.

### **Small Groups Week 4: Covenant Faithfulness, Deliverance, & Lovingkindness**

- Introduction: Psalms in the Old Covenant vs. the New (Pages 51-52)
- Chapter 9: The Grace of God's Covenant Faithfulness (Psalm 15, 24, 45, 89, 105)
  - Chapter 10: Grace: The Triumph of Deliverance (Psalm 3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 17, 23, 27, 35, 54, 57, 59, 64, 83, 109, 129, 140)
- Chapter 11: The Overflowing Grace of God's Lovingkindness (Psalm 36, 63)

Question #1: Reflecting on God's covenant faithfulness, how does understanding that God's promises are unbreakable affect the way you view your relationship with Him, especially in times of hardship or unfulfilled expectations?

Question #2: Psalm 24 declares that only those with clean hands and a pure heart can stand in God's

presence. How does this impossibly high standard point us to the grace found in Jesus Christ, and what does it mean for us today to live in response to His unearned grace?

Question #3: In times of adversity, how does trusting in God's grace as both a shield and a source of justice shape the way we respond to those who oppose or falsely accuse us?

Question #4: How does the image of God's lovingkindness as a river of delights in Psalm 36 and Psalm 63 shape your understanding of God's grace?

How can this image impact the way you experience His grace in your daily life?

Question #5: David found joy and sustenance in God's grace even during times of personal crisis, such as when he fled from Absalom. How might we learn to draw strength from God's grace during our struggles, and what are some practical ways to seek refuge in His presence during difficult times?

Additional Questions/Comments/Notes:

**Chapter 12:**  
**The Eternal Grace of God's Sovereignty**  
**Psalm 2, Psalm 8, Psalm 29, Psalm 33, Psalm 47,**  
**Psalm 90, Psalm 93, Psalm 97, Psalm 103,**  
**Psalm 110**



## **Chapter 12: The Eternal Grace of God's Sovereignty**

One of the most foundational truths in the Psalms is the recognition of God's ultimate and absolute authority, power, and control over all things, including creation, history, and human affairs, without being limited or constrained by any other power or being.

His reign is unshakable, His power unmatched, and His rule eternal. As we contemplate God's sovereignty, we see that it is not merely a doctrine to be acknowledged intellectually, but a source of grace that shapes how we live, trust, and relate to Him. Understanding that God is sovereign over the universe, our lives, and history itself brings comfort and assurance, for His grace is inextricably linked to His sovereign rule.

In this chapter, we will explore how God's sovereignty is not something distant or impersonal, but a source of grace that invites us to rest in His unchanging nature. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). We will reflect on how the Psalms invite us to acknowledge and celebrate God's sovereignty, and how this recognition leads us to peace, security, and trust in His eternal plan. Through key psalms such as Psalm 2, Psalm 8, and Psalm 33, we will see how God's sovereignty reveals His greatness, wisdom, and loving governance over His people.

### **Grace in Acknowledging God's Sovereignty**

The Psalms are rich with declarations of God's reign, reminding us that His sovereign authority is both a source of awe and comfort.

One of the most striking expressions of this is found in Psalm 2, where the psalmist addresses the futility of human rebellion against God. It opens with a pointed question: “Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain” (Psalm 2:1)? Despite the turmoil and arrogance of earthly powers, the psalmist makes it clear that God’s rule is unshakable: “The One enthroned in Heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them” (Psalm 2:4).

**Psalm 2:1-2 → Acts 4:25-26**

This truth echoes powerfully in the New Testament. Acts 4:25–26 directly references Psalm 2 when the early church gathers to pray following the arrest of Peter and John. They see in those events the very fulfillment of the psalm, recognizing Jesus as the Anointed One against whom the nations rage. Their prayer affirms that, even amid opposition and persecution, God’s sovereign plan remains firmly in place.

Psalm 2 reminds us that God’s grace is not only seen in His tender care but also in the security and peace we find by trusting in His supreme authority. Even when the world seems in chaos, we rest in the assurance that God is enthroned above it all, reigning with purpose, power, and grace.

**Psalm 2:7 → Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5, 5:5**

In verse 2:7, the psalmist proclaims, “You are My Son; today I have begotten you” (Psalm 2:7), which is also cited in Acts 13:33 and Hebrews 1:5, and 5:5, further affirming the Messianic significance of this passage. The declaration of God’s Sonship points to Jesus, whose authority as the Anointed One fulfills God’s ultimate plan of redemption, highlighting His eternal reign as King and Savior.

- This verse is applied to Jesus in three places:
  - **Acts 13:33** – Paul uses it to affirm Jesus’ resurrection as proof of His divine Sonship.
  - **Hebrews 1:5** – Establishes Christ’s superiority over angels.
  - **Hebrews 5:5** – It highlights that Jesus did not exalt Himself but was appointed as High Priest by the Father.

“Kiss His son, or He will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction” (Psalm 2:12a).

God’s answer to human pride and power is to place His Son in Zion. To kiss His Son is to find rest in Him and live in union with Him.

God’s sovereignty is not merely about His unmatched power and authority—it is a profound display of His unwavering purpose, perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ. When we speak of God’s sovereignty, we’re referring to a divine plan that is not only unthreatened but also one that is flawlessly carried out in the person of Jesus. The grace that flows from this truth brings incredible assurance: God’s redemptive plan has always centered on Christ and will never be overcome. As Scripture affirms, “He was chosen before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake” (1 Peter 1:20). In Christ, we see the fullness of God’s will and the certainty of His sovereign grace, eternally at work for our good.

The rebellious nations may rage, but God’s purpose will stand firm. Jesus is the answer to the confusion that results from rebellion against God’s order.



When we reject His rule, we are left in a state of confusion, where peace and clarity are absent. The psalmist encourages us to “kiss the Son” (Psalm 2:12), a call to submit to God’s authority and receive the grace that flows from living in harmony with His rule.

In the same way, when we recognize God’s sovereign rule over our lives, we are invited to submit to His leadership and trust in His perfect plan. This recognition is grace in itself, for it frees us from the anxiety of trying to control our circumstances and helps us rest in the certainty that God is in control. His sovereignty assures us that nothing in our lives is outside of His loving care. “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

### **God’s Sovereign Majesty Revealed in Creation**

In Psalm 8, the psalmist reflects on the glory of God as seen in creation. The psalm begins with a declaration of praise: “Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the Earth! You have set Your glory in the heavens” (Psalm 8:1). The psalmist is amazed by the work of God’s hands—the stars, the moon, and the vastness of creation—and yet, amid such grandeur, God has crowned humanity with dignity and purpose: “You made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor” (Psalm 8:5).

## **Psalm 8:4-6 → Hebrews 2:6-8**

“What is man that you are mindful of him... You have made him a little lower than the angels.”

- Hebrews applies this to Christ’s incarnation, showing that He humbled Himself as a man, but ultimately has dominion over all creation.

Building on this truth, we see the grace of God’s sovereignty expressed not only in Christ’s incarnation but also in His purposeful and loving creation. Despite the vastness of the universe, God has placed humanity in a position of honor and responsibility. This is not a result of human merit but of God’s sovereign will and grace. By acknowledging God’s rule over creation, we recognize our place within His divine plan, and this acknowledgment fills us with awe and humility. It calls us to rest in the assurance that God has a plan for His creation and that we, as part of that plan, are loved and cared for. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

## **The Power and Goodness of God’s Sovereign Word**

In Psalm 29, the psalmist celebrates the power of God’s voice. The psalm opens with a call to the heavenly beings to worship the Lord for His mighty works: “Ascribe to the Lord, you heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength” (Psalm 29:1). The psalm then describes the voice of the Lord as powerful and majestic, shaking the Earth and displaying His glory in creation: “The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic” (Psalm 29:4).

God's sovereignty is demonstrated in the very fabric of the universe. The grace of God's sovereignty is seen in the fact that His Word is powerful enough to create and sustain all things. When we acknowledge God's authority over creation, we recognize the profound truth that His Word is the foundation of all life. It is this same sovereign Word that speaks grace into our lives, leading us, guiding us, and empowering us to live in His truth. Jesus is the Word made flesh, as the Gospel of John tells us: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us" (John 1:1, 14). Through Jesus, the Word, all things were created, and through Him, life is sustained.

Moreover, Jesus is the Life — the source of both physical and eternal life. As He says in John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." In Him, God's sovereignty is perfectly revealed, for through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus not only demonstrates God's authority but also offers us the life we were created to have — a life full of purpose, grace, and eternal significance.

Through the psalmist's praise, we see that acknowledging God's sovereignty is not only an intellectual exercise—it is a call to worship and awe. When we recognize God's sovereign rule, we are drawn into a deeper worship of the One who holds all things in His hands.

## **The Grace of God's Sovereignty in His Providential Care**

Psalm 33 is another psalm that underscores the goodness and sovereignty of God. The psalm begins with a call to praise God for His righteousness and justice, declaring that "the Word of the Lord is right and true; He is faithful in all He does" (Psalm 33:4). The psalmist then reflects on God's creation, reminding us that He spoke the world into existence: "By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of His mouth" (Psalm 33:6).

God's sovereignty is evident not only in His power to create the universe but also in His providential care. The psalmist declares, "The Lord foils the plans of the nations; He thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations" (Psalm 33:10-11). This is grace because it assures us that no matter what happens in the world around us, whether good or bad, God's purposes will ultimately prevail.

This recognition of God's sovereignty offers us peace, for it assures us that God's plans for our lives cannot be thwarted by the uncertainties of life. As we rest in His sovereignty, we experience His grace in the certainty that He is working all things for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28).

### **Let Your Unfailing Love Surround Us, Lord**

"Lord, let Your unfailing love surround us, for our hope, our trust, and our waiting is in You alone" (Psalm 33:22, NLT).

True hope is found in our Lord alone. His unfailing love surrounds us, offering the security we long for. "Love us, God, with everything You've got—that's what we are depending on" (Psalm 33:22 MSG). And indeed, He did love us with everything He had, giving His only Son for our salvation. This reveals the truth that God is love (1 John 4:8).

This kind of love becomes the foundation of our hope. Romans 5:5 reminds us: "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." The Holy Spirit's primary mission is not merely to demonstrate God's miraculous power, but to reveal the depth and certainty of His love. It is this love, unwavering and eternal, that gives us the strength to endure life's trials with confidence. In every circumstance, we can rest securely in the love of God made visible in Jesus Christ.

Many people think the Holy Spirit came to teach us about signs and wonders, but His greatest work is revealing the power of God's love. This is the miracle we live in daily: to know that no matter what we face, we can boldly say, "Jesus loves me, this I know."

When you hear the word hope, what rises in your heart? What are you hoping for right now? Some might say, "I hope for a raise," or even "I hope my team wins the Super Bowl," But Biblical hope is far more than wishful thinking—it's a confident expectation rooted in the character of God. If your hope is anchored in temporary things like sports, money, or convenience, you will often be let down. But for the psalmist—and every believer—true hope is found in God alone.

The Hebrew word “yachal” expresses this kind of hope: a patient, trusting, enduring confidence in the Lord’s goodness. It’s not passive waiting—it’s active trust. And in that trust, we find rest.

The Israelites waited with patient trust, “yachal”, knowing that God would one day send a Savior. When Jesus entered our world, He became “ELPIS”—the embodiment of hope, the joyful, confident expectation of eternal salvation.

Psalm 33:22 declares: “Let Your unfailing love surround us, Lord.” In the original Hebrew, this verse is built on three powerful words: “Hesed” (God’s covenant love), “Jehovah” (the self-existent, eternal God), and “Yachal” (waiting with trust).<sup>65</sup> In a world where every other love can fail, God’s love is unfailing and eternal. Our hope must rest in Him alone.

Theologian John Gill writes that this hope is not based on any merits of the people, but on the boundless grace of God—His character and flawless record.<sup>66</sup>

It’s all too easy to place our hope in the wrong things. As much as I deeply love my wife and cherish our children, I know that my ultimate hope can’t rest in them. No person, no matter how dear, was meant to carry the weight of our deepest expectations. When we elevate anyone—or anything too high, disappointment is bound to follow.

Over the years, some have tried to place their hope in me as a pastor. But let me be the first to say—please don’t do that. I consider it a good day when I can keep track of both my wallet and my phone!

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<sup>65</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/psa/33/22/t\\_conc\\_511022](http://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/psa/33/22/t_conc_511022)

<sup>66</sup>John Gill. John Gill’s Exposition of the Bible.

[www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/romans-5-5.html](http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/romans-5-5.html)

Like Paul, my desire is simply this: "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

My hope is in Jesus—He alone is the Savior of my soul. My confident expectation, now and forever, is rooted in Him. And my greatest desire, through the work of the Holy Spirit in me, is to point others to that same unshakable hope.

Our culture today often places hope in political leaders. I've seen many Americans fear the outcome of elections, thinking that if a certain candidate wins, it will be "the end of the world as we know it" or that all their hopes and dreams will come true. But this kind of misplaced hope can easily lead to disappointment. No candidate, no leader, and no system can deliver the lasting hope we are truly seeking. Our hope must be rooted in something far greater—Jesus Christ.

When I read Psalm 33:22, I realize that placing our hope in any candidate, no matter who they are, will ultimately disappoint, even as the Israelites found with David as their king. Our hope is not in a candidate; it's in Jesus. While it's important to pray for our leaders, we must remember not to place our hope in them. The beauty of God's Word is that the more we immerse ourselves in it, the more we understand God's love, which gives us the hope we need to face anything, instead of succumbing to fear.

I once lived in a rough neighborhood, filled with dangers that kept me on edge as a parent. There were many times I found myself praying, "Lord, deliver us from this neighborhood. Please help us move." But then, I preached a message about how God doesn't always deliver us out of trouble; He delivers us in it.

My perspective shifted. I began to trust that God's unfailing love surrounded me and that He had me exactly where I was for a purpose. While I continued to pray for protection, I also started looking for opportunities to share His love with the people around me, knowing that some might encounter His grace through the presence of Christ in me.

Hope isn't about escaping difficult situations; it's about having confidence that God's love surrounds us even in the midst of them. As I began to trust in His love, I saw how He used those circumstances to build hope in the hearts of those around me.

Paul's words in Romans 8 bring this all together. For the early church in Rome, which faced persecution and division, hope was essential. And just like them, we need to be reminded that our hope is in God's love for us. Paul writes in Romans 8:31-32: "What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since He did not spare even His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, won't He also give us everything else?"

How do we know that God's love is unfailing and trustworthy? We look to Jesus. Since He gave His Son for us, we can be sure that He will provide everything we need. When we are tempted to doubt His love, we need to set our minds on His love and renew our thinking. When my hope is in Jesus, I have confidence for the future—peace with God has been settled in my past, grace abounds in my present, and hope fills my future.

Romans 8:33-34 continues, "Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for His own? No one—God Himself has given us right standing with Himself. Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died



for us, was raised to life for us, and is sitting at the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us."

Jesus is interceding for us—praying for us, living in us. My hope is in His righteousness, not in my circumstances. And with His love, no accusation or condemnation can stand against me.

Romans 8:35 asks, "Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love?" The answer is a resounding no! No trouble, no calamity, no persecution, no hardship can ever take away the love of Christ. We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. The struggles we face today pale in comparison to the glory that awaits us in eternity.

In the end, no matter what you face—whether it's the challenges of your neighborhood, your job, or your struggles—remember that your hope is in Jesus. He will never disappoint. No matter what happens, His love will surround you, and that is the hope that will sustain you.

### **Hope is found in Jesus**

Psalms 47 is a triumphant declaration of God's sovereign rule over all nations. It calls for joyful praise because God reigns as the King over the Earth, subduing nations under His authority and choosing an inheritance for His people.

- **Key Themes:**

- A call to exalt Him with praise (v. 1, 6)
- God's universal Kingship (v. 2, 7-8)
- His power to subdue nations (v. 3)
- His reign over all peoples (v. 9)

God chooses Abraham and promises to make him a great nation, blessing all nations through him. This shows God's sovereign grace in electing a people for Himself, just as Psalm 47 declares Him as the King who rules over all. Paul declares that Christ is exalted above all rulers and authorities, with all things placed under His feet (Ephesians 1:20-23). This aligns with Psalm 47, where God is enthroned as the King of all nations. The church, as Christ's Body, is included in this sovereign rule.

John sees a multitude from every nation, tribe, and language worshiping before God's throne (Revelation 7:9). This fulfills Psalm 47:9, which proclaims that all nations will gather under God's rule. It reflects the eternal fulfillment of God's sovereignty, where people from all backgrounds worship Him.

Psalm 47 anticipates the global reign of God, which began with His promise to Abraham (Genesis 12), is fulfilled in Christ's exaltation (Ephesians 1), and reaches its completion in the heavenly worship of all nations (Revelation 7). It showcases God's eternal grace in sovereignly choosing and ruling His people for His glory.

### **The Eternal Nature of God's Sovereign Rule**

In Psalm 90, we are reminded of the eternal nature of God's reign. This psalm, attributed to Moses, begins with a meditation on God's eternality: "Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God" (Psalm 90:1-2).

The psalmist reflects on the fleeting nature of human life, in contrast to the eternal constancy of God's sovereignty. God's sovereignty is not temporary; it is eternal, unchanging, and steadfast. This truth brings us grace, for it reminds us that we are under the care of a God who is not swayed by time or circumstance. His rule is eternal, and His grace is ever-present. As we rest in the reality of His unchanging nature, we find peace and security amid the uncertainties of life.

Psalms 93 is a powerful declaration of God's sovereignty and majesty. The psalmist affirms that the Lord reigns as King, clothed in splendor and strength, and that He is established forever. The psalm speaks of God's control over creation, emphasizing that even the mighty waves of the sea are under His command. It portrays God's eternal reign and unshakable authority over the world, bringing comfort and assurance to His people. The psalm concludes by affirming the holiness of God and the steadfastness of His laws, which are a source of security for His people.

**Key Verse:** "The Lord reigns; He is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed; He has put on strength as His belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved" — Psalms 93:1 (ESV).

This psalm highlights God's grace in being an unshakable source of refuge and stability, reminding believers that no matter the chaos around them, God's sovereignty remains secure and His presence is a constant foundation for all who trust in Him.

### **Psalms 97: The Eternal Grace of God's Sovereignty**

Psalm 97 proclaims God's absolute rule over all creation, displaying both His power and righteousness.

The psalm begins with the declaration, "The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad" (v.1), affirming that God's sovereignty is a source of joy and security for His people.

His reign is marked by justice, righteousness, and judgment (v.2), ensuring that evil will not prevail.

Despite the presence of darkness and opposition, God's eternal grace is revealed in His faithfulness to the righteous. He protects those who love Him (v.10) and fills them with His light and joy (v.11). This psalm reminds us that, though the world may seem chaotic, God is in control, and His kingdom will endure forever—a truth fully realized in Jesus, the sovereign King (Revelation 19:6).

**Key Verse:** "The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad" — Psalm 97:1 (ESV).

Psalm 97 is a celebratory proclamation of God's sovereignty and righteous judgment. It depicts the Lord's mighty power over the Earth, where His reign causes both the heavens and the Earth to rejoice. The psalm emphasizes that God's justice will prevail, and those who love Him are protected, while the wicked will be judged. It calls for all people to honor God, recognizing His holiness and supremacy over all creation.

This psalm highlights God's grace in reigning justly over the Earth, offering His people security, and calling them to rejoice in His rule and righteousness.

## **Psalm 103: Sovereign Grace and Compassion**

Psalm 103 beautifully blends God's sovereignty with His tender mercy. David exalts the Lord as King over all creation—majestic and powerful—yet also full of compassion and grace. While David may not have known God as "Father" in the personal way that Jesus would later reveal, his words reflect a deep trust in God's fatherly care. In Christ, we now fully see what David only glimpsed: that the sovereign Lord is also our loving Father who forgives, heals, redeems, and crowns us with steadfast love. As Jesus prayed to the Father, He said, "I have made Your name known to them, and will continue to make it known, so that the love You have for Me may be in them and that I Myself may be in them" (John 17:26). Through Jesus, the name and nature of God as Father has been fully revealed to us.

**Key Verse:** "The Lord has established His throne in Heaven, and His Kingdom rules over all" — Psalm 103:19 (ESV).

From beginning to end, this psalm reminds us that the God who rules the universe is also the God who knows our frame and remembers we are dust (v.14). His rule is eternal, and His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting.

## **The Reign of Christ as King**

In Psalm 110, we see a prophetic psalm that points forward to the reign of Christ as the eternal King. The psalm begins with a declaration from God to the Messiah: "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet'" (Psalm 110:1). This psalm is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who, as the Son of God, reigns at the right hand of the Father, exercising His sovereign authority over all creation.

**Psalm 110:1 → Matthew 22:44; Acts 2:34-35; Hebrews 1:13**

"The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand.'"

- Jesus uses this Scripture to prove His divine authority.
- Peter and Hebrews reference it to show Christ's exaltation.

The quote "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand.'" is from Psalm 110:1 and is frequently cited in the New Testament to affirm the divinity of Jesus. Jesus Himself uses this verse to demonstrate His divine nature and authority, particularly in the Gospels.

Here's how Psalm 110:1 proves Jesus' divinity:

**1. Jesus' Use of Psalm 110:1 in Matthew 22:41-46**

In Matthew 22:41-46, Jesus asks the Pharisees, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" The Pharisees answered, "The son of David." Jesus then asks them why, if the Messiah is David's son, David calls Him "Lord" in Psalm 110:1, where David says, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand.'"

- Key Question: Jesus asks, "If David calls him 'Lord,' how can He be his son?"
- Theological Implication: David, as the human king, would never call his descendant "Lord" unless that descendant was not just human, but divine. Jesus is showing that the Messiah, though born as a descendant of David, is greater than David and must be more than just a human king. He must be divine.

This argument is significant because it highlights that Jesus, as the Messiah, is both David's descendant (human) and his Lord (divine). Jesus uses Psalm 110:1 to point to His divinity as the eternal Son of God, making it clear that the Messiah is not merely a human king but a divine person who shares in the glory and authority of God.

## 2. Application of Psalm 110:1 in the Early Church

In Acts 2:34-36, Peter, in his Pentecost sermon, quotes Psalm 110:1 to affirm Jesus' divinity. He states that Jesus, whom God raised from the dead, has been exalted to the "right hand" of God, thus fulfilling the Psalm's prophecy. Peter declares:

- "For David did not ascend to Heaven, and yet he said, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.' Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah" (Acts 2:34-36).

Peter's use of this verse emphasizes that Jesus' exaltation to God's right hand is a confirmation of His divine authority and position. By applying Psalm 110:1 to Jesus, Peter is proclaiming that Jesus is Lord (YHWH), equal in divinity to God the Father.

### 3. Hebrews 1:13 and the Superiority of Jesus

In Hebrews 1:13, the author references Psalm 110:1 to emphasize Jesus' superior position to angels:

- "To which of the angels did God ever say, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet'" (Hebrews 1:13)?

This rhetorical question underscores that Jesus holds a position far superior to any angel. The "right hand" is a place of supreme honor and authority. Only someone divine, like Jesus, could be invited to sit at God's right hand. This further affirms Jesus' divinity, as no created being (like an angel) would be granted such an exalted position.

### 4. Theological Implication: Jesus as Divine and Human

The phrase "The Lord said to my Lord" contains two distinct terms for God:

- "The Lord" (YHWH) refers to God the Father.
- "My Lord" refers to the Messiah, who is addressed as "Adonai", a title of respect and authority.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/psa/110/1/ss1/t\\_conc\\_588001](http://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/psa/110/1/ss1/t_conc_588001)



The two Lords in this verse point to the two persons of the Godhead — God the Father and God the Son. Jesus, in using and being associated with this verse, is identifying Himself as the one who sits at the right hand of God, a divine position of ultimate authority and power.

## **Conclusion**

Psalm 110:1, when applied to Jesus, reveals His divinity by showing that:

- Jesus is both David's son (human) and David's Lord (divine).
- Jesus' position at the right hand of God affirms His equality with God and His divine authority.
- The use of this psalm by Jesus, Peter, and the author of Hebrews solidifies the belief that Jesus is the divine Messiah, who shares in the eternal and sovereign authority of God.

This verse, therefore, serves as a powerful proof of Jesus' divinity.

For Christians, this psalm speaks of the grace we have in Christ, who, through His death and resurrection, has been exalted to the highest place. His reign is a reign of grace—a reign that extends forgiveness, mercy, and salvation to all who come to Him. Christ's sovereignty is a source of grace because it assures us that His rule is just, and His love is everlasting.

## **Resting in the Grace of God's Sovereignty**

The Psalms reveal the richness of God's sovereignty—a sovereignty that is both powerful and gracious.

As we acknowledge God's reign over all creation, we are invited to rest in the unchanging nature of His rule. His grace is woven into His sovereign plan for the universe and our lives. When we recognize that God is in control, we can lay down our worries, trust in His providence, and find peace in His eternal purposes.

The grace of God's sovereignty is a grace that frees us from anxiety and fear and calls us to a deeper faith. It is grace that leads us to worship, to trust, and to rest in the assurance that God's purposes will stand firm forever. May we, like the psalmists, find comfort and strength in the eternal grace of God's sovereignty.

**Chapter 13:**  
**The Grace of Joy in God's Salvation**  
**Psalm 16, Psalm 40, Psalm 51, Psalm 92,**  
**Psalm 116**



## **Chapter 13: The Grace of Joy in God's Salvation**

One of the most beautiful expressions of grace found in the Psalms is the deep and lasting joy that springs from experiencing God's salvation. This is not a fleeting or circumstantial happiness, but a joy that transforms the heart from the inside out. It flows from the assurance that we have been redeemed by God. Rooted in the eternal hope of His faithfulness, this joy remains steady through trials, challenges, and suffering. It endures not because life is easy, but because God is good, and His grace is more than enough.

In this chapter, we will explore how God's grace leads to joy and rejoicing in His salvation. We will look at key psalms such as Psalm 16, Psalm 40, and Psalm 116 to understand how the psalmists express their joy in God's deliverance and how that joy becomes a transforming force in their lives. Even when facing difficulties, the psalmists find reason to rejoice, and their expressions of joy offer us powerful insights into how we, too, can experience and express joy in God's grace and salvation.

### **The Source of Joy: God's Salvation**

Psalm 16 begins with a word that might seem unfamiliar—"A Miktam of David." Before studying this psalm, I had never used the word "miktam," and honestly didn't even know what it meant. And I'm not alone—even biblical scholars are uncertain about its exact meaning. The best understanding is that "miktam" is likely a musical term, possibly referring to a specific type of composition or a particular

instrument.<sup>68</sup> Some suggest it could indicate a wind instrument, while others think it might relate to percussion, like a tambourine or cymbals. Though its precise meaning remains a mystery, what follows in Psalm 16 is a beautiful expression of trust in God—a theme that resonates through every note, whether sung or played.

In Psalm 16, David reflects on the joy that comes from knowing God as his ultimate refuge and salvation. He begins the psalm with a declaration of trust: “Keep me safe, my God, for in You I take refuge” (Psalm 16:1). David’s joy is deeply tied to his relationship with God. His refuge is not found in circumstances or material wealth, but in the salvation God provides.

This kind of joy and security cannot be bought or earned—it comes from a deep trust in God alone. Few people are aware of how staggeringly rich King David was, yet he did not put his trust in his wealth. King David, a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), was incredibly wealthy, yet he used his riches to honor God. Near the end of his life, he bequeathed extraordinary resources for the construction of the Temple.

“In my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a million talents of silver, and of bronze and iron without weight” (1 Chronicles 22:14).

A biblical talent weighed about 75 U.S. pounds, meaning David donated over 109 million troy ounces of gold, worth an estimated \$158 billion today, and silver valued at over \$18 billion.

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<sup>68</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4387/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4387/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

Even after this lavish gift, he added 3,000 talents of Ophir gold and 7,000 talents of silver (1 Chronicles 29:3-4). Beyond gold and silver, he provided marble, onyx, brass, and precious woods “beyond number” (1 Chronicles 22:1-4, 16; 29:2).

His extravagant giving reflects a heart fully surrendered in worship, pointing us to the ultimate King, Jesus, who gave far more than gold—His very life—to build an eternal Kingdom. David’s net worth easily exceeded 200 billion dollars.<sup>69</sup>

David writes: “I say to the Lord, ‘You are my Lord; apart from You I have no good thing’” (Psalm 16:2). For David, God’s salvation is the source of all good and all joy. This confidence in God’s salvation extends beyond his own life—David prophetically speaks of a greater fulfillment in the Messiah.

In verse 1, David says, “Keep me safe, my God, for in You I take refuge.” From the very first line, we can tell that David is in a place of great distress. He’s asking for protection, but notice the confidence he has in his song. In verse 8, he declares that he will not be shaken. Even though his situation is difficult, the tone of this psalm is not one of lament or despair—it’s a psalm of settled joy. Despite all of his troubles, David sings with praise and trust. This is what makes this psalm an instant classic. In these lyrics, we find the secret of contentment (Psalm 16:2) and immense joy even in hard times (Psalm 16:7-9). And it’s also a powerful reminder of what Jesus’ work accomplishes for us (Psalm 16:10-11).

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<sup>69</sup>How Rich was King David? BibleStudy.org. [www.biblestudy.org/basicart/how-rich-was-king-david.html](http://www.biblestudy.org/basicart/how-rich-was-king-david.html)

Theologian John Trapp once said that verse 1 is the “Most powerful plea” because trusting God is the highest honor we can give Him.<sup>70</sup> That trust leads David to say in verse 2: “I say to the Lord, ‘You are my Lord; apart from You I have no good thing.’” — Psalm 16:2 (ESV).

Everything good in our lives is a gift from God (Psalm 16:2, James 1:17). Just think about it: apart from God, what do we have? With Him, we have everything.

James, Jesus’ half-brother, really drives this home in his letter. In James 1:17, he says: “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights.”

James had seen the greatest good humanity could receive—Jesus. His words echo David’s sentiment: “Apart from You, I have no good thing” (Psalm 16:2).

Psalm 16:3 says, “I say of the holy people who are in the land, ‘They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.’” In contrast, verse 4 warns, “Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.” This isn’t about God actively punishing people—it’s the natural result of seeking fulfillment in anything but Him. False gods, whether idols or worldly pursuits, always disappoint. Yet, even in that pain, God is at work, drawing people to the realization that nothing apart from Him satisfies. He even uses His children to help unbelievers see their need for Jesus.

David continues in verse 5, “Lord, You alone are my portion and my cup; You make my lot secure.” Despite coming from humble beginnings as a

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<sup>70</sup>John Trapp. Psalm 16: The Benefits of a Life-Commitment to God.  
[www.enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-16/](http://www.enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-16/)

shepherd, he declares, "Surely I have a delightful inheritance." His inheritance wasn't in wealth, status, or success—it was in God alone. Looking back, David sees how God led him from the fields to the throne, shaping his life with grace. "The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places." His security was never in his circumstances, but in the faithful God who had been his portion all along.

In verse 7, David says, "I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me." This verse gives us a powerful reminder that God's guidance isn't limited to certain times of the day.

When I studied the word "reflection," I found an interesting translation in the New English Translation: "I will praise the LORD who guides me; yes, during the night I reflect and learn." The Hebrew word used here, "yacar", doesn't just mean "reflect" in the way we might think—it means "taught."<sup>71</sup> David is saying that even at night, when the day is over and everything is quiet, God is still teaching us. I love that God continues to speak, instruct, and guide us, even as we rest.

When I was training for missionary work at Teen Mania Ministries in Garden Valley, Texas, they emphasized waking up early to spend time with God. That's a great practice—after all, David did write in Psalm 63:1, "O God, You are my God; early will I seek You." But not everyone is a morning person, and that's okay. Some of us connect best with God in the stillness of the night. If that's you, don't feel like

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<sup>71</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3256/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3256/kjv/wlc/0-1/)



you're missing out spiritually just because you don't always rise before the sun. God is present and at work in our lives at all hours, even when the world is asleep.

The NIV translates Psalm 16:7 as, "I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me." Interestingly, the word "heart" here isn't the usual metaphor we think of in Western culture. The Hebrew word used is "kilyah", which means "kidneys."<sup>72</sup> In biblical Hebrew, the kidneys were seen as the seat of deep emotion and thought, what we might call the inner self or conscience. In some cultures today, translators render "kilyah" as "heart" or even "throat" or "gut," because those organs are considered the center of emotions and belief rather than the heart, as understood in Western thought. This is especially true in parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. In David's context, "kilyah" is a poetic way of saying that God is instructing him at the deepest level of his being. So when he says his heart instructs him at night, he's expressing that God is speaking to his mind and spirit, even in the quiet, still moments of the night.

This intimate guidance from God isn't just a personal comfort to David—it also points to something far greater. The depth of relationship and trust expressed in Psalm 16 ultimately finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

### **Psalm 16:8-11 → Acts 2:25-28, 13:35**

"You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, nor let your Holy One see corruption."

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<sup>72</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3629/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3629/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

- In Acts 2:25-28, Peter preaches that David foresaw the resurrection of Jesus.
- In Acts 13:35, Paul reiterates that Jesus' body did not undergo decay, unlike David's.

The joy David speaks of in this psalm is a joy that comes from experiencing God's grace in His salvation. It is a joy that transcends external circumstances, a joy rooted in the certainty of God's presence and protection. David knows that God is his inheritance, and because of this, his heart is glad: "Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure" (Psalm 16:9).

The grace of God's salvation provides a deep and abiding joy, one that surpasses fleeting happiness or momentary pleasure. It is a joy that comes from knowing that God is with us, that He has rescued us, and that He holds us in His eternal care. This joy finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ, who, through His resurrection, secures our place in God's presence forever.

When Peter preaches in Acts 2:25-28, quoting Psalm 16, he speaks of Jesus' resurrection as the ultimate proof of God's saving grace. In this same sermon, he proclaims that those who believe in Christ will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), the very presence of God who fills believers with joy (Romans 14:17).

Paul echoes this in Acts 13:35, emphasizing that while David's body saw decay, Jesus did not, because He was raised to life. Through Jesus, the joy David experienced is now made complete in us through the Holy Spirit, who assures us of our salvation and fills us with the same unshakable joy in God's presence.

This is the joy that David foreshadowed—a joy not dependent on circumstances, but on God’s eternal promise, fulfilled in Christ and sealed in us by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14).

“You make known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand” (Psalm 16:11). “To be at someone’s right hand is to be their advocate in court or support in battle or companion for a journey. In Christ, this is all true (Acts 2:24-36). Because He died and rose for us, He is our representative in Heaven (so we are intimately loved). And someday we will not just sense Him at our side but see Him face to face. In our resurrected bodies that will be endless, unimaginable pleasure (Psalm 16:9-11). Now we have nothing to fear.”<sup>73</sup>

### **The Transformative Power of Joy in God’s Salvation**

In Psalm 40, David expresses profound gratitude for God’s deliverance and the joy that comes with it: “I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand” (Psalm 40:1-2).

David had been in a place of despair, yet God’s salvation had lifted him and set him on solid ground. This act of deliverance filled David’s heart with joy and led to an outpouring of praise.

David continues by saying, “He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.

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<sup>73</sup>Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller. *A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms: The Songs of Jesus*. P.23. Viking Publication. 2015.

Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in Him” (Psalm 40:3).

This new song represents the transformative power of God’s grace. When God saves, He does more than just deliver from difficulty—He changes the heart. The joy that results from this change is contagious; it is a joy that causes others to look to God in faith. During the trial, David is given a new song to sing, a song of salvation, and that song becomes a testimony to God’s goodness and grace.

For us, the grace of God’s salvation works similarly. When we experience God’s saving grace, it transforms us from the inside out, filling us with joy even in the most challenging circumstances. This joy is a sign of God’s work in our lives—it reflects His power to redeem and renew. As we rest in the joy of His salvation, we become living testimonies to His grace, showing others that God’s love and mercy are available to all. This joy leads us to live lives that reflect God’s will, not out of obligation, but from hearts transformed by grace, echoing a deeper truth revealed in Scripture.

### **Psalm 40:6-8 → Hebrews 10:5-7**

“Sacrifices and offerings You have not desired, but a body You have prepared for me.”

- Hebrews interprets this as Christ’s mission to fulfill the Law, replacing animal sacrifices.

### **Grace that Brings Us Back**

In Psalm 51, we see how grace brings joy through the process of repentance and forgiveness.

After David's sin with Bathsheba, he writes this penitential psalm, acknowledging his guilt and seeking God's mercy. Despite the gravity of his sin, David is confident in the transformative power of God's grace. He begins the psalm by saying, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions" (Psalm 51:1).

David's joy in salvation is linked to the grace of forgiveness. After confessing his sin, he asks God to restore to him the joy of salvation: "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me" (Psalm 51:12). David's prayer reflects a deep understanding of the connection between grace and joy. Joy is not the absence of sorrow or repentance, but the result of God's grace working in the heart of a believer. When God forgives, He restores not only the relationship but also the joy that comes from being reconciled to Him. For those in Christ, this forgiveness is not temporary or conditional—it is complete and perpetual. New Testament believers live in the ongoing reality of being fully forgiven through the finished work of Jesus.

This assurance allows us to walk in continual joy, even when we fall short because our standing before God is secure in Christ. Even in moments of failure, God's grace draws us back to joy. As we change our minds about the wrong we have done (repentance) and embrace what Christ has already accomplished for us (His finished work of forgiveness), we experience the joy of salvation anew. The grace of God's forgiveness brings us peace and joy, knowing that our sins are fully forgiven and that we are completely accepted in Christ.

## **The Enduring Joy of Salvation**

In Psalm 92, the psalmist reflects on the joy that comes from God's ongoing faithfulness and salvation. He writes: "It is good to praise the Lord and make music to Your name, O Most High, proclaiming Your love in the morning and Your faithfulness at night" (Psalm 92:1-2). The joy of salvation is not just a one-time experience; it is an enduring, ongoing celebration of God's faithfulness and grace.

The psalmist speaks of the righteous flourishing in God's presence: "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God" (Psalm 92:12-13). The joy of salvation leads to spiritual growth, strength, and stability. As we remain rooted in God's grace, we experience the fullness of His joy, which sustains and strengthens us through all seasons of life.

## **Rejoicing in God's Deliverance**

In Psalm 116, the psalmist expresses gratitude and joy for God's deliverance from death: "I love the Lord, for He heard my voice; He heard my cry for mercy. Because He turned His ear to me, I will call on Him as long as I live" (Psalm 116:1-2). The psalmist has reorganized his life around a deep, grateful love for God.

The psalmist's joy is rooted in the personal experience of God's salvation and deliverance. The grace of salvation fills him with a deep love for God and an uncontainable desire to praise Him.

The joy in Psalm 116 is not only for the psalmist's deliverance but also for the recognition of God's mercy

toward His people: "The Lord protects the unwary; when I was brought low, He saved me" (Psalm 116:6). This grace-filled joy is not confined to the individual but extends to the community. God's grace leads us to rejoice not just in our salvation but in the salvation of others. Psalm 116:13 says: "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord" (Psalm 116:13).

This verse speaks to the psalmist's recognition of God's salvation and the act of receiving it with gratitude. The "cup of salvation" represents the blessings and deliverance God provides, and lifting it up symbolizes a response of praise and thanksgiving for His grace.

Now, tying this into the New Testament understanding, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross provides a deeper revelation of what it means to "drink from the cup of salvation." In Luke 22:42, when Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prays:

"Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

Here, Jesus speaks of the "cup" as a metaphor for the suffering and divine wrath He was about to endure for the sins of humanity. Jesus took the cup of God's wrath upon Himself, bearing the punishment that we deserved so that we might be saved. His willingness to drink this cup was the ultimate act of sacrificial love, allowing us to drink from the cup of salvation.

Because Jesus drank the cup of divine wrath in our place, we are invited to drink from the cup of salvation—this represents the grace, forgiveness, and eternal life He offers. Through His death, we are freed from the wrath that should have been ours, and in

return, we are invited into a relationship of salvation, where we can lift the cup in joy and gratitude, calling on the name of the Lord.

Thus, Psalm 116:13 and Luke 22:42 together illustrate how Jesus' sacrifice made it possible for us to experience the cup of salvation, as He endured the cup of wrath for our sake.

The psalmist concludes with a pledge to offer thanksgiving and praise for God's great mercy: "I will sacrifice a thank offering to You and call on the name of the Lord" (Psalm 116:17).

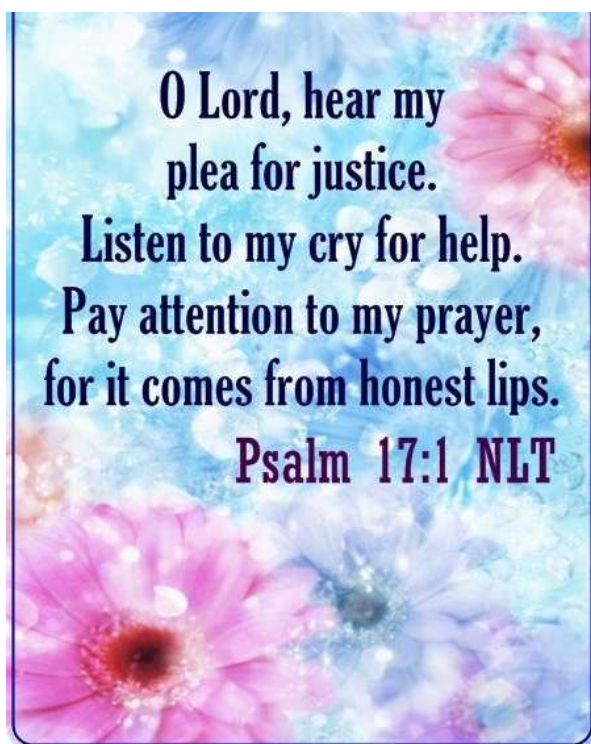
### **The Grace of Joy in God's Salvation**

The grace of God's salvation brings joy that lasts, joy that is transformative, and enduring. It is a joy that comes not from external circumstances but from the deep, unchanging knowledge that God has rescued us, forgiven us, and brought us into a relationship with Him. As we reflect on the Psalms, we see that the joy of salvation is a grace-filled response to the goodness, faithfulness, and mercy of God.

Whether we are rejoicing in God's deliverance, finding joy in a renewed mind, or celebrating His ongoing faithfulness, we are invited to experience the overflowing joy that comes from knowing we are saved by grace. This joy sustains us through life's challenges and strengthens us in our walk with God. May we, like the psalmists, find our hearts filled with the grace of joy in God's salvation, and may that joy overflow in our worship, our lives, and our witness to the world.



**Chapter 14:**  
**Grace in Lament and Honest Prayer**  
**Psalm 13, Psalm 22, Psalm 42, Psalm 44, Psalm**  
**55, Psalm 69, Psalm 70, Psalm 74, Psalm 77,**  
**Psalm 79, Psalm 88, Psalm 102, Psalm 120,**  
**Psalm 137, Psalm 142, Psalm 143**



## **Chapter 14: Grace in Lament and Honest Prayer**

A lament is a profound, often misunderstood part of the Christian journey. It is a way of expressing pain, confusion, and sorrow to God, and it is deeply embedded in the Psalms. Throughout Scripture, the psalmists model the courage to come before God with unfiltered honesty, even when they are angry, confused, or despairing. Lament is not a sign of weak faith; instead, it reveals a trust that God can handle our raw emotions and a confidence that His grace is big enough to meet us in our deepest struggles.

Is lament still a part of the Christian experience in Christ? The answer is yes, although it takes on a new dimension under the New Covenant. While believers have the assurance of salvation, peace, and joy in Christ, we still live in a fallen world and experience suffering, loss, and longing for Christ's return. Lamenting allows us to bring our pain before God honestly while still trusting in His goodness.

### **Jesus Lamented**

1. In Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-39, Luke 22:41-44)
  - Jesus, in deep sorrow, prays, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death" (Matthew 26:38). He laments before the Father, expressing His anguish, yet submits to God's will.
2. Jesus on the Cross (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34)

- Jesus quotes Psalm 22:1: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" This is a profound moment of lament, not in doubt but in expressing the weight of human suffering and the fulfillment of prophecy.

## **New Testament Examples of Lament**

### **1. Paul's Lament Over Sin and Struggle (Romans 7:24-25)**

- Paul cries out, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" He laments the ongoing struggle with sin but immediately shifts to gratitude in Christ for deliverance.

### **2. Paul's Trials and Plea for Relief (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)**

- Paul speaks of a "thorn in the flesh" and pleads with the Lord three times to remove it. Though he laments, he ultimately finds strength in God's grace.

### **3. The Church's Lament and Groaning (Romans 8:22-26)**

- Paul describes creation and believers groaning as they await the fullness of redemption. The Holy Spirit even intercedes for us with "groanings too deep for words" (v. 26), showing that lament is a part of the Christian journey.

### **4. The Martyrs Cry Out in Lament (Revelation 6:9-10)**

- The souls of those who were slain for their faith cry out, “How long, O Lord?” This echoes the Lament Psalms and shows that even in Heaven, there is a longing for God’s justice until all evil is judged.

## **How Lament Looks Different in Christ**

- Unlike Old Testament laments, which often end in hope for future deliverance, New Testament lament is rooted in the completed work of Christ and the sure hope of our resurrection.
- Lament is not hopeless despair but faith-filled sorrow that still trusts in God’s plan.
- We lament with hope and expectation (1 Thessalonians 4:13), knowing that suffering is temporary and that Christ will make all things new (Revelation 21:4).

In this chapter, we explore how grace allows us to bring our laments to God. Lament is more than simply complaining or airing grievances. It is a form of prayer—a conversation with God in which we pour out our hearts, acknowledge our pain, and invite God to intervene. Key psalms like Psalm 13, Psalm 22, and Psalm 42 highlight the honest cry of the psalmists in suffering and sorrow. Through their examples, we learn that grace enables us to express our deepest frustrations while also acknowledging God’s ability to heal, restore, and answer.

## **Grace Enabling Honest Prayer**

The Psalms offer a powerful example of what it means to lament in a way that is both raw and vulnerable, yet also rooted in trust.

Take Psalm 13 as an example. David cries out: “How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?” (Psalm 13:1). David’s words are not the polished prayers we may often associate with worship. Instead, they are filled with the raw emotion of someone who feels abandoned and forgotten by God. But notice that despite his frustration, David continues to bring his concerns directly to God.

The grace in lament is found in the fact that David, even in his distress, still brings his pain to God. He doesn’t turn away from God in anger; instead, he turns toward Him in trust. Even in the darkest moments, David recognizes that God is the only one who can address his pain. This trust in God’s presence, even in the absence of an immediate answer, is a key aspect of grace. Grace gives us the freedom to be honest with God, knowing that He is not offended by our struggles or honest complaints. Rather, He invites us to bring our whole selves to Him.

In Psalm 22, the cry “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” is a raw expression of anguish that Jesus would later echo on the cross (Matthew 27:46). The psalm begins with a deep sense of abandonment, yet by the end, the psalmist affirms God’s faithfulness: “You who fear the Lord, praise Him!... For He has not hidden His face from him but has listened to his cry for help” (Psalm 22:23–24). This movement from pain to praise shows that even in our laments, God’s grace is present, leading us through suffering toward deeper trust in His deliverance.

Lament is not a lack of faith—it is faith expressed honestly.

Grace enables us to bring our doubts and fears before God, not because we have all the answers, but because we believe that God is still good and that He hears us.

**Psalm 22:1 → Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34**

The psalms often reveal both the heart of God's grace and the longing for redemption. Psalm 22 is a striking example, ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Quoted by Jesus on the cross (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34), this powerful moment connects the suffering of David with the ultimate suffering of Jesus, who bore the sins of the world to reconcile humanity to God.

The prophetic nature of Psalm 22 continues beyond the opening cry of abandonment. As the psalm unfolds, it details specific elements of the Messiah's suffering. One such detail appears in verse 18:

**Psalm 22:18 → John 19:24**

"They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."

- John sees the Roman soldiers gambling for Jesus' clothes as a direct fulfillment of this prophecy.

Remarkably, the psalm that begins in despair and flows through suffering doesn't end in defeat—it crescendos with hope and victory. Psalm 22:22 shifts the tone, pointing to restored relationship and worship among the redeemed.

**Psalm 22:22 → Hebrews 2:12**

"I will tell of Your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation, I will praise You."

- **Hebrews 2:12** quotes this as Jesus speaks of His relationship with the church, specifically His role as the One who leads believers to praise God. This verse highlights Christ's identification with humanity and His mediatorial role.

Jesus is also portrayed as the fulfillment of the kingly and messianic promises in the Psalms. Psalms like Psalm 2, which speaks of God's anointed king and His victory over the nations, point to Jesus as the ultimate King who establishes God's eternal Kingdom. Similarly, Psalm 110, which declares that the Lord said to the Messiah, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool," finds its fulfillment in Jesus, who ascended to the Father's right hand and will return to judge the living and the dead.

In addition to His role as the suffering servant and victorious king, Jesus also embodies the grace and mercy found in the Psalms. As the ultimate intercessor, Jesus is the one who not only fulfills the psalmists' cries for mercy and salvation but also offers grace to all who call on His name. Through Jesus, the Psalms take on new meaning as we see God's grace in a tangible, personal way through His life, death, and resurrection.

Jesus also used the Psalms to teach His disciples and deepen their understanding of God's work in the world. After His resurrection, in Luke 24:44, Jesus said to His followers: "Everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." This statement reveals that the Psalms, along with the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures, foreshadowed the coming of the Messiah and His redemptive work.

For Christians, the Psalms are no longer just ancient songs of Israel but also songs of Jesus, revealing His heart for the Father, His deep connection to humanity, and His mission to bring grace and salvation to all (Psalm 22:26-30). As we read the Psalms, we can encounter the grace of God made manifest in Jesus, whose life was the ultimate expression of the love, mercy, and steadfast kindness that the Psalmists longed for.

## **Healing Through Lament and Prayer**

“For the director of music. A maskil of the Sons of Korah. As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, my God” (Psalm 42:1).

A maskil is a term used in the titles of certain Psalms in the Hebrew Bible, often translated as “a skillful song” or “a contemplative psalm.” The word MASKIL comes from the Hebrew root S-K-L (śākal), which means “to act wisely” or “to give insight.”<sup>74</sup> Therefore, a maskil is generally understood as a psalm intended to teach or impart wisdom, often through deep reflection or meditation on God’s ways.

These psalms often contain rich theological and moral insights, and they may be focused on understanding God’s actions, the nature of wisdom, or the complexities of human experience. Some scholars believe that the maskil psalms were also meant to be sung or recited in a way that encouraged deep thought and personal reflection.

While not all psalms with the title “maskil” necessarily have the same style or purpose, the term generally

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<sup>74</sup>What does ‘maskil’ mean in the Bible? BibleHub.com.  
[www.biblehub.com/q/what\\_does\\_'maskil'\\_mean\\_in\\_the\\_bible.htm](http://www.biblehub.com/q/what_does_'maskil'_mean_in_the_bible.htm)



signifies that the psalm has a reflective, instructive, or wisdom-oriented nature. Examples of psalms titled “maskil” include Psalm 32, Psalm 42, and Psalm 44.

## **God Meets Us in Our Pain**

God’s grace is not only evident in the act of bringing our pain before Him, but also in how He meets us in those moments of despair. In Psalm 42, the psalmist struggles with deep sorrow and a sense of distance from God: “Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me” (Psalm 42:5)? This psalm beautifully illustrates the process of moving through sorrow by engaging with God. The psalmist does not hide his emotions or attempt to gloss over his pain. Instead, he confronts his soul’s turmoil directly and brings it before God in prayer. Yet, even amid his lament, there is an underlying recognition that God is still the source of his hope: “Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God” (Psalm 42:11).

The deepest longing of my heart is for God to be my greatest joy. We weren’t created to be content with merely God’s blessings; we were made to desire God Himself above all else. This desire for God’s presence and His true joy often comes into sharp focus during life’s trials. It is precisely in our moments of distress that our need for hope becomes most apparent.

When do we most need hope? The psalmist—here the sons of Korah, not David—gives us a clear answer: when our souls are disturbed, downcast, or deeply troubled. These two words, “downcast” and “disturbed,” come from the Hebrew words “shâchach” (despaired)<sup>75</sup> and “hâmâh” (troubled).<sup>76</sup> A more

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<sup>75</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7817/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7817/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

accurate translation might be, “Why, my soul, are you disturbed? Why are you troubled within me?” It’s in these moments of deep distress, when we feel overwhelmed, that we need hope the most. The psalmist offers a simple but powerful solution: “Put your hope in God.”

## **What Does It Look Like to Put Our Hope in God When Our Soul Is Troubled?**

When we are facing difficult moments, when our hearts are heavy, putting our hope in God means continuing to praise Him, even in the storm. The Hebrew word for praise is “yadah”, which means to give thanks.<sup>77</sup> So, to put our hope in God is to give Him thanks, even while we’re still troubled. We praise Him because, as the psalmist says, “He is my Savior, my God”. This act of praising God in our pain is one of the ways we place our trust in Him.

This brings us to another beautiful Scripture: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Here, Paul calls God the “God of hope”. Of all the characteristics of God—His power, His knowledge, His omnipresence—one of the most profound and often overlooked is that He is the God of hope. If you’re feeling hopeless, if you’re facing a situation that feels impossible, bring it to the God of hope. When you trust in Him, He will fill you with joy and peace (Romans 15:13).

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<sup>76</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1993/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1993/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>77</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3034/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3034/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

Do we believe that God is the God of hope? Do we believe He can save those who are suffering, heal the sick, and preserve us when we're in danger? If we do, then when our souls are troubled, we will give thanks "praise" to the God of hope, trusting in His ability to act.

The source of our hope is found in God. As Paul writes, "May the God of hope... fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him" (Romans 15:13). Our hope is not based on circumstances but on the unchanging, all-powerful nature of God. As Christians, our hope comes from God, the author of hope.

At one point, we were "without hope and without God" (Ephesians 2:12). But when we set our hope on God, our lives are changed. Hope rooted in anything other than God will eventually fail us, but when we attach our hope to Him, we experience life with joy and peace, no matter the circumstances.

J. Lyth's simple yet insightful outline of Romans 15:13 is worth sharing:

I. The privileges of true Christians:

1. Joy
2. Peace
3. Hope

II. The method of securing them:

1. God, the source
2. Faith in Christ, the means
3. The Holy Spirit, the agent<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>J. Lyth D.D. Christian Privileges. BibleHub.com  
[www.biblehub.com/sermons/auth/lyth/christian\\_privileges.htm](http://www.biblehub.com/sermons/auth/lyth/christian_privileges.htm)

Paul's prayer is not merely a hopeful wish but a powerful statement. In Greek, the word "may" in "may the God of hope fill you" doesn't imply a possibility, as we might assume. It's not that we might experience hope; it's a promise that we will be filled with hope, joy, and peace. This is a work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, making us overflow with hope.

Before Paul declares God as the "God of hope" in Romans 15:13, he gives the greatest example of God delivering on hope: the long-awaited Messiah. The Jews had hoped for a Savior for centuries, and God delivered in a way they never expected—through Jesus Christ, the hope of the world, for both Jews and Gentiles. This is why God is called the God of hope.

In Romans 15:12, Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah: "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in Him the Gentiles will hope" (Isaiah 11:10).

This hope is not just for the Jews but for all nations and all ethnicities. It's a hope for salvation, for the coming Messiah, for Jesus. And through Jesus, we can now wait for eternal salvation with joy and confidence.

So how do we have hope "elpis"—an expectation of good<sup>79</sup>—when we're facing troubling times? How do we expect good from bad? We trust in God. Trusting in God, knowing He is the God of hope, allows us to see hope even in the darkest times.

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<sup>79</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1680/kjv/tr/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1680/kjv/tr/0-1/)

Years ago, I met with local pastors every week for lunch. One day, a pastor shared how, after a Sunday service filled with joy and peace, he walked to the back of the sanctuary and saw that the Vacation Bible School (VBS) sign-up sheet had only one name on it—his wife's. He said, "I was so discouraged." One of the other pastors asked, "What do you do about it?" In a situation like that, it feels hopeless. How can you run a VBS with only one volunteer?

But that's where Romans 15 comes in. The answer to hopelessness is God—the God of hope. You take it to God, trust that He will provide, and trust in His timing. The power of the Holy Spirit will fill you with peace, joy, and hope, even when the circumstances don't change immediately.

At the next pastors' meeting, the same pastor smiled and said, "The congregation was so filled with joy and God's love in the service that they forgot all about the VBS sign-up sheet. The next day, calls started coming in, asking to sign up. We ended up with more than enough volunteers."

God is faithful to bring hope and peace, even in the most discouraging situations. Trust in the God of hope, and He will fill you with joy, peace, and overflowing hope.

The healing aspect of grace is often most visible in these moments of lament. When we express our pain and frustrations before God, we invite His grace to work in ways we cannot imagine. We are directly connected to the mighty deeds of the past, not because they were merely the exploits of our ancestors, but because they were the works of God Himself, and He is still with us today. This truth is echoed in Psalm 44, where the psalmist acknowledges

that it was not by their strength, but by God's power, that their forefathers triumphed. Just as God was with them, guiding and delivering them, He remains with us now, working in our lives (Psalm 44:1-3).

### **Psalm 44: Crying Out for Help and Trusting God's Faithfulness**

Psalm 44 is another poignant example, where the people of Israel feel defeated and abandoned. The psalmist cries out to God, asking why He has allowed the nation to suffer: "Awake, Lord! Why do You sleep? Rouse Yourself! Do not reject us forever" (Psalm 44:23). Despite their sense of abandonment, the psalmist clings to the hope that God will not forsake them. We learn from the psalmist the power of processing our grief through sustained prayer. This kind of prayer—deep, honest, and raw—is an important part of the healing process. In Psalm 55, David models the kind of prayer that doesn't shy away from expressing pain, betrayal, and fear. He asks God to hear his cry and to act swiftly: "Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea; hear me and answer me" (Psalm 55:1). This prayer acknowledges the psalmist's need for immediate divine intervention, and yet it is grounded in a relationship with God. God's grace meets David in his darkest moment and allows him to trust that God will act on his behalf. In Christ, we have the assurance that God hears our prayers, for we have been brought near to Him (Ephesians 2:13) and can boldly approach His throne of grace with confidence (Hebrews 4:16).

This nearness to God doesn't mean we're spared from hardship—in fact, Scripture is honest about the reality of suffering in the life of the believer.

Even when we're walking closely with God, there may be times when it feels like we are surrounded by difficulty or even targeted because of our faith. Yet even in those moments, God's love remains unshakable.

### **Psalm 44:22 → Romans 8:36**

"For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

- Paul uses this verse to highlight the suffering Christians endure for the sake of Christ. Paul quotes it to show that, despite hardship, nothing can separate believers from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

This reminder—that nothing can separate us from God's love—is especially powerful when we face betrayal, rejection, or deep personal pain. One of the most painful moments in David's life was not a military defeat, but a relational wound.

### **David's Chief Advisor Betrays Him**

David had received some disturbing news: "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom" (2 Samuel 15:31). David's heart must have been torn at this revelation, for Ahithophel was not only his trusted chief advisor, but also someone he had relied on for wise counsel for many years. And now, this man—the brother of ruin<sup>80</sup>, as his name means—had joined in the rebellion against David's throne.

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<sup>80</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h302/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h302/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

To fully understand the weight of this moment, we must look at the circumstances surrounding Absalom's revolt. Absalom, David's third son, had spent years subtly building his following, especially among the people of Judah's rural areas. He had grown popular through his charisma, his royal pretensions, and his ability to connect with the common people. Absalom's beauty and charm, combined with his extravagant lifestyle and impressive entourage, made him the ideal candidate to challenge David. Over time, Absalom had promised a better future for the people if he were in power, sowing discontent with David's reign (2 Samuel 15:1-6). What began as a simple rebellion turned into a full-scale plot to overthrow David.

In the moment captured by 2 Samuel 15:31, David is not only grappling with the rebellion of his son but also the betrayal of his most trusted advisor. Ahithophel, who had stood by David through thick and thin, was now advising Absalom. The situation was grave, and David, knowing he had no certainty of who could be trusted, cried out to God: "LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness" (2 Samuel 15:31). This prayer was no mere request—it was an expression of David's utter dependence on God in a time of betrayal and confusion.

Psalms 55:12-14 gives us a deeper insight into David's heart during this moment of personal betrayal. David laments:

"For it is not an enemy who taunts me—then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—then I could hide from him.



But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng."

David's words echo the depth of his pain. The betrayal wasn't from an enemy he could have expected or hidden from; it was from Ahithophel, a man who had once been his confidant, his trusted companion in the house of God. They had shared moments of counsel and fellowship. To have such a person turn against him must have felt like a wound to the very soul.

But it's not just the betrayal that stings—it's the closeness of the relationship. David's relationship with Ahithophel was not superficial. They had shared counsel, not just in matters of state, but in spiritual matters as well. The friendship between David and Ahithophel had been one of deep trust. Yet, in this tragic moment, that trust was shattered, and David was left grappling with the uncertainty of who he could trust.

Ahithophel's betrayal is made all the more poignant when we understand the significance of his name. The name Ahithophel means "brother of ruin" or "brother of folly." At this moment, his role as a traitor seems almost predestined, as if his very name was a warning. His wisdom, which had once been as valuable as the words of God Himself (2 Samuel 16:23), had now turned against David, conspiring with Absalom to bring him down.

David's prayer to God—asking that Ahithophel's counsel be turned to foolishness—was not simply about stopping Absalom's plans.

It was a plea for God to intervene in such a way that Ahithophel's wisdom, once revered by both David and Absalom, would be rendered powerless. David knew that this advisor's counsel had been a source of great strength in the past, but now he prayed for God to turn it into foolishness for the sake of his survival.

This prayer of David's is profound because it demonstrates a deep understanding of God's power over all things. David knew that Ahithophel's wisdom was a gift from God, but God could just as easily turn that wisdom into folly to frustrate the plans of the wicked. It reminds us that, even when it seems like everything is conspiring against us, God is sovereign. He can turn what seems like a certain defeat into a victory far greater than we can imagine.

In this moment, David gives us a powerful lesson: when we don't know who to trust, when it feels like the world is turning against us, we must turn to the Lord. God has the power to turn the tide of any situation, to make the wisdom of the world seem like foolishness, and to bring about His plans for our good, even when we don't see a way forward.

David's actions following his prayer reveal a deep trust in God's ability to intervene. Rather than passively waiting, he sent Hushai—a loyal friend and trusted advisor—back to Jerusalem with a strategic plan to counter Ahithophel's counsel. Hushai's name fittingly means "swiftly,"<sup>81</sup> and he lived up to it by acting swiftly and decisively. This moment underscores a powerful truth: even as we pray for God's intervention, we are also called to act in faith, trusting that God is already moving swiftly on our behalf.

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<sup>81</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2365/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2365/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

God answered David's prayer. Though Ahithophel's advice remained brilliant, it was ultimately rejected by Absalom in favor of Hushai's counsel. That decision set off a chain of events that led to Ahithophel's tragic suicide and the eventual downfall of Absalom. The very counsel once esteemed as if it came from the mouth of God was rendered ineffective, proving that God can turn even the most threatening schemes into nothing.

In the end, David's prayer was fulfilled, and we witnessed how God can transform dire circumstances into opportunities for His glory. David's grief over Absalom's rebellion also reveals a deeper layer of grace. Though Absalom had betrayed him, David's love for his son remained—a poignant reflection of God's love for us. Just as David mourned over Absalom, our Heavenly Father's love was so great that He sent His own Son, Jesus, to redeem us, even while we were still in rebellion.

David's prayer, "Turn it, Lord," is a declaration of faith, believing that God can turn our trials into testimonies, our setbacks into victories, and our pain into purpose. In moments of betrayal, uncertainty, or hardship, we can follow David's example, trusting that God is always working, turning things for our good and His glory.

The grace found in the Psalms affirms this truth. God not only hears the psalmist's lament but uses it to draw them closer to Himself. Lament, when expressed through honest prayer, becomes a pathway to healing. It creates space for grace to meet us in our pain. Through lament, we affirm that God is greater than our struggles and that His grace is sufficient for every sorrow.

Sometimes, He stills the storm around us (Mark 4:39), and other times, like Peter on the water, He strengthens us to walk through it (Matthew 14:27–31). In both, His presence and power remain our hope.

## **The Redemption of Lament in the Psalms**

Lament is not just about venting our emotions; it is also a path toward healing and redemption. In Psalm 69, David cries out for help, feeling overwhelmed by his enemies and his despair: “Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck” (Psalm 69:1). There has been slander that has caused David much pain but when you are suffering look outward to the victory you have through the cross of Christ, praise God and minister to others (Psalm 69:32).

David’s heartfelt cry in Psalm 69 not only reveals his suffering but also points prophetically to the suffering of Christ. His pain and rejection become a foreshadowing of the Messiah’s own experience. This connection is made clear in the New Testament, where specific verses from Psalm 69 are applied directly to Jesus.

### **Psalm 69:9 → John 2:17; Romans 15:3**

“Zeal for your house has consumed me.”

- John applies this when Jesus cleanses the Temple.
- Paul references it to show Christ’s selflessness.

## **Psalm 69:21 → Matthew 27:34; John 19:28-29**

“For my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.”

- Prophecy is fulfilled when Jesus is given vinegar on the cross.

### **From Lament to Trust: Prophecy, Siege, and the Blood That Speaks a Better Word**

Psalm 69, like many others, moves from deep distress to confident trust in God’s future deliverance: “I will praise God’s name in song and glorify Him with thanksgiving” (Psalm 69:30). The act of lament allows for a recognition of the situation’s gravity, but it also opens the door for the psalmist to proclaim the greatness of God and His future intervention. In this space between sorrow and hope, faith begins to rise. As John Newton beautifully put it, “Unbelief talks of delays; faith knows that properly there can be no such thing.”<sup>82</sup>

This kind of faith was not only expressed in personal lament but also echoed through the prophetic voices of Scripture. Centuries before it came to pass, the prophet Isaiah foretold the rise of siege works and battle towers against Jerusalem (Isaiah 29:2-4). Long before the Romans placed an eagle on a standard, Moses warned of a besieging nation coming “as the eagle swoops down” (Deuteronomy 28:49-53). Moses also prophesied that the siege would be so severe that parents would resort to eating their children.

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<sup>82</sup>John Newton. Letter VII to the Reverend Mr. R\_\_\_\_\_. In the Works of the Reverend John Newton. New York: Robert Carter, 1847. Page 337.

Asaph described the bloodshed, saying it would flow like water (Psalm 79:1-4), while Micah predicted that the city would become a heap of ruins (Micah 3:9-12). These prophecies were ultimately fulfilled in AD 70. While the psalmist calls for God's vengeance on the invaders (Psalm 79:12), we learn that Jesus' blood would be poured out in Jerusalem and His blood "speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (Hebrews 12:24), because Jesus' blood brings the forgiveness of sins.

This shift from judgment to mercy highlights the transformative power of God's grace, which invites us to call out to Him in our distress. In Psalm 70, we find a brief yet urgent cry for God's help in the face of distress and opposition. David pleads for God to hasten His deliverance and save him from his enemies, who seek his life. He expresses his complete dependence on God's mercy and longs for His intervention. Despite his desperate situation, David remains confident in God's ability to rescue him, and he calls on others to join in praising the Lord for His salvation.

**Key Verse:** "Make haste, O God, to deliver me! O Lord, make haste to help me" — Psalm 70:1 (ESV).

This psalm highlights God's grace in offering immediate help and refuge to those who call upon Him in times of need, reminding believers that God is quick to respond to their cries for deliverance.

Psalm 74 is a communal lament where the psalmist cries out to God over the destruction of the Temple and the suffering of His people. It expresses deep anguish, questioning why God seems distant and allowing enemies to triumph. However, amidst the sorrow, the psalmist recalls God's past mighty deeds,

His power over creation, and His ability to deliver. The psalm ends with a plea for God to act, to remember His covenant, and to bring justice against those who mock Him. This psalm teaches the grace found in honest lament and prayer, reminding believers that even in distress, they can seek God's intervention and faithfulness.

**Key Verse:** "Yet God is my King from of old, working salvation in the midst of the Earth" — Psalm 74:12 (ESV).

Psalm 77 is a heartfelt lament where the psalmist struggles with distress and feels abandoned by God. In verses 1-4, he directs his thoughts and feelings toward God, crying out in anguish but finding no immediate relief. As the psalm progresses, the psalmist shifts his focus from present suffering to remembering God's past faithfulness and mighty works. Reflecting on God's deliverance, especially in Israel's history, renews his trust. This psalm highlights the grace in lament, showing that honest prayer, even when relief is delayed, can lead to restored faith and hope.

**Key Verse:** "I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old" — Psalm 77:11 (ESV).

This act of remembering serves as a foundation for the psalmist's reflection and meditation. "I remembered my songs in the night. My heart meditated and my spirit asked" (Psalm 77:6). Meditation consists in large part of asking the right questions, "My spirit asked".<sup>83</sup> The psalmist reflects on

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<sup>83</sup>Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller. *A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms: The Songs of Jesus*. P.180. Viking Publication. 2015.

God's grace revealed through the exodus, and as believers, we have the greater exodus from sin and death through Jesus (Luke 9:31).

### **Psalm 79: A Cry for Mercy Amid Desolation**

Psalm 79 is a raw lament over the devastation of Jerusalem, likely written after the Babylonian invasion. The psalmist pleads with God to show mercy to broken and humiliated people, asking Him to remember His compassion and not hold their sins against them. It's an honest prayer from a place of national grief, yet rooted in hope that God's mercy will prevail.

**Key Verse:** "Help us, God our Savior, for the glory of Your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name's sake" (Psalm 79:9).

This psalm reminds us that even in devastation, we can boldly ask for grace—not because we deserve it, but for the sake of His name and faithfulness.

### **Psalm 88: Grace in Lament and Honest Prayer**

Psalm 88, written by Heman the Ezrahite, is one of the darkest laments in Scripture. Heman, known for his wisdom and service (1 Kings 4:31, 1 Chronicles 25:5-6), likely spent his life helping and leading others in worship, yet he experienced deep personal suffering. Unlike most psalms, Psalm 88 ends without hope, trust, or resolution, making it one of the few that do not turn toward praise or assurance. The only other psalm like this is Psalm 39. While both psalms express deep anguish, Psalm 39 ends with a more hopeful note than Psalm 88.



In Psalm 39, although the psalmist is wrestling with the brevity of life and suffering, there is still a plea for God's intervention and a desire for deliverance: "Hear my prayer, Lord, listen to my cry for help; do not be deaf to my weeping" (Psalm 39:12). The psalm ends with a request for God to help and deliver him, showing some measure of hope, even though it is a desperate cry.

### **Why Would God Include Psalm 88 in Scripture?**

Psalm 88 reminds us that God welcomes even our darkest prayers. It teaches us that faith isn't about always feeling hopeful, but about turning to God, even in moments of despair. Psalm 88 challenges the lie Satan tells in Job 1:9-11, where he claims that no one serves God without expecting something in return. Psalm 88 stands as a testament that true worship isn't about receiving blessings, but about seeking God, even when everything feels lost.

Even in our deepest suffering, God invites us to cry out honestly. Worship is not just for seasons of joy but also for seasons of sorrow, proving that our faith is not dependent on circumstances, but on the God who hears, even in the silence.

**Key Verse:** "O Lord, God of my salvation, I cry out day and night before You" — Psalm 88:1 (ESV).

### **Psalm 102: Grace in Lament and Honest Prayer**

Psalm 102 is a heartfelt cry of distress, expressing deep suffering and sorrow. The psalmist feels weak, abandoned, and overwhelmed (v.1-11), yet during his pain, he acknowledges God's eternal nature and faithfulness (v.12-17).

Though personal suffering seems overwhelming, he finds hope in God's unchanging grace and His promise to restore His people.

In lament, grace sustains us, and God's sovereignty assures us that our pain is never the final word.

"He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; He will not despise their plea" (Psalm 102:17). There is no such thing as unanswered prayer.

### **Psalm 120: Grace in Lament and Honest Prayer**

Psalm 120 is a song of lament from one of the pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem, expressing distress and deep sorrow due to the falsehood and strife encountered in a hostile environment.

Psalm 120 is the first of fifteen "Songs of Ascent" (Psalms 120–134), which were sung by worshipers as they ascended Mount Zion for the annual feasts.

The psalmist cries out to God, seeking deliverance from deceitful and malicious people (v.2). It highlights the pain of living among those who do not align with God's truth and the brokenness that results from such relationships.

However, the psalmist turns to God in honest prayer, acknowledging His sovereign power and expressing trust in God's ability to deliver and protect. The psalm ends with a sense of despair over the environment, but the psalmist remains steadfast in seeking refuge in God alone.

This psalm exemplifies that lamenting and seeking God's intervention is a form of worship, showing that it's okay to bring honest grief and pain before God, trusting that His grace will bring healing and eventual deliverance.

**Key Verse:** "In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me" — Psalm 120:1 (ESV).

### **Psalm 137: Grace in Lament and Honest Prayer**

Psalm 137 is a heartfelt lament expressing the sorrow and anguish of the Israelites during their exile in Babylon. As they remember Jerusalem, they are overcome with grief and longing, unable to sing the songs of their homeland in a foreign land (v.1-4). The psalmist recounts the mocking of their captors, who demanded they sing songs of Zion, further deepening their pain (v.3). The psalm shifts from deep sorrow to an honest expression of frustration and desire for justice, as the psalmist calls for God's vengeance on the Babylonians for their role in the destruction of Jerusalem (v.7-9). Despite the raw emotion and desire for judgment, the psalm still holds space for honest prayer before God, reflecting the truth that it's okay to bring our deepest emotions and even anger to God.

Psalm 137 reminds us that grace in lament includes the freedom to express our pain and longing honestly before God, even when it includes hard and raw emotions. God's grace allows for the fullness of human expression in prayer, trusting that He understands our deepest sorrows and will bring justice in His time.

**Key Verse:** "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land" — Psalm 137:4 (ESV)?

## **Psalm 142: Grace in Lament and Honest Prayer**

Psalm 142 is a deeply personal lament in which David cries out to God during a time of intense distress and feelings of isolation. David is hiding in a cave, fleeing from King Saul, who is seeking to kill him out of jealousy and fear. This period of David's life was marked by uncertainty and fear, as he was constantly on the run. The psalmist expresses his sense of being alone and trapped, with no one to help him (v.4). In this moment of despair, David pours out his complaint to God (v.1-2).

This psalm is associated with the time described in 1 Samuel 22:1-2 when David sought refuge in the cave of Adullam while Saul pursued him. David, feeling abandoned and persecuted, was joined by his family and a group of discontented men. At this low point, David cried out to God for deliverance and guidance. The cave of Adullam is located in the Valley of Elah.<sup>84</sup>



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<sup>84</sup>[www.flickr.com/photos/lexijoy/4730939276/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/lexijoy/4730939276/)

Despite this darkness, David turns to God in honest prayer, expressing both his pain and his trust in God's ability to deliver him (v.5-7). The psalm highlights the grace of God's presence even in distress. Though David is in a dire situation, his prayer reveals that he recognizes God as his refuge and trusts in His rescue. Even in times of feeling forsaken, God's presence is a source of strength, and He provides a path forward through His faithfulness and mercy.

**Key Verse:** "I cry to you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living'" — Psalm 142:5 (ESV).

In Psalm 143, the psalmist is in the depths of his soul's distress, feeling persecuted and abandoned. Yet even amid his plea for mercy, he acknowledges that God is his refuge and his source of hope: "I spread out my hands to You; I thirst for You like a parched land" (Psalm 143:6). This imagery of thirst reveals the deep longing for God that is stirred by the psalmist's pain. Lament, in this sense, is not a futile exercise but a journey toward deeper dependence on God. It moves from raw emotion to a deeper relationship, reminding us that God's grace is often most tangible when we are most vulnerable before Him.

### **God Hears Us Because He Loves Us**

David said, "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened" (Psalm 66:18). But in another place, he prayed, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications! Answer me in Your faithfulness, in Your righteousness! And do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight no one living is righteous" (Psalm 143:1-2).

David, recognizing his unrighteousness, asked God to hear him based not on his merit, but on God's faithfulness and righteousness. And God answered. Similarly, your Heavenly Father hears your prayers, not because of your goodness, but because of His goodness and love for you. With the righteousness of God in Christ, we can approach Him boldly, knowing that He hears us and responds in grace.

What about John 9:31, where it says, "God does not hear sinners"? The Jews believed this, but Jesus didn't. He encouraged us to pray continually, saying things like "When you pray" (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and sharing parables to teach us to pray (Matthew 6:7, Luke 18:1, 10-14). The Bible never discourages prayer. Instead, it urges us to "devote yourselves to prayer" (Colossians 4:2) and "pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Now, consider 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But keep reading: "I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven for His name's sake" (1 John 2:12).

In the New Covenant, we're forgiven not because we confess our sins, but because of Jesus' name. The belief that we need to confess or cleanse ourselves before God will hear, forgive, or accept us stems from the Old Covenant. But on the cross, Jesus dealt with all our sins—every single one, both the ones we've confessed and the ones we haven't.

This truth frees us to pray with confidence, knowing that our forgiveness is secure in Christ.

However, while our position in Christ is secure, there are still things that can hinder our prayers. So, the question remains:

### **What Truly Hinders Prayer?**

Jesus said, “And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive” (Matthew 21:22).

The greatest hindrance to prayer isn’t sin but unbelief. Notice that unbelief doesn’t stop God from hearing us; it just stops us from receiving from Him.

Effective prayer is rooted in faith, trusting that God hears us no matter who we are or what we’ve done, because of who Jesus is and what He has done for us. John emphasizes this idea when he talks about confession, which means “agreeing with God”.<sup>85</sup> Agree that Jesus has already dealt with all your sins, once and for all. Agree that God is good, loves you, and hears your prayers.

You might be thinking, “But I don’t know how to pray. I’m afraid I’ll pray wrong.” Brennan Manning, in *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, writes, “There is no such thing as bad prayer. Your Heavenly Father delights in hearing from you. Whatever is on your mind, tell Him about it. Share your hurts, your worries, your hopes, your dreams, your secret fears, and struggles.”<sup>86</sup>

So, don’t worry about getting the words just right—what matters most is coming to God with an open heart. The key is confidence. “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that

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<sup>85</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3670/kjv/tr/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3670/kjv/tr/0-1/)

<sup>86</sup>Brennan Manning. *The Ragamuffin Gospel*. Multnomah Books. 2005. Page 71.

He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we asked of Him" (1 John 5:14-15).

You can have confidence in your Father's goodness when you pray. Whatever your need is today, approach your Heavenly Father with the confidence that He hears your prayers and will act on your behalf (Deuteronomy 33:26).<sup>87</sup>

## **Grace Empowers Honesty**

Grace empowers us to be completely honest with God in our laments. The psalms teach us that we do not need to sanitize our pain or pretend that everything is fine. Instead, we are invited to bring our deepest struggles, frustrations, and sorrows before God, knowing that He hears us and is with us in our pain. The grace we receive in these moments of lament is not just the comfort of God's presence, but also the healing of our hearts as we express our pain and allow Him to work through it.

Lament does not have to be an isolated or solitary experience; rather, it can deepen our relationship with God and open the door for His grace to heal, restore, and transform. It is through lament that we come to understand that God's grace is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9), His love is unchanging (Romans 8:38-39), and His promises are always faithful (2 Corinthians 1:20). By following the psalmists' example of honest prayer, we too can experience the grace of God in our struggles and find hope in His steadfast love.

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<sup>87</sup>Paul Ellis. Does Sin Hinder Our Prayers? Escape to Reality. November 18, 2021. [www.escape toreality.org/2021/11/18/does-sin-hinder-our-prayers/](http://www.escape toreality.org/2021/11/18/does-sin-hinder-our-prayers/)



### **Small Groups Week 5: God's Sovereignty, Joy, & Lament**

- Introduction: The Psalms as the Songs of Jesus (Pages 52-54)
- Chapter 12: The Eternal Grace of God's Sovereignty (Psalm 2, 8, 29, 33, 47, 90, 93, 97, 103, 110)
- Chapter 13: The Grace of Joy in God's Salvation (Psalm 16, 40, 51, 92, 116)
- Chapter 14: Grace in Lament and Honest Prayer (Psalm 13, 22, 42, 44, 55, 69, 70, 74, 77, 79, 88, 102, 120, 137, 142, 143)

Question #1: In Psalm 2, the nations rebel against God's sovereignty, yet His plan remains unshaken. What does this teach us about the relationship between human rebellion and God's ultimate control over history? How does recognizing God's eternal sovereignty impact the way you handle the uncertainties and challenges in your own life?

Question #2: In Psalm 16, David finds joy in knowing God as his ultimate refuge and salvation, even amidst difficult circumstances. How can we cultivate a similar, unshakable joy in our lives, knowing that Jesus is our ultimate salvation?

Question #3: In Psalm 40, David sings a new song of praise after experiencing God's deliverance. How does the grace of Jesus' salvation inspire a "new song" in our own lives, and how can that joy be a testimony to others?

Question #4: When we experience deep sorrow or betrayal, as the psalmists did, how can we distinguish between lamenting in faith versus lamenting out of hopelessness? How might God's grace guide us in those raw moments of despair? What examples of hope can we find in the Psalms, and which Psalms speak most powerfully to you about finding hope in suffering?

Question #5: In Psalm 42, the psalmist chooses to "put his hope in God" despite feeling downcast. How does praising God during personal struggles change our perspective on hope, and how can we cultivate this kind of trust in God even when our circumstances seem overwhelming?

Additional Questions/Comments/Notes:

**Chapter 15:**  
**The Final Grace: Hope in God's Future Salvation**  
**Psalms 14, Psalm 53, Psalm 118, Psalm 145**



## **Chapter 15: The Final Grace: Hope in God's Future Salvation**

As we journey through the Psalms, we encounter a consistent theme of God's grace that points beyond the immediate circumstances to a future hope—one that speaks of ultimate salvation, redemption, and restoration. The grace that we experience in the present is a foretaste of the greater grace to come when God will fulfill His promises to His people, bringing about complete and eternal salvation. This final grace of hope is not just wishful thinking or a distant dream; it is rooted in God's character and His faithful promises.

In this chapter, we explore how grace in the Psalms directs our hearts and minds toward the future hope of God's ultimate salvation. Through psalms like Psalm 53, Psalm 118, and Psalm 145, we are reminded that God's grace is not limited to the present moment but points to the fulfillment of His promises—promises of deliverance, restoration, and eternal life. This future salvation is not just for the ancient Israelites, but for all God's people, who live in the light of His unbreakable covenant.

### **Grace That Points to Future Redemption: Psalm 14 & Psalm 53**

The Psalms often express a longing for salvation that is not yet fully realized. Psalm 53 and Psalm 14 are essentially the same except for verses 5 and 6. Psalm 53 offers a sobering reflection on the fallen state of humanity and the pervasive nature of sin:

"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good" (Psalm 53:1). This psalm reminds us of the brokenness of the world and the need for divine intervention. But even in this acknowledgment of human corruption, there is an undercurrent of hope—hope that God will bring justice and deliverance.

In Psalm 53, the psalmist expresses the yearning for God to act in righteousness, to restore and save His people: "Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores His people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad" (Psalm 53:6)! The future salvation here is not just about individual forgiveness, but a corporate restoration—salvation that will bring Israel, and ultimately the world, into a right relationship with God. This is the grace that points to the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises, a salvation that will fully heal the brokenness of humanity and the world.

Just as the psalmist longs for the coming of salvation, we, too, as believers in the New Covenant, look forward to the day when Christ will return to fully and finally deliver His people. God's grace, in its final form, is revealed in the ultimate restoration and redemption of all things. The hope of God's future salvation is the culmination of all the grace we have experienced in this life, bringing us into the eternal joy and peace that God has promised.

### **Grace in the Present, Hope for the Future: Psalm 118**

Psalm 118 is a declaration of God's goodness and deliverance, and it also contains a powerful reminder of the future salvation to which God's grace points.

The psalm begins with a call to give thanks for God's steadfast love: "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever" (Psalm 118:1). This refrain, "His love endures forever," is a reminder that God's grace is not temporary or conditional, but is enduring and eternal. This timeless truth is reflected in Scripture, where we see how God's plan unfolds through His love. For instance:

**Psalm 118:22-23 → Matthew 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7**

"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."

- Jesus applies this to Himself, showing that though He was rejected, He is the foundation of God's Kingdom.

This theme of salvation and deliverance continues as the psalm moves forward, looking toward a future time of hope. In verse 26, the psalmist prophesies: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Psalm 118:26). These words find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who came to bring salvation not just to Israel, but to the world. This future hope is realized in the person and work of Jesus, who inaugurated the Kingdom of God and ushered in the final grace of salvation through His life, death, and resurrection.

**Psalm 118:26 → Matthew 21:9; Mark 11:9; Luke 19:38; John 12:13**

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

- Sung during Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

The psalmist's words remind us that God's faithfulness in the past gives us confidence for the future. We live in the beautiful tension of the "already" of God's grace and the "not yet" of His complete redemption. In this space, we hold on to His promises, knowing He is both present now and preparing something greater still to come.

And speaking of promises and divine design—did you know there's something unique about the placement of Psalm 118 in the Bible?

- Psalm 118 is the middle chapter of the entire Bible.
- Psalm 117, just before it, is the shortest chapter.
- Psalm 119, right after it, is the longest.
- There are 594 chapters before and 594 chapters after Psalm 118.
- Add them together and you get 1188 chapters.
- And Psalm 118:8? That's considered the central verse of the whole Bible.<sup>88</sup>

Coincidence? Maybe. But it's beautifully fitting that the heart of Scripture points us to trust in the Lord.

"It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man" (Psalm 118:8). True security and hope are found in trusting God, not in human strength or wisdom.

## **The Future Kingdom of Grace: Psalm 145**

In Psalm 145, the psalmist declares the greatness of God and His sovereignty over all creation, while also looking forward to the fulfillment of God's promises to His people. "The Lord is trustworthy in all He promises and faithful in all He does" (Psalm 145:13).

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<sup>88</sup>Michelle de Campos. A Message From The Middle of the Bible.  
[www.kubik.org/lighter/middle.htm](http://www.kubik.org/lighter/middle.htm)

God's promises, including His promises of grace and salvation, are sure. His faithfulness is not just for the present, but for the future, where we will experience the full richness of His grace.

Psalm 145 was written in a much darker period of David's life, when his son, Absalom, had turned against him and started a rebellion. Amid his heartbreak, David once again writes a song of praise.

Psalm 145:5: "I recall the old days; I meditate on all You have done; I reflect "siyach" mediate, muse, speak, ponder, sing on your accomplishments."<sup>89</sup> When we dive into God's Word, when we pray, and when we sing, we are engaging in the act of "siyach", speaking God's Word or singing it over our lives, reflecting on the immense blessings He has poured out on us.

Is your past or your present robbing you of the joy of today?

Consider Paul—if anyone had a past the enemy could use against him, it was Paul. He had persecuted the early church and played a role in the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. And yet, Paul received such a powerful revelation of God's forgiveness that he could boldly declare, "Forgetting those things which are behind...I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13–14).

Consider David—his son tried to steal the throne, he faced relentless trials, and he had many moral failures. But like Paul, David didn't stay stuck in the past. Instead, he turned to God's Word, to prayer, and

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<sup>89</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7878/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7878/kjv/wlc/0-1/)



to worship. In Psalm 143:5, David wrote, "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that You have done," choosing to reflect on God's faithfulness rather than his failures.

Both Paul and David found joy and strength not by dwelling on their regrets or present struggles, but by fixing their eyes on God's grace, His unchanging character, and the glorious future He promised. They pressed forward—not because their paths were easy, but because God's mercy was greater than their past, and His call was more compelling than their pain.

In Christ, God has forgiven you of all your sins. He has completely forgiven you and declared, "Your sins and lawless deeds, I will remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17). Like Paul and David, God can take the tears of yesterday—whether it was David's heartbreak over Absalom's rebellion and death, or Paul's sorrow over those who rejected the Gospel (Philippians 3:18)—and turn them into miracles of tomorrow. David, despite his grief, would see Solomon rise to the throne and fulfill the vision God had placed in his heart, building the Temple and establishing peace in Israel. Likewise, Paul, though deeply burdened for the lost, witnessed countless lives transformed by the Gospel. From city to city, churches sprang up—Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus—each one a living testimony that God can bring beauty from brokenness and eternal fruit from even the deepest sorrow.

David declared, "He has given one to sit on my throne today while my own eyes see it" (1 Kings 1:48).

Despite the turmoil and disruption in the kingdom, nothing stopped God's plan from prospering in his life. In the same way, God can restore to you in abundance all that you have lost and use even the painful events of your past for your ultimate good.

God's Word promises, "The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard" (Isaiah 58:8). That means wherever you've been—whatever your past holds—God's glory goes behind you, and the blood of Jesus has already covered it. Your past is no longer defined by shame, failure, or regret, but by the redeeming power of Christ's finished work on the cross. So don't let your past rob you of today's joy. The same Savior who washed away your sin is the One who meets all your needs today. "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Philippians 4:19–20).

### **The Everlasting Kingdom and God's Generosity: A Glimpse of Future Salvation**

The psalmist speaks of God's Kingdom, declaring that the Lord's reign will be forever: "Your Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and Your dominion endures through all generations" (Psalm 145:13). This Kingdom, of which we are citizens through grace, will one day be fully established when Christ returns. The future salvation that the psalm points to is a salvation that includes the redemption of all creation, a renewal where God's grace will be fully manifest in the establishment of His eternal Kingdom.

For more information on the millennial reign of Christ, check out the book: *Living in the Last Days: A Practical Guide to Understanding Biblical Prophecy*.<sup>90</sup>

In verse 16, the psalmist also speaks of God's generosity, saying: "You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing" (Psalm 145:16). This is a picture of the abundance of grace that God will pour out in the future when His salvation is fully realized. However, we also experience this generosity today, as every need is met in Jesus, whether spiritual, emotional, or physical (Philippians 4:19). The fulfillment of this promise will be a time when every need is met, every sorrow is wiped away, and every injustice is corrected. The grace that we have experienced in part will be fully realized in the world to come.

### **Hope in the Final Grace: Eternal Life**

The hope of God's future salvation is not just about physical restoration or political deliverance, but about the ultimate redemption of humanity and all creation. The final grace we look forward to is the grace of eternal life, promised to all who believe in Christ. In the New Covenant, we understand that through Jesus, we have been promised eternal life—not just as a future hope, but as a present reality, guaranteed by the Holy Spirit.

However, the grace that we experience in this life is a shadow of the grace to come. As the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 8:18-19, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

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<sup>90</sup>Dr. Matthew Webster. *Living in the Last Days: A Practical Guide to Understanding Biblical Prophecy*. Kindle Direct Publishing. 2025.

The creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.” The ultimate fulfillment of God’s promises, including the promise of eternal life, is something we eagerly await.

Just as the psalmists longed for God’s ultimate salvation, so too do we look forward to the return of Christ and the establishment of His eternal Kingdom. In the creation of the New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 21-22), God’s grace will be fully realized, and His people will experience the fullness of His salvation, joy, and peace forever.

### **Living in Light of the Final Grace**

As we look at the Psalms and reflect on God’s grace, we see that the ultimate fulfillment of His grace is still to come. The grace that we experience in the present is a down payment, a preview of the greater grace that awaits us in the future. This hope is not a distant, wishful thought; it is a living, breathing reality that sustains us through life’s trials and struggles.

God’s future salvation is the final grace, the grace that brings everything to completion. It is the hope of eternal life, the restoration of all things, and the fulfillment of God’s promises to His people. As we live in this present age, we do so with the confidence that God’s promises are sure and that His grace will one day be fully revealed. In the meantime, we continue to trust in His present grace, knowing that it points us toward a future filled with His unshakable love, His perfect justice, and His eternal salvation.

## **The Final Fulfillment of God's Grace**

Throughout the Psalms, the psalmists frequently express both their trust in God's current faithfulness and their anticipation of His ultimate fulfillment of all things. This dual perspective—grace now and grace to come—offers profound hope to believers throughout the generations.

Psalm 102 provides a compelling example of this forward-looking hope. Written during a time of suffering, the psalmist cries out to God in distress, yet his lament quickly transitions into a declaration of faith:

"You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come" (Psalm 102:13).

Even in personal hardship, the psalmist clings to the assurance that God's grace will be revealed in the future. This passage echoes throughout Scripture, culminating in the New Testament's revelation of the New Heaven and New Earth, where God's grace reaches its final and complete manifestation.

## **The Coming of the Righteous King**

Psalm 72 is another powerful example of how God's grace points to the future. This psalm, attributed to Solomon, describes an ideal king who reigns with justice and righteousness, ensuring that the poor and needy are cared for:

"For He will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help" (Psalm 72:12).

Though this psalm may have originally described Solomon's reign, its ultimate fulfillment is found in Jesus Christ, the King of kings. His reign is marked by perfect justice and mercy, culminating in the final completion of salvation.

Jesus alluded to this hope when He declared: "The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free" (Luke 4:18).

The grace foretold in Psalm 72 is fully realized in Christ, whose Kingdom will one day be established in all its fullness, bringing lasting restoration to all who trust in Him.

### **The Grace That Renews All Things**

Psalm 85 captures the anticipation of a future restoration beautifully:

"Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs forth from the Earth, and righteousness looks down from Heaven" (Psalm 85:10-11).

This poetic imagery speaks of a time when God's grace will bring about a perfect harmony between Heaven and Earth. The psalmist recognizes that while God's grace is already present, its full realization is yet to come.

The Apostle John echoes this idea in Revelation 21:3-4:

"Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

This ultimate fulfillment of grace—the complete renewal of all creation—reflects the heart of the psalmist's longing. Just as the psalmists looked forward to God's future salvation, so too do we eagerly anticipate the day when His grace is fully revealed.

### **Living in Expectation of Final Grace**

While we wait for the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises, the Psalms teach us how to live with expectant faith. Psalm 37 encourages us to trust in the Lord and live righteously while awaiting His future deliverance: "Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:3-4).

This passage reminds us that even as we look ahead to God's final grace, we are called to actively trust and follow Him in the present. Our hope is not passive but a living, breathing faith that shapes our daily lives. We live in the tension between the "already" and the "not yet"—experiencing His grace now while anticipating the final fulfillment of His promises. This hope sustains us, strengthens us, and assures us that, in Christ, the best is yet to come. As we continue to walk in His grace, let us hold fast to the psalmist's words: "Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord" (Psalm 31:24).

**Chapter 16:**  
**The Grace of God's Guidance**  
**Psalm 1, Psalm 19, Psalm 25, Psalm 32, Psalm**  
**73, Psalm 131**

*Psalm 48:14*

**FOR THIS GOD IS OUR  
GOD FOR EVER AND  
EVER; HE WILL BE OUR  
GUIDE EVEN TO THE END.**



## **Chapter 16: The Grace of God's Guidance**

One of the most profound expressions of God's grace is His guidance. Throughout the Psalms, we see that God does not leave His people to navigate life alone, especially in times of uncertainty or decision-making. Instead, He offers wisdom, direction, and a path that leads to peace, righteousness, and life. As we journey through the complexities of life, God's guidance is not a cold, impersonal set of instructions but an act of grace that reveals His love, His wisdom, and His desire to be intimately involved in our daily lives. His desire is for our good, and that is why He is called our Good Shepherd.

In this chapter, we will explore how God's grace provides guidance, wisdom, and direction, particularly in times of confusion, struggle, and decision-making. Key psalms such as Psalm 1, Psalm 19, Psalm 25, Psalm 32, Psalm 73, and Psalm 131 reflect the grace that leads us in paths of righteousness and invites us to trust in God's wisdom and timing. These psalms highlight how God's grace serves as a guide, pointing us toward the ways of truth, peace, and purpose. Ultimately, Jesus is the embodiment of this truth, as He Himself declared, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Through Him, we find the ultimate guidance, wisdom, and direction for our lives. Moreover, the Holy Spirit, who dwells within every believer, continues to lead and empower us with God's wisdom, reminding us of the truth and helping us walk in God's will every day. As Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth (John 16:13), enabling us to live out God's plan with clarity and strength.

## **The Grace of God's Law and Wisdom: Psalm 1 & Psalm 19**

Psalm 1 begins with a stark contrast between the righteous and the wicked, showing us that the one who meditates on God's Law- day and night is like a tree planted by streams of water, yielding fruit in its season (Psalm 1:3). The psalmist reveals that the righteous man, who delights in God's Word, is rooted in God's guidance, and as a result, he experiences a life full of purpose and fruitfulness. This picture of the tree flourishing in God's presence represents the grace that God gives to those who seek His wisdom. His Word is not a burden but a source of life and stability.

From the very beginning of the Psalms, we are pointed to Jesus because the Psalms are the songs of Jesus — expressing His righteousness, His sufferings, and His ultimate triumph. Psalm 1 presents the picture of “the blessed man,” a figure that ultimately finds its fulfillment in Christ.

### **Psalm 1:1 – The Blessed Man**

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly...”

- Theologian John Gill sees this as referring ultimately to Christ, the truly blessed man, but also to believers who follow Him.

### **Psalm 1:2 – Delighting in the Law of the Lord**

“But his delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.”

- This speaks of Christ's perfect obedience and the believer's joy in God's Word.

- Meditation implies constant reflection and deep engagement, not just reading.

### **Psalm 1:3 – The Tree Planted by Waters**

“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water...”

- The tree represents the believer, firmly rooted in Christ.
- The water symbolizes grace, constantly nourishing and sustaining the righteous.

### **Psalm 1:4 – The Wicked Are Like Chaff**

“The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.”

- The wicked have no spiritual substance—they are easily scattered and judged.
- Chaff is useless and burned, pointing to divine judgment.

### **Psalm 1:5 – The Wicked Shall Not Stand**

“Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment...”

- They will have no defense before God on Judgment Day.
- Gill links this to the final separation of the righteous and the wicked.

### **Psalm 1:6 – The Lord Knows the Righteous**

“For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

- God’s knowledge of the righteous implies love, care, and predestination.
- The wicked are ultimately headed for destruction.<sup>91</sup>

In Psalm 19, the psalmist declares that the heavens and the Earth declare the glory of God and that His law is perfect, refreshing the soul. The whole universe resounds with a symphony of praise, and we are invited to take part.

“The Law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul; the statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7). God’s guidance through His Law is an expression of His grace, as He provides us with wisdom that leads to life. This psalm emphasizes how God’s Word is not simply rules to follow, but a means by which our souls are refreshed and our paths made clear. God’s guidance is a gift that leads us not only to wisdom but to joy, peace, and spiritual flourishing.

The grace of God’s Law, as portrayed in both Psalm 1 and Psalm 19, is foundational to understanding how God’s guidance works. His wisdom, found in His Word, leads us in paths of righteousness and makes our way clear, even in times of uncertainty. Grace is present in the offering of this guidance, as God’s Word brings life and hope in a world full of confusion and chaos.

### **The Grace of God’s Instruction in Decision-Making: Psalm 25 & Psalm 32**

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<sup>91</sup>Gill’s Exposition on the Whole Bible.  
[www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/geb/psalms-1.html](http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/geb/psalms-1.html)

Psalm 25 is a prayer for guidance, asking God to lead the psalmist in His truth and teach him His ways.

The psalmist expresses his confidence in God's grace, saying, "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He instructs sinners in His ways" (Psalm 25:8). Here, God's grace is evident in His willingness to guide those who are humble enough to ask for direction. The psalmist understands that God does not leave His people in the dark but offers His instruction freely to those who seek it. This truth is echoed in the New Testament, where Jesus Himself says, "Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). Just as the psalmist points to God's guidance, Jesus reveals that through Him, we are given the light that leads us to truth and salvation. This guidance is an expression of God's grace because it is given not based on our merit but on His loving kindness.

Similarly, in Psalm 32, the psalmist reflects on the grace of God's guidance in times of personal failure and sin. After confessing his sins to God, he writes, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with My loving eye on you" (Psalm 32:8). This verse reveals the tender care of God's grace in providing direction. Even when we stray or fail, God's grace does not abandon us; instead, it guides us back to the right path with compassion and love. The promise of God's guidance is wrapped in grace, showing that He is patient and persistent, even when we falter.

Both Psalms highlight that God's guidance is not a detached, impersonal force but a loving, grace-filled direction for our lives. Whether we are in moments of decision-making or personal struggle, God's guidance is a gift that leads us to healing, restoration, and righteousness.

His instruction is an act of grace because it is given freely, with no strings attached, to those who humble themselves and seek His wisdom.

### **The Grace of Resting in God's Guidance: Psalm 73 & Psalm 131**

Psalm 73 offers a powerful reflection on how grace helps us to navigate our understanding of the world, especially when we face the challenges of seeing others prosper while we struggle. It is important to recognize that envy will only rob you of your joy. As the psalmist wrestles with the apparent prosperity of the wicked, he is tempted to question God's justice. However, upon entering God's sanctuary and reflecting on His sovereignty, the psalmist receives a new perspective. "When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny" (Psalm 73:16-17). God's guidance, in this case, helps the psalmist understand the bigger picture, shifting his perspective from earthly struggles to eternal truth. However, just as the psalmist found clarity by entering God's sanctuary, a New Testament believer might reflect on their salvation through Jesus Christ and the grace that has been freely given to them.

When the believer looks at the world through the lens of God's eternal truth, they recognize that, like the psalmist, their perspective is often limited by earthly circumstances. However, in light of God's sovereignty and the grace they've received through Christ, they are reminded that God's justice will ultimately prevail. The final destiny of the lost, though painful to acknowledge, is something that should stir compassion in their hearts.

The believer, having been shown mercy despite their unworthiness, is compelled to share that mercy with others, offering the hope of salvation in Christ to those who are lost. This understanding should not lead to judgment, but rather to a deeper sense of compassion, knowing that they, too, were once lost and in need of God's grace.

In this way, reflecting on God's sovereignty and grace prompts a New Testament believer to both appreciate the gift of salvation they've received and to have a heart for the lost, desiring to lead others to the same grace.

The grace of God's guidance in Psalm 73 provides clarity in times of confusion. When we face the temptation to compare ourselves to others or when life seems unfair, God's grace opens our eyes to His greater purposes and eternal truths. His guidance does not promise that life will always be easy or that we will always understand every situation, but it does offer the peace of knowing that God is sovereign, His ways are just, and His eternal purposes will stand.

Psalm 131 speaks of the grace of resting in God's guidance. In this short psalm, the psalmist expresses a deep trust in God, saying, "But I have calmed and quieted myself; I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content." Spiritual maturity is like a child that has been weaned. We do not delight only in what God can give to us (milk), but we delight in being with God (Psalm 131:2). This picture of contentment and trust is the result of knowing that God is in control and that His guidance is trustworthy. When we rest in God's grace, we can quiet our anxious hearts and trust that He will lead us according to His perfect will.

The grace of resting in God's guidance helps us release control and trust that God will direct our steps. We do not have to have all the answers or have everything figured out; instead, we can trust that God's grace will guide us in the right direction, leading us to peace and contentment. Like a child resting in the arms of a loving parent, we can find peace knowing that God's guidance is sufficient for all of our needs.

### **The Grace of God's Guidance in All Seasons**

Ephesians 1:17–19 is a powerful prayer from the Apostle Paul:

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power."



Paul prayed this over believers who were already filled with the Holy Spirit, showing that there's more to life in the Spirit than simply receiving Him. Paul desired that they would experience the Spirit flowing as wisdom and revelation through a deeper knowledge of Jesus.

The more you grow in the revelation of Jesus and His unmerited favor (grace), the more you walk in divine wisdom. This Spirit-led wisdom empowers you to navigate life's challenges with clarity and confidence.

As you ask God to lead you by His Spirit of wisdom today, trust that He will. When the Holy Spirit reveals the wisdom of Jesus to you, no situation is hopeless, no problem is unsolvable, and no obstacle is insurmountable. His wisdom will guide you through trials, lift you above setbacks, and cause you to walk in victory.

God wants every believer not only to be filled with the Spirit but to walk in the Spirit, allowing His wisdom to influence decisions, direct steps, and illuminate the path forward. As Scripture reminds us, even "the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1:25). With His Spirit of wisdom at work in you, you carry insight far greater than the world could ever offer.

In moments of uncertainty or decision-making, the grace of God's guidance is a source of comfort, hope, and wisdom. The psalms remind us that God's guidance is a living expression of His grace that leads us to peace, righteousness, and eternal life.

Whether through His Word, His counsel in prayer, or the deep rest we experience in trusting Him, God's guidance is a gift that invites us into a deeper relationship with Him. In times of decision, confusion, or difficulty, we can turn to God, knowing that His grace will direct our paths. "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5, NKJV). God's wisdom is available to all who seek it, and His presence will never leave us as we walk the journey of life. Just as the psalmists found their direction in God's grace, so too can we, trusting that the God who has guided His people in the past will continue to guide us today and into the future.

### **The Grace of God's Unfailing Guidance in Our Weakness**

As we continue reflecting on God's grace in providing guidance, it's important to recognize the depth of His compassion for us in our weaknesses and uncertainties. In Psalm 103:14, the psalmist reminds us of God's tender understanding of our human frailty: "For He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust." This verse beautifully encapsulates the grace of God's guidance in our lives. God knows our limitations and our struggles. He understands the challenges we face, both internally and externally, and He offers His guidance not because we have earned it but because He loves us and desires to lead us to a place of peace and flourishing. "We do not have a High Priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Christ knows our struggles intimately

and can offer both compassion and help as we navigate life's difficulties.

The grace of God's guidance is especially evident in times when we feel most inadequate. When we are unsure of our next steps, overwhelmed by the complexities of life, or crippled by doubt and fear, God's guidance becomes even more precious. His grace meets us in those moments of vulnerability, reminding us that we do not have to navigate life's challenges alone. Whether in our struggles, in the uncertainty of decisions, or in the weight of spiritual confusion, God's grace is our refuge. He invites us to come to Him, to ask for His wisdom, and to trust in His perfect understanding.

In Psalm 73, the psalmist, after experiencing deep inner turmoil, expresses the realization that his efforts to understand the ways of the world were futile: "When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before You" (Psalm 73:21-22). This confession of weakness highlights how, in our attempts to make sense of life on our own, we often become overwhelmed and lost. Yet, it is in these moments of recognizing our frailty that God's grace shines most brightly. He does not abandon us in our ignorance or confusion; rather, He guides us through it, offering us clarity, peace, and direction.

God's grace also reveals itself in His patience with us. Often, we find ourselves hesitant to follow His guidance or slow to trust His timing. Yet God, in His grace, does not chastise us for our fear or indecision. Instead, He gently leads us, step by step, knowing that our faith will grow as we learn to depend on Him more deeply. The grace of God's guidance is not only

found in the certainty of knowing what to do next but also in the trust that He will be with us in the journey, strengthening us, encouraging us, and leading us to a place of peace.

This grace is also woven through the life of Jesus, who, in His weakness, modeled complete trust in His Father's guidance. Jesus, in His humanity, was fully aware of His dependence on God the Father for every step He took.

In Matthew 26:39, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will." Even in His greatest hour of distress, Jesus modeled perfect surrender to God's guidance. He knew that the Father's will, though difficult, was ultimately the path to glory. Jesus' trust in His Father's direction is the ultimate example of grace, showing us that true guidance does not come from our strength or our ability to understand everything, but from our willingness to surrender to God's will.

In our own lives, when we face uncertainty or weakness, we can look to Christ's example as the ultimate model of trusting God's guidance. Just as Jesus relied on the Father in His darkest hour, we too can rely on God's grace to guide us through our moments of weakness and confusion. The grace of God's guidance is not a promise of an easy path, but it is a promise that He will never leave us, that He will lead us through, and that His ways are always the best, even when they are hard to follow.

The grace of God's guidance, especially in times of weakness and uncertainty, is a precious gift that leads us to deeper trust, dependence, and peace. God knows our weaknesses and, in His infinite grace,

offers us the wisdom and direction we need to navigate life. Whether we are making decisions, facing struggles, or simply trying to understand our circumstances, God's guidance is a beacon of hope. It is a grace that illuminates our paths, strengthens our hearts, and leads us to a place of rest, knowing that our loving Father is guiding us every step of the way.

**Chapter 17:**  
**Grace in the Psalms of Thanksgiving**  
**Psalm 66, Psalm 100, Psalm 111, Psalm 118,**  
**Psalm 138**



## **Chapter 17: Grace in the Psalms of Thanksgiving**

Thanksgiving is an essential aspect of the spiritual life, a practice that reflects a heart fully aware of God's grace. In the Psalms, we see the overflow of gratitude as a response to the abundant grace of God, whether for His deliverance, provision, or steadfast love. The Psalms of Thanksgiving are rich with expressions of praise and joy that reflect not just an acknowledgment of God's actions, but a deep, transformative recognition of His unmerited favor toward His people.

In this chapter, we explore how grace is intricately woven into the Psalms of Thanksgiving, highlighting the role of grace in cultivating a heart of thankfulness. Key psalms such as Psalm 66, Psalm 100, Psalm 111, Psalm 118, and Psalm 138 reveal that gratitude is not a duty or obligation, but a heartfelt response to God's grace. These psalms invite us to look at gratitude as an outpouring of recognition and response to God's ongoing grace in our lives.

### **The Call to Thanksgiving as a Response to Grace: Psalm 66 & Psalm 100**

Psalm 66 is a powerful Psalm of Thanksgiving that begins with a call to the entire earth to join in praise: "Shout for joy to God, all the earth; sing the glory of His name; make His praise glorious" (Psalm 66:1-2). The psalmist recounts how God has delivered His people, particularly through times of trial and hardship. The psalmist writes, "For you, God, tested us; You refined us like silver" (Psalm 66:10).

This refining, though difficult, is viewed as an act of grace, as God's discipline and testing serve to purify His people. Just as silver is heated and refined to remove impurities, the psalmist suggests that God refines His people, bringing them into a place of abundance and spiritual growth. This is a part of how God works all things together for our good.

The entire psalm emphasizes that the act of thanksgiving is a natural response to God's grace, especially in light of His provision and deliverance. By remembering God's past acts of grace—His faithfulness in times of struggle—the psalmist calls others to join in worship and gratitude. Psalm 66 demonstrates that thanksgiving isn't merely about saying "thank you" for blessings received, but it's a reflection of a deep awareness of God's gracious work in every circumstance of life, especially in seasons of trial and hardship.

Similarly, Psalm 100 is a joyful call to worship and thankfulness: "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs" (Psalm 100:1-2). This psalm is a reminder that our gratitude toward God is a natural outpouring of recognizing His greatness and goodness. The psalmist reminds the people that they are His, "It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture" (Psalm 100:3). This acknowledgment of God as Creator and Shepherd invites a heartfelt response of gratitude. Thanksgiving, in this psalm, is both a corporate and personal act—an expression of joy that stems from knowing that we are God's people, recipients of His mercy and grace.



In both Psalm 66 and Psalm 100, we see that gratitude is not merely an isolated emotion or ritual, but a communal response to the grace of God, recognizing His involvement in the past and present. God's grace initiates our thanksgiving, and it propels us into a deeper relationship with Him, marked by joy and worship.

### **The Overflow of Gratitude for God's Great Works: Psalm 111 & Psalm 118**

Psalm 111 is a psalm of praise that highlights the greatness of God's works, His faithfulness, and His righteousness: "Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them" (Psalm 111:2). The psalmist reflects on the majesty of God's actions, declaring that His grace is seen in the way He provides for His people: "He provides food for those who fear "yâre": revere<sup>92</sup> Him; He remembers His covenant forever" (Psalm 111:5). This psalm emphasizes that God's acts are not random or distant; they are purposeful, reflective of His covenant faithfulness and care. This recognition of God's grace in His works leads to thanksgiving and reverence.

As we reflect on God's works with reverence, something beautiful begins to happen—our desires start to mirror His. Love is what shapes us, and it was God's love that made us new creations in Christ. As we delight in the Lord's works and grow in our love for His nature, His character begins to shape our own. When we embrace His justice, compassion, and faithfulness, these qualities naturally begin to show up in our words, decisions, and actions.

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<sup>92</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3373/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3373/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

The more we appreciate who God is, the more we are transformed by His Spirit. As 2 Corinthians 3:18 reminds us, “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” When His nature takes root in us, we don’t just observe His glory—we reflect it.

This is beautifully captured in Psalm 118, where the psalmist expresses gratitude for God’s unwavering goodness. “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever” (Psalm 118:1). This phrase, repeated throughout the psalm, captures the heart of the psalmist’s thanksgiving: that God’s grace is enduring and constant. In the face of life’s challenges, the psalmist recalls how God has been their protector, deliverer, and refuge. “The Lord is my strength and my defense; He has become my salvation” (Psalm 118:14). Gratitude in Psalm 118 arises not only from personal deliverance but from the recognition that God’s grace extends over time—His love and faithfulness endure forever.

Both Psalm 111 and Psalm 118 emphasize that thanksgiving is rooted in an awareness of God’s great works, both historical and personal. When we reflect on the ways God has worked in our lives—delivering, providing, and saving—our hearts naturally overflow with gratitude. This response to God’s grace encourages us to recount His faithfulness, which deepens our trust in His continuing work in our lives.

## **The Thanksgiving of the Grateful Heart: Psalm 138**

Psalm 138 is another powerful expression of thanksgiving, where the psalmist gives thanks for God's goodness and His attentive care:

"I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; before the 'gods' I will sing your praise" (Psalm 138:1). The psalmist is fully aware of God's grace in answering prayers, providing help, and delivering him from danger: "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You preserve my life" (Psalm 138:7). In this psalm, gratitude flows from the psalmist's recognition that God's grace sustains him in every circumstance of life, particularly in moments of distress.

A key theme in Psalm 138 is the psalmist's reflection on God's personal involvement in his life. The psalmist knows that God listens to him, responds to his prayers, and grants him victory: "The Lord will vindicate me; Your love, Lord, endures forever—do not abandon the works of Your hands" (Psalm 138:8). We are reminded that because we are a work of God's hands that we are valuable and precious to our Creator. "For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well" (Psalm 139:13-14).

The psalmist is declaring that he, as a creation of God, is valuable and precious in God's sight. This deep, personal awareness of God's active and loving involvement fuels his praise and thanksgiving, just as it does in Psalm 138, where gratitude flows from the recognition of God's intimate care and responsiveness.

## **Cultivating a Heart of Thanksgiving Through Grace**

Thanksgiving, in the Psalms, is more than an isolated act—it is the overflow of a heart deeply aware of God’s ongoing grace.

Gratitude arises from remembering who God is and what He has done, and it grows as we see how His grace has shaped our lives. “But by the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Corinthians 15:10a). The psalmists are not simply giving thanks for the tangible blessings they have received but for the very presence and character of God. They give thanks because they know that all that they are and all that they have is a result of God’s unmerited favor.

In our own lives, grace plays a central role in cultivating a heart of thanksgiving. It is through God’s grace that we are given the ability to be thankful at all. His grace opens our eyes to His goodness, His mercy, and His eternal love, which should stir up a response of heartfelt gratitude. When we take the time to reflect on God’s grace, our hearts are inevitably filled with thanksgiving.

In Psalm 66, Psalm 100, Psalm 111, Psalm 118, and Psalm 138, we see that thanksgiving is a response to God’s grace that flows out of a deep relationship with Him. As we encounter God’s grace in the everyday moments of our lives, our gratitude becomes a spontaneous act of worship, an overflow of the joy we experience from being recipients of His love. Just as the psalmists celebrated God’s grace in their lives, we too are called to give thanks for the countless ways God has worked in and through us.

## Living in a Posture of Thanksgiving

The psalms of thanksgiving invite us to cultivate a lifestyle of gratitude that acknowledges God's grace in all things. True thanksgiving is more than just a momentary expression of gratitude—it is a continual posture of the heart, a response to the grace that surrounds us every day.

As we recognize the ways in which God's grace has shaped our lives, our hearts naturally overflow with thanksgiving, worship, and joy. As we live in light of His grace, we cannot help but give thanks.

"In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6b). "With thanksgiving" in Greek is "meta"<sup>93</sup> "eucharistia"<sup>94</sup>. Meta means "after," and eucharistia is where we get eucharist or communion from. Paul encourages us to worship God for all our spiritual blessings in Jesus before presenting our requests. Begin by thanking God for what He has done for us in Christ, and then share your needs with Him. This approach expresses trust in God. Gratitude for what we have in Christ shifts our perspective on our needs, strengthens our faith in His provision, and opens our hearts to the unexpected ways He may choose to meet them."<sup>95</sup>

## Living Out a Heart of Gratitude Through Grace

Thanksgiving in the Psalms is more than a passive acknowledgment of God's actions. It is a call to actively participate in a life of gratitude, one that continues to give thanks for God's grace in both the

<sup>93</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3326/niv/mgnt/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3326/niv/mgnt/0-1/)

<sup>94</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2169/niv/mgnt/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2169/niv/mgnt/0-1/)

<sup>95</sup>Dr. Matthew Webster. *Living in Victory*. Kindle Direct Publishing. 2023. Pages 29-30.

tangible and intangible aspects of life. In many ways, the Psalms teach us that thanksgiving is not only a response to God's deliverance or blessings but also a way of living in the reality of His grace. It's a lifestyle that reflects the ongoing gratitude we have as recipients of His grace, regardless of our circumstances.

As we consider God's grace, we are reminded that the Psalms provide not just a model for thanksgiving but a continual invitation to live a life that overflows with praise. For the psalmists, thanksgiving was a natural expression of their awareness of God's ongoing involvement in their lives. In Psalm 66, Psalm 100, Psalm 111, Psalm 118, and Psalm 138, we see that gratitude arises from recognizing how God's grace has impacted the past, shaped the present, and secured the future.

The life of thanksgiving is not marked by moments of gratitude alone but by a constant, daily reflection on God's goodness and faithfulness. Thanksgiving becomes an expression of trust and faith in God's continual grace. When we recognize how much God has done for us, both in creation and in salvation, our hearts cannot help but overflow with thankfulness. Every moment becomes an opportunity to worship, to declare God's goodness, and to express our gratitude.

In the same way that the psalmists reflect on God's acts of salvation, provision, and protection, we too are called to recount God's grace in our lives. We are invited to reflect on how He has provided for us, guided us, and been our refuge in times of trouble. This process of remembering God's grace not only deepens our relationship with Him but also transforms the way we live. It encourages us to face life's

challenges with a heart of thanksgiving, even in hardship.

### **The Psalms and the Call to Generous Thanksgiving**

The Psalms also point us to the importance of a thankful heart that is not only for personal benefit but extends outward into the lives of others. As recipients of God's grace, we are called to share that grace with others, and this is a form of thanksgiving in itself. When we give thanks for God's provision, we also recognize that He has entrusted us with the resources and opportunities to bless others. Our thanksgiving becomes a bridge to generosity, where we seek to share God's grace with those in need, both spiritually and materially.

In Psalm 118, the psalmist gives thanks for the enduring love of God, not only for himself but for the entire community. "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever" (Psalm 118:1). This declaration of God's goodness is not limited to a private experience but calls all people to join in the thanksgiving, to acknowledge God's grace, and to share in the blessings of His love. In this way, thanksgiving is a communal experience, one that connects us to others as we remember God's goodness together.

Similarly, in Psalm 100, the psalmist calls all the earth to give thanks to God: "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth" (Psalm 100:1). The call to thanksgiving is not just for an individual, but for a community, for all of creation to recognize and celebrate God's grace. Our thanksgiving, when shared with others, has the power to draw people into the presence of God, inviting them to experience His love and grace for

themselves. This communal aspect of thanksgiving reflects God's desire to bring people together in worship and praise, united by His grace.

In the New Testament, Paul echoes this idea of thanksgiving being part of a larger, communal response to God's grace. In Ephesians 5:20, Paul urges believers to "always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Thanksgiving becomes a constant, communal act, one that unites believers across time and space in worship and praise.

### **The Fruit of a Grateful Heart**

When thanksgiving flows from a heart that has experienced God's grace, it produces lasting fruit. Gratitude is not a fleeting emotion but a transformative response to God's love and mercy. A grateful heart is one that reflects the character of God, who is full of compassion, mercy, and love. As we cultivate gratitude in our lives, we become more like Him, demonstrating His love and grace to the world around us.

In Psalm 138, the psalmist reflects on the goodness and faithfulness of God, acknowledging that God's grace sustains him in every circumstance of life: "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You preserve my life" (Psalm 138:7). This gratitude leads to a life of faithfulness, where we trust God to sustain us and to guide us through difficult times. Our gratitude fuels our worship and our willingness to serve others in love.

A heart of thanksgiving also helps us to persevere through challenges. Just as the psalmist in Psalm 66 recounts how God refined him through trials, so too



can we trust that even in moments of difficulty, God's grace is at work in our lives. Thanksgiving, in this sense, becomes a way to reframe our perspective on hardship, seeing it not as a burden but as an opportunity to experience God's grace in new and deeper ways.

## **The Power of Magnifying the Lord: A Heart of Gratitude in the Psalms of Thanksgiving**

The word "magnify" or "magnified" is used 16 times in the Psalms.<sup>96</sup> Magnify "gâdal" means to grow, to make powerful, to make great.<sup>97</sup> So, in a verse like Psalm 34:3: "Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together" or in Psalm 69:30: "I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify Him with thanksgiving", how do we magnify the Lord? It is obvious that we can't make God greater than He already is, and we also can't make God grow more powerful through our worship, so what does the psalmist mean "magnify the Lord"?

**1. Magnification Through Perception:** When we "magnify" God, we are not adding to His greatness, but rather increasing our perception of His greatness. Just as a magnifying glass makes something small appear larger to our eyes, magnifying God means that we are choosing to focus on His attributes, His character, and His works in a way that increases our awareness and appreciation of His majesty. It's about lifting our gaze and attention to the greatness of God, acknowledging His goodness, His power, and His glory in our lives.

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<sup>96</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1431/kjv/wlc/0-2/#lexResults](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1431/kjv/wlc/0-2/#lexResults)

<sup>97</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1431/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1431/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

**2. Magnification Through Praise:** In Psalm 69:30, David says, "I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify Him with thanksgiving." Here, the act of magnifying God is connected with praise and thanksgiving. As we praise Him, we are verbalizing and expressing His greatness, which in turn enlarges our understanding and experience of who He is. Our praise doesn't change God; it changes us by aligning our hearts with His reality. Through worship, we lift up the name of God, and in doing so, we become more aware of His supremacy.

**3. Magnification Through Exaltation:** Psalm 34:3 says, "Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." To "exalt" means to raise or lift up.<sup>98</sup> In this context, magnifying God is about exalting Him in our hearts, in our speech, and our lives. It's a communal and personal act of bringing God to the forefront of our lives, recognizing Him as the ultimate source of all that is good and worthy. The act of exalting His name together emphasizes a collective response to the greatness of God, recognizing that we all share in His glory and goodness.

**4. Magnification Through Focus:** To magnify God is also about shifting our focus onto Him, especially when life's circumstances tempt us to focus on everything else. In moments of difficulty, David's call to magnify the Lord is an invitation to look beyond the present struggles and distractions, turning our attention and affection toward God's greatness. "The key to standing strong when doubt and fear arise is not to look at the circumstances but to look at God's promises. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together" (Psalm 34:3). Faith is not

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<sup>98</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7311/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7311/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

based on what we see, but on what we know to be true through God's Word."<sup>99</sup> It's a conscious choice to prioritize God's nature, promises, and works over the challenges we face.

**5. Magnification Through Transformation:** Finally, when we magnify the Lord, our lives are transformed. As we focus on God's greatness, our hearts are humbled, our faith is strengthened, and our perspective is changed. The more we magnify Him in worship and praise, the more we grow in understanding and reverence. It's as if we become more "in tune" with His greatness, and that transformation leads to greater joy, peace, and trust in Him.

In summary, "magnifying the Lord" is not about changing God but about changing ourselves through the intentional act of focusing on, exalting, and praising the One who is already great and worthy of all honor. It is a way of cultivating a heart and mind that constantly acknowledges God's greatness, His goodness, and His sovereignty, regardless of our circumstances.

### **Living in the Overflow of Grace**

The Psalms of Thanksgiving serve as a reminder that gratitude is not just an occasional act but a way of life. As we reflect on God's grace—His deliverance, provision, and love—we are invited to live in constant thanksgiving, both in good times and in bad. Thanksgiving becomes a way of acknowledging God's presence in our lives, a way of responding to His grace with joy, worship, and generosity. Through the

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<sup>99</sup>Dr. Matthew Webster. *Equipped for Victory: Put on the Full Armor of God*. Kindle Direct Publishing. 2027. Page 99.

psalms, we learn that gratitude is not merely about giving thanks for what God has done, but about recognizing who He is and how His grace transforms our lives.

As we cultivate a heart of thanksgiving, we begin to reflect the character of God more fully, sharing His love and grace with others and living in a posture of continual worship. May the psalms of thanksgiving inspire us to live with hearts full of praise, recognizing that every good gift comes from God and that His grace is the source of all our blessings. May we respond with gratitude, not only in words but in every area of our lives, living in the overflow of His grace.

### **Small Groups Week 6: Future Hope, God's Guidance, & Thanksgiving**

- Chapter 15: The Final Grace: Hope in God's Future Salvation (Psalm 14, 53, 118, 145)
- Chapter 16: The Grace of God's Guidance (Psalm 1, 19, 25, 32, 73, 131)
- Chapter 17: Grace in the Psalms of Thanksgiving (Psalm 66, 100, 111, 118, 138)

Question #1: Living in the Tension of "Already" and "Not Yet": The Psalms speak of both God's present grace and the future salvation we are promised. How can we, as believers today, live in the tension between experiencing God's grace now and anticipating the ultimate fulfillment of His promises in the future? What does it look like to "live in light of the final grace" in our daily lives?

Question #2: The Power of Hope in God's Future Salvation: Psalm 118 declares, "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man" (Psalm 118:8). How does the hope of God's future salvation shape the way we trust in God today? How can this

hope help us overcome present struggles and uncertainties? What does it mean to fully trust in God's future grace?

Question #3: In Psalm 25 and Psalm 32, we see God's guidance given freely to those who seek it, especially in times of personal failure. How does this shape your understanding of God's grace in moments when you feel lost or disconnected? How can we lean into His guidance even when we struggle with our own mistakes or doubts?

Question #4: Psalm 73 illustrates how God's guidance can shift our perspective when we face confusion or

envy toward others. In what ways do you find yourself comparing your life to others, and how does God's grace help you navigate these moments? How can resting in God's guidance help us find peace when life doesn't seem fair?

Question #5: How does the practice of thanksgiving in the Psalms help us shift our focus from our struggles to God's grace? Reflecting on Psalms like Psalm 66, Psalm 100, or Psalm 138, what are some specific ways God's grace has shaped your life that you can offer thanks for today? How might cultivating a heart of gratitude impact your relationship with God in both joyful and difficult seasons?

Additional Questions/Comments/Notes:

**Chapter 18:**  
**The Grace of Restoration**  
**Psalm 66, Psalm 100, Psalm 111, Psalm 118,**  
**Psalm 138**





## Chapter 18: The Grace of Restoration

Restoration is at the heart of God's redemptive work in the world and the lives of His people. The word "restore" (shûwb) appears sixty-two times in the Psalms.<sup>100</sup>

The concept of restoration, however, appears fourteen times in the Psalms, and this specific number carries rich significance. In Hebrew, the number 14 is associated with the concept of "double completeness" because it is the double of 7, a number considered to symbolize perfection and completeness in Hebrew tradition. We see this concept reinforced not only in the genealogy of Jesus, which is divided into three sets of 14 generations in Matthew 1:17 but also in the significance of the 14th day of Nisan when the Passover lamb was sacrificed (Exodus 12:6). Both instances point to God's perfect and complete plan for salvation.

When we consider the fullness of God's restoration, it reflects this "double completeness." When the Lord restores, He always gives more than what was lost, whether in quantity or quality. Whatever the enemy has taken from you, we can trust the Lord for a complete restoration of 120 percent or more.

Why 120 percent? This principle is rooted in the trespass offering found in Leviticus. Leviticus 6:4-5 says: "He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, and give it to whomever it belongs, on the day of his trespass offering."

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<sup>100</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/search/search.cfm?Criteria=restore&t=NIV#s=s\\_primary\\_0\\_1](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/search.cfm?Criteria=restore&t=NIV#s=s_primary_0_1)

This law required a person to restore what was stolen and add one-fifth, bringing the total to 120 percent of the original value.

Though this principle was part of the Old Covenant, how much more can we expect restoration under the New Covenant of grace— “a far better covenant with God, based on better promises” (Hebrews 8:6)? We can believe God for even more than 120 percent restoration!

Additionally, the restitution was made on the day of the trespass offering, which points to what Jesus did for us on the cross. He took our place, paying for our trespasses so that we could receive God’s blessings, including restoration.

If you have accepted Christ as your trespass offering, God’s greater restoration is on the way. Whatever has been stolen from you, God will restore it, even more than you had before. As Joel 2:25 promises, He will restore the years the locusts have eaten— your best days are ahead!<sup>101</sup> So, take heart—your story isn’t over. God’s promise of restoration doesn’t end with returning what was lost; it’s about bringing you into something greater.

This is where the significance of restoration in the Psalms adds depth. The word “restoration” appearing fourteen times throughout the Psalms highlights that God’s restoration is not just a return to what was lost, but an abundant renewal that goes beyond the original state.

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<sup>101</sup>Joseph Prince. God’s Much-More Restoration! [www.josephprince.org/blog/daily-grace-inspirations/gods-much-more-restoration](http://www.josephprince.org/blog/daily-grace-inspirations/gods-much-more-restoration)

This “double completeness”—as symbolized by the number 14—implies that God’s restoration offers both present and future renewal. It is not only about physical or material restoration but also spiritual renewal and wholeness, bringing His people to a deeper, fuller experience of His grace and favor. Expect greater things ahead as God restores, renews, and blesses you beyond what you have ever imagined.

This kind of restoration touches every part of our lives—body, soul, and spirit—drawing us into a deeper awareness of God’s abundant grace and favor.

We see this truth echoed throughout the Psalms, where the recurring theme of God’s grace heals, renews, and rebuilds what has been broken, whether through sin, sorrow, or failure. The psalmists, in their heartfelt expressions of longing and desperation, often cry out to God for restoration, acknowledging that only God’s grace can restore what has been lost.

In this chapter, we will explore the powerful and transformative grace of God that brings restoration to the brokenhearted, the fallen, and the weary. Psalms such as Psalm 30, Psalm 51, Psalm 71, Psalm 80, Psalm 85, Psalm 107, Psalm 114, Psalm 126, and Psalm 147 provide vivid expressions of God’s grace in the process of restoration, revealing how God takes the shattered pieces of our lives and reassembles them in His perfect will.

### **Psalm 66: A Song of Gratitude for Deliverance**

Psalm 66 celebrates God’s deliverance and restoration, with the psalmist recounting how God has rescued His people from hardship and refined them through trials. This psalm is a call to all the earth to praise God for His powerful acts of salvation.

**Key Verse:** "Come and see what God has done, His awesome deeds for mankind" (Psalm 66:5)!

### **Psalm 100: A Call to Worship and Thanksgiving**

Psalm 100 is a jubilant call to worship the Lord with thanksgiving. It acknowledges God's enduring faithfulness, His role as Creator, and His loving, restoring nature. This psalm encourages all people to come before God with joy, knowing that He is a good and compassionate shepherd.

**Key Verse:** "For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

### **Psalm 111: Praise for God's Great Works**

Psalm 111 praises God for His wondrous works, faithfulness, and justice. The psalmist reflects on God's deeds that bring restoration and order to His people, emphasizing that God's wisdom and mercy are deeply woven into the fabric of creation and salvation.

**Key Verse:** "The works of His hands are faithful and just; all His precepts are trustworthy" (Psalm 111:7).

### **Psalm 118: A Prayer of Thanksgiving for God's Salvation**

Psalm 118 is a prayer of thanksgiving, where the psalmist recounts God's deliverance from trouble and expresses confidence in God's eternal love. The psalm also speaks to God's restoration in the face of oppression, celebrating His victory over enemies and His provision in times of need.

**Key Verse:** "The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad" (Psalm 118:24).

## **Psalm 138: A Psalm of Gratitude for God's Faithfulness**

Psalm 138 reflects on God's faithfulness during trials and how He has restored the psalmist. The psalmist expresses gratitude for God's Word, His protection, and His constant love. This psalm emphasizes that God will fulfill His purposes in our lives, and His grace brings complete restoration.

**Key Verse:** "The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; Your love, O Lord, endures forever—do not abandon the works of Your hands" (Psalm 138:8).

In all of these psalms, the grace of restoration shines brightly, reminding us that no matter the trials or hardships we face, God's grace is sufficient to restore, renew, and make us whole. Each psalm affirms that God's faithfulness, love, and power are the foundation of our restoration.

## **Restoring the Brokenhearted: Psalm 30 & Psalm 51**

Psalm 30 is a psalm of thanksgiving, written by David after experiencing a time of deep distress, where God's grace brought restoration to his life.

Psalm 30 reflects the emotions and trust in God that David would have had during his time of crisis in Ziklag. In 1 Samuel 27:6, David was given the city of Ziklag by the Philistines as a refuge while he was fleeing from King Saul. Later, in 1 Samuel 30, the city was attacked and burned by the Amalekites, and David and his men were devastated.

David's time in Ziklag, recorded in 1 Samuel 30, was one of his most devastating yet defining moments. Here's what happened:

1. **Ziklag Burned & Families Taken** – While David and his men were away, the Amalekites raided Ziklag, burned it to the ground, and took all the women and children captive, including David's two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail (1 Samuel 30:1-3).
2. **Despair & Distress** – When David and his men returned and saw the destruction, they wept until they had no strength left. His men were so bitter over their loss that they talked about stoning David (1 Samuel 30:4-6).
3. **David Strengthens Himself in the Lord** – Instead of succumbing to despair, David found his strength in the Lord. He sought God's direction by asking the priest to bring the ephod—a sacred garment worn by the high priest that was used to discern the will of God (Exodus 28) and asked if he should pursue the raiders. God answered: "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all" (1 Samuel 30:6-8).
4. **Pursuit & Victory** – David and 400 of his men pursued the Amalekites. They found a deserted Egyptian servant who led them to the raiders. David attacked and defeated them, recovering everything and everyone that had been taken (1 Samuel 30:9-20).
5. **Grace & Generosity** – After the victory, some of his men didn't want to share the spoils with those who had stayed behind. But David insisted on fairness, establishing a principle that those who guard supplies share in the reward (1 Samuel 30:21-25).

## **Significance of Ziklag in David's Life**

- It was a turning point where David chose faith over fear despite the overwhelming loss.
- It demonstrated God's grace in restoration, as David recovered all that was lost.
- It marked the end of his time running from Saul—soon after, he became king in Hebron (2 Samuel 2:4).

Ziklag is a powerful example of how, even in our lowest moments, God strengthens, restores, and leads us to victory when we turn to Him.

Psalm 30 opens with David's declaration: "I will exalt You, Lord, for You lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me" (Psalm 30:1). David had experienced a time of trouble, but through God's mercy, he was restored. This psalm emphasizes the contrast between despair and deliverance: "Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). David reflects on the pain he had endured but acknowledges that God's grace brought about a renewal of joy and peace.

## **Turning Mourning into Dancing: A Journey from Sadness to Joy**

Psalm 30:11-12: "You turned my wailing into dancing; You removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing Your praises and not be silent. LORD my God, I will praise You forever."

In David's life, there were many times when everything seemed to be falling apart. Here is a list of some of the difficult events in his life.

## 1. David's Anointing and Saul's Jealousy

- **Challenge:** David was chosen by God to be king, which made Saul, the current king, extremely jealous. Saul's jealousy led to David being pursued and nearly killed multiple times.
- **Scripture Reference:**
  - 1 Samuel 16:13 – "So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David."
  - 1 Samuel 18:9 – "And from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David."
  - 1 Samuel 18:10-11 – Saul threw a spear at David in an attempt to kill him.
  - **1 Samuel 19:1-2** – "Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David and warned him, 'My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there.'"

## 2. David Flees from Saul (Running for His Life)

- **Challenge:** David had to flee for his life from Saul, who was actively trying to kill him. This period of David's life was marked by constant danger, insecurity, and emotional turmoil.
- **Scripture Reference:**
  - 1 Samuel 19:10 – "Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded



him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape.”

- 1 Samuel 21:10-12 – David fled to Gath, a Philistine city, and feared for his life.

### **3. David’s Time in Ziklag (Loss of His Family and Possessions)**

- **Challenge:** While in Ziklag, David and his men returned from a battle only to find that the Amalekites had raided their city, taken their wives and children, and burned everything down. His men were so distressed that they talked about stoning David.
- **Scripture Reference:**
  - 1 Samuel 30:1-4 – “David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag; they had attacked Ziklag and burned it, and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old.”
  - 1 Samuel 30:6 – “David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters.”

### **4. David’s Sin with Bathsheba**

- **Challenge:** David’s moral failings, particularly his affair with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah, led to a series of painful consequences, including the death of their child and conflict within his own family.

- **Scripture Reference:**

- 2 Samuel 11:2-4 – “One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace... he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, ‘She is Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah.’”
- 2 Samuel 12:9-10 – “Why did you despise the Word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.”

## **5. The Death of His Child (Consequences of Sin)**

- **Challenge:** The child born from David’s adultery with Bathsheba died as a consequence of his sin, which deeply affected David.
- **Scripture Reference:**

- 2 Samuel 12:15-18 – “The Lord struck the child that Uriah’s wife had borne to David, and he became ill. David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground.”
- 2 Samuel 12:18 – “On the seventh day the child died.”

## **6. David’s son Amnon rapes his sister Tamar, and in retaliation, their brother Absalom kills Amnon.**

**The Assault:** Tamar was the daughter of King David and his wife Maacah. She had a half-brother, Amnon, who was David's son by another wife. Amnon became infatuated with his sister Tamar and, through a deceitful scheme, lured her to his house, where he sexually assaulted her.

- **Aftermath:** Following the assault, Amnon's feelings of lust quickly turn into hatred, and he casts Tamar out, further humiliating her. Tamar, devastated and shamed, sought refuge with her full brother, Absalom. The incident led to Absalom's eventual revenge on Amnon and the deepening turmoil in David's family. After Amnon assaulted his sister, Tamar, Absalom harbored deep resentment and hatred toward Amnon for what he had done. However, Absalom waited for two years before taking action, biding his time until an opportunity arose for revenge when Absalom killed Amnon.

### **Scriptural Support:**

1. **2 Samuel 13:1-2** - This introduces Amnon's infatuation with Tamar:

"In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David. Amnon became frustrated to the point of illness on account of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her."

2. **2 Samuel 13:11-14** - The assault itself:

"But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, 'Come to bed with me, my sister.' 'No, my brother!' she said to him. 'Don't force me! Such a

thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing.'"

3. **2 Samuel 13:15-16** - Amnon's reaction after the assault:

"Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. 'Get up and get out!' he said. 'No, my brother!' she said to him. 'Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me.' But he refused to listen to her."

4. **2 Samuel 13:20-21** - Tamar's Mourning, Absalom's and David's Responses:

"Her brother Absalom said to her, 'Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet now, my sister; he is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart.' And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman. When King David heard all this, he was furious."

5. **2 Samuel 13:23-29**- Absalom kills Amnon

In 2 Samuel 13:23-29, Absalom seeks revenge against his half-brother Amnon for raping their sister Tamar. After two years, Absalom invites all the king's sons to a sheep-shearing festival and orders his servants to kill Amnon when he is drunk. His servants obey, and the other sons of David flee in fear.

## **7. Rebellion of His Son Absalom**

- **Challenge:** David's son, Absalom, rebelled against him and sought to take the throne. This led to a civil war and a significant personal and public crisis for David.

- **Scripture Reference:**

- 2 Samuel 15:10-14 – “Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, ‘As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, Absalom is king in Hebron.’”
- 2 Samuel 15:14 – “David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, ‘Come, we must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom.’”

## 8. The Death of Absalom

- **Challenge:** Absalom’s death was a moment of deep grief for David. Despite Absalom’s rebellion, David loved him dearly, and his death was a devastating blow.

- **Scripture Reference:**

- 2 Samuel 18:33 – “The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said, ‘O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you – O Absalom, my son, my son!’”

## 9. David’s Old Age and Succession Struggle

- **Challenge:** As David grew older, there was a struggle over who would succeed him. His son Adonijah tried to seize the throne, causing further family turmoil.
- **Scripture Reference:**

- 1 Kings 1:5-10 – “Now Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, put himself forward and said, ‘I will be king.’”

## 10. Census and the Resulting Plague

- **Challenge:** David’s decision to take a census of Israel, which was seen as an act of pride and trust in military strength rather than in God, led to a plague that resulted in thousands of deaths.
- **Scripture Reference:**
  - 2 Samuel 24:2-4 – “So the king said to Joab and the army commanders with him, ‘Go and count the Israelites from Beersheba to Dan. Then report back to me.’”
  - 2 Samuel 24:15 – “So the Lord sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.”

In each of these ten trials, David faced overwhelming odds—moments that could have easily defined him by defeat. The enemies of David were too strong for him alone; his circumstances seemed impossible, and defeat loomed on every side. But then, David experienced the transformative power of God. During all the pain and brokenness, he discovered a God who rushes to the helpless, heals the broken, restores what is lost, and brings life to the dying. God doesn’t just offer a way out; He offers a complete turnaround. David’s experience wasn’t unique to him. It is an experience available to all of us, especially as believers in Jesus.

Earlier in Psalm 30, David had written: "Sing praises to the LORD, O you His saints, and give thanks to His holy name. His favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning" (Psalm 30:4-5).

For those who trust in God, no setback, no hardship, and no sorrow can be lasting. Christ, through His sacrifice, has conquered our greatest fears and pains—not always instantly, but surely. The suffering we face cannot outlast the life that He purchased for us. For those who believe, joy is always on the horizon. We find joy in the morning, after the mourning, and even within the mourning itself. And so we sing—even in the darkest, most painful moments—because we know that our God can and will turn things around.

In the Hebrew text of Psalm 30:11, we find the word "haphak", which means "to overturn" or "turn around."<sup>102</sup> God is ready to "haphak" overturn your sadness and transform it into dancing. But this doesn't happen by force—God won't simply change your emotions for you. You must allow Him, through the Holy Spirit, to take the sorrow that has overtaken you and turn it around into something beautiful.

David, in this psalm, speaks not only of his present circumstances but also of future events. This particular psalm was likely written in 1017 B.C., several years before the birth of Solomon. Seven years after this psalm was penned, David faced one of the greatest heartaches of his life—the death of his child with Bathsheba. But God was not done with David. In his mourning, David turned to God, and God brought him peace and joy in a way he never

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<sup>102</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2015/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2015/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

expected. We read about this in 2 Samuel 12:14-31. When David's son with Bathsheba passed away, he fell into deep mourning. He fasted, lay in sackcloth, and begged God to spare his child. But when the child died, David's response was unexpected. He got up, washed, and went into the house of the Lord to worship. Afterward, he allowed his mourning to turn to joy as he received the blessing of a new son, Solomon. Solomon's name comes from the Hebrew word "shalom", meaning peace.<sup>103</sup> Amid his grief, God brought peace—shalom/Solomon—into David's life.

David's response to loss was a model for how we can approach our moments of grief. Mourning is natural, but it's not meant to be endless. There is a time for mourning (Ecclesiastes 3:4), but there is also a time for God to turn mourning into dancing (Psalm 30:11). The process began for David when he chose to worship, even in his sorrow. Worship, as it always does, opened the door for God's peace to enter, and soon after, joy came bursting into his life in the form of a new blessing.

It wasn't that his child came back to life or that things went back to normal. Instead, God did something deeper. He birthed something new—shalom, peace—in David's heart, and that peace led to joy.

As I reflect on my own life, I can relate to moments when I've mourned too long over loss, whether it was the loss of a job, a relationship, or even a cherished dream. But it was worship that began the life transformation. It wasn't that the circumstances instantly changed, but worship opened my heart to receive God's peace. Just as it did for David, that peace led me from mourning to dancing.

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<sup>103</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8010/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8010/kjv/wlc/0-1/)



I don't want to oversimplify things. Mourning is real. Grief is real. We need space to feel those things and to process them. But like David, we must ask ourselves: "Can our mourning change the situation?" "Can our grief bring back what we've lost?" David knew the answer: "I will go to him, but he will not return to me" (2 Samuel 12:23). In other words, the child is gone, but I'll see him again one day. Even death, even loss, is temporary because of the resurrection. Jesus is the life who defeated death.

David's grief didn't last forever. God gave him a new blessing in the form of Solomon, who would go on to be one of the wisest and most prosperous kings in Israel's history. Solomon was the very embodiment of God's love and faithfulness to David. God wasn't just restoring what David had lost; He was providing something greater—through David's lineage would come the promised Messiah.

Jeremiah 31:13 reflects the powerful transformation described in Psalm 30: "Then young women will dance and be glad, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow."

This transformation from sorrow to joy is nothing short of miraculous. People don't usually dance in times of sadness, but when God changes our mourning into joy, the shift becomes evident. The joy He gives stirs something deep within, and suddenly, what was once sorrow is expressed in the freedom and movement of dance. Joy has the power to make us move—it turns mourning into celebration.

I've been to many weddings in my life, and while weddings are joyful occasions, it's rare to see every single person, no matter their age or background, on

the dance floor at the same time. However, when the right song plays, something magical happens. It has the power to move everyone, regardless of age, generation, or background. It's like that with God's joy. When He begins to orchestrate a new song in your life, that joy has the power to move you in ways you never thought possible, and those around you will notice and participate in the joyous celebration of what the Lord has done. The joy of the Lord isn't just for you—it's meant to overflow from you. As God works in your heart, transforming your mourning into dancing, the joy He gives will be contagious, touching the lives of others.

This is what David's psalm teaches us. It's not about waiting for everything to be perfect in our lives before we experience joy. No, joy comes when we invite God into our sorrow, when we allow Him to work in our hearts, and when we choose to worship Him despite our circumstances. And just like David, who found joy in the birth of Solomon, we too can experience the birth of peace and joy in our lives, "shalom"—even in the hardest seasons.

My prayer for you is simple: allow God into your sorrow, bring Him into your mourning, and watch as He transforms it into dancing. Because when God works in your life, your sadness will turn into joy, and you'll want to sing His praises forever. Worship, and let God turn your mourning into dancing.

### **The Restoration Found in Psalm 51**

In Psalm 51, David's plea for restoration is centered on the grace of God in the wake of his sin with Bathsheba. This psalm, written after David's confrontation with the prophet Nathan, reflects the heart of a man who recognizes his need for God's mercy and restoration. "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). David's repentance is deeply rooted in the understanding that only God's grace can cleanse him from sin and restore him to a place of right relationship with God. He pleads for God's grace to not only forgive him but also to "restore to him the joy of God's salvation" (Psalm 51:12).

In both of these psalms, God's grace is seen as the agent of healing and renewal. Whether through the restoration of joy after sorrow or the forgiveness and renewal of a contrite heart, God's grace has the power to restore us fully, even from the most painful or grievous of circumstances.

### **Renewing the Contrite Heart: Psalm 71 & Psalm 80**

Psalm 71 is a psalm of trust in God's grace during a time of aging and difficulty. The psalmist calls out to God for help, acknowledging that only God's grace can provide the restoration needed in the face of life's inevitable challenges: "Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone" (Psalm 71:9).

This psalm highlights the grace of God during life's seasons—God's restorative power does not diminish with time.

The psalmist recalls God's past faithfulness, trusting that God will continue to restore him and renew his strength in his old age. Much like Caleb, who, at 85 years old, reflected on God's sustaining power before inheriting the Promised Land, saying, "I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out" (Joshua 14:11), we too can trust that God's faithfulness extends into our later years, renewing our strength and empowering us for the journey ahead. The grace that God provides is not just for moments of crisis but is sustained throughout all of life's stages.

In studying the word "hope" throughout Scripture, we notice a significant shift between the Old and New Testaments. While there are many verses about hope before the cross, what truly stands out is the transformation in both the understanding and definition of hope after the cross. "Hope" appears 167 times in the Bible, across 159 different verses. Of these, 86 occurrences appear in 83 verses in the Old Testament, and 81 instances in 76 verses in the New Testament.<sup>104</sup>

The Old Testament Hebrew word for hope is "towcheleth", derived from "yachal", which means "to wait" or "to hope with expectation."<sup>105</sup> In everyday life, we often use the word "hope" in a way that lacks certainty. For example, when I drive through a Taco Bell drive-thru, I might say, "I hope they don't put lettuce on my taco."

That's more of a wish than a confident expectation. In Michigan, people might say, "I hope we have an Indian summer," but any true Michigander knows better than to count on it.

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<sup>104</sup>Strong, James. *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1890.

<sup>105</sup>[www.biblehub.com/hebrew/8431.htm](http://www.biblehub.com/hebrew/8431.htm)

In the Old Testament, hope was not merely wishful thinking but a confident expectation rooted in God's past faithfulness. Because God had proven Himself trustworthy, His people could look forward with assurance to His promises. This understanding of hope carries into the New Testament, where it finds its fulfillment as a steadfast confidence in God's promises through Christ.

The New Testament Greek definition of hope, "elpis", carries an even stronger connotation:

1. An expectation of good.
2. A joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation.
3. Hope as something grounded in God, the author of hope, or the thing hoped for.<sup>106</sup>

The difference is profound. Hope in the Old Testament lacked the certainty we see after the cross of Jesus Christ. With His death, resurrection, and ascension, the hope that we hold today is anchored in the certainty of God's promises fulfilled in Christ. That's why much of the New Testament focuses on hope that is grounded in what Jesus has done. However, it is still valuable to look at how hope was understood before the cross, as there are important lessons from the lives of Solomon and David that can shape our understanding of hope today.

Let's take a look at Proverbs 13:12, a verse written by Solomon, David's son. It says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life."

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<sup>106</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1680/kjv/tr/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1680/kjv/tr/0-1/)

Solomon, the wisest man to ever live (outside of Jesus, who is the wisdom of God), had something important to teach us about deferred hope. But what exactly does “deferred hope” mean?

Consider the context of Solomon’s life. Solomon had many wives—700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3). Solomon’s life wasn’t without complications, and it’s safe to say that Solomon likely experienced a fair amount of deferred hope.

The word “towcheleth” (תֹּחֶלֶת), translated as “hope” in Proverbs 13:12, does not provide additional nuance beyond the general concept of expectation. However, as we examine the verse more closely, its meaning becomes clearer: “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.” Here, “hope deferred” refers to an expectation that is delayed or postponed, leading to deep discouragement. Many of us can relate to this feeling—when something we long for seems just out of reach, it can weigh heavily on our hearts.

Solomon’s wisdom here is clear: when we place our hope in things outside of God, it can lead to disappointment and, ultimately, a sick heart. But when the thing hoped for is realized, it becomes a “tree of life.” Where else do we see the “Tree of Life” in the Bible? In Genesis 2:9, the tree of life was in the Garden of Eden. And in Revelation 2:7, Jesus promises that to the victorious, He will give the right to eat from the Tree of Life in the paradise of God.

Solomon was ultimately pointing to the hope of a Savior, a longing for redemption that would come to fruition. This hope, fulfilled in Christ, is a tree of life for us.

Romans 5:11 speaks to this fulfilled hope: “We also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” Our hope has been realized in Christ, and through Him, we have eternal life—our longing fulfilled, access to the Tree of Life.

Now let’s look back at David’s life. David’s courage wasn’t something he mustered up on his own—it was a derivative virtue, flowing from a source beyond himself. Courage is never truly self-generated; it is always the byproduct of faith. What we believe in empowers our boldness. Whether that faith is placed in God or something else, courage is always rooted in trust—trust in a strength greater than our own that will carry us through.

For David, that source was God. In the earlier chapters of his life, the prophet Samuel had anointed him as the future king of Israel in the presence of his brothers (1 Samuel 16:13). David carried that divine promise with him, and it became a wellspring of courage. When he stepped onto the battlefield and heard Goliath’s defiant taunts, his confidence wasn’t in his strength but in God’s faithfulness. He remembered how God had already delivered him from the paw of the lion and the bear (1 Samuel 17:34–36). These moments of divine rescue built a foundation of trust that produced the courage David needed to face the giant.

But David’s faith wasn’t only tested in battles against enemies. It was also tested in the most personal and painful moments of his life.

In Psalm 71:14, David writes, “As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise You more and more.” This wasn’t written during a season of triumph but during a time of deep turmoil—when his son Absalom had rebelled, and David was fleeing for his life. The son he once cherished had become his enemy, forcing David to abandon his throne. And yet, in the middle of this heartbreak, David still declared, “I will always have hope.”

The Hebrew word for hope, “yachal”, means to wait for, to hope, or to expect.<sup>107</sup> This is not wishful thinking—it is experiential hope, built on a history of God’s proven faithfulness. David had walked with God through highs and lows, and he had learned that real hope could not be anchored in people or circumstances, but only in God and His unchanging promises. One of those promises was that David’s throne would be established forever through his descendants. David believed in the covenant God made with him, and even in chaos, that belief gave him strength.

His circumstances didn’t immediately improve—in fact, they worsened. When news came that Absalom had died in battle, David’s grief was overwhelming. His anguished cry echoes through time: “O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place!” (2 Samuel 18:33). Yet, despite that grief, David’s hope endured. It wasn’t based on outcomes—it was rooted in the character of God. That is why, in Psalm 71:14, David follows his declaration of hope with a commitment to worship: “I will praise You more and more.”

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<sup>107</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3176/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3176/kjv/wlc/0-1/)



David's story shows us that real courage flows from faith, and real hope is sustained by trust in God's unfailing love. Even in sorrow, betrayal, and loss, David held on to the One who never failed him. That same courage and hope are available to us when we root our lives in the faithfulness of God.

As New Testament believers, we live on the other side of the cross. The hope David held onto amid trial pointed toward a greater fulfillment. His hope was often for deliverance from enemies or restoration of his kingdom, but we have received the ultimate victory through Jesus Christ. Through Him, we've been given hope that is eternal—victory over sin and death. Our hearts overflow with praise for God's provision in Christ: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

This living hope in Christ not only fulfills the longings seen throughout the Old Testament but also weaves through the lives of those who trusted God in impossible circumstances. While the word "hope" is first explicitly mentioned in Joshua 2:18, the theme of hope emerges as early as Genesis 3. Right after the fall, God gave a promise—a foreshadowing of redemption through the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head. Hope has always been God's answer to brokenness.

The book of Ruth brings this hope to life. Ruth, a Moabite widow with no status, no security, and every reason to despair, chose to place her trust in the God of Israel.

What did God do? He led her to Boaz—a kinsman-redeemer. Through their union, Ruth became the great-grandmother of David and part of the lineage of Jesus Christ. Her story is a testimony of how God's favor and grace can take a life marked by loss and write a legacy of redemption and purpose.

As believers in Christ, we've been grafted into this same lineage of hope. If David, who endured betrayal, grief, and war, could say, "I will always have hope; I will praise You more and more" (Psalm 71:14), how much more should we, who have the full revelation of Christ, be filled with hope? Our hope isn't rooted in our circumstances—it's anchored in the finished work of Jesus.

Place your hope in your circumstances, and your heart will grow weary. But place your hope in the provision of God through Christ, and your heart will overflow with praise. We are not people without hope—we are people whose hope is alive, enduring, and unshakable.

### **The Grace of Restoration: From Israel's Cry to Christ's Fulfillment**

In Psalm 80, the psalmist cries out for God to restore His people, Israel, who have experienced exile and hardship. "Restore us, O God; make Your face shine on us, that we may be saved" (Psalm 80:3). The grace of restoration is expressed in God's face shining upon His people, bringing healing and salvation. This psalm is a collective plea for renewal, where the people of Israel long for God to restore them to their rightful place as His chosen people. The restoration in this context is not only personal but also corporate—God's grace has the power to heal a nation and bring it back into fellowship with Himself.

Psalm 80 uses the imagery of God's people as a vine—planted, nurtured, and cared for by God, yet now broken and in need of restoration. The psalmist pleads for God to return, revive, and protect His people, just as a gardener would tend to a struggling vine.

Jesus expands on this metaphor in John 15:1-5, declaring, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener... You are the branches." This connection reveals that true life, growth, and fruitfulness come only through abiding in Christ. Just as Israel depended on God for survival, Christians remain connected to Jesus, the source of spiritual life.

This truth points to God's supernatural grace—we are not self-sustaining, but rather creations of God's supernatural grace. Just as a vine cannot grow apart from the gardener's care, believers flourish only through God's grace and sustaining power. God lifts us "aíró"<sup>108</sup> to bear even more fruit for His glory (John 15:2).

Psalm 80 includes a plea for God to "let Your hand be on the man at Your right hand, the Son of Man You have raised up for Yourself" (Psalm 80:17). This verse prophetically points to Jesus, the ultimate "Son of Man", who now sits at God's right hand (Hebrews 1:3).

In Psalm 80:2, the psalmist also calls on God to stir His power and save His people, mentioning Benjamin, a name meaning "Son of the Right Hand."<sup>109</sup> Jesus, as the true and greater Benjamin, is the Son at God's right hand, granting us access to God's presence. Through His sacrifice and resurrection, He restores

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<sup>108</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g142/kjv/tr/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g142/kjv/tr/0-1/)

<sup>109</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1144/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1144/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

what was broken, fulfilling the cry of Psalm 80 for salvation.

Hebrews 10:19-20 affirms this: "We have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way..." Jesus, the true Benjamin, has opened the way for us to be fully restored to God.

### **Rebuilding What Was Lost: Psalm 85 & Psalm 107**

Psalm 85 is a psalm of restoration after a period of judgment and exile. The psalmist acknowledges that God's anger has been turned away, and he pleads for God to restore His favor upon the land: "You, Lord, showed favor to Your land; You restored the fortunes of Jacob" (Psalm 85:1). This psalm reveals that restoration is not only a personal experience but also a communal one, where God's grace rebuilds the fortunes of a people who have fallen into disfavor. In the New Covenant, however, we experience a permanent restoration where we can never fall out of favor with God. Through Jesus Christ, we are forever reconciled to God, and His favor is unshakeable. As the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 8:1, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Additionally, Ephesians 1:6 declares that we are "accepted in the Beloved," meaning we are eternally favored and adopted into God's family through Christ. God's favor is not based on our performance but on His unchanging grace and the finished work of Jesus, ensuring that we stand in His favor forever.

The psalmist also prays for peace and restoration, anticipating a time when righteousness and peace will reign again, a time when God's grace will rebuild what has been torn down.

In Psalm 107, we see the grace of restoration in the lives of those who have been wandering, lost, or afflicted. Psalm 107 can be viewed as a collection of testimonies highlighting God's unwavering love. Each stanza serves as a unique case study, illustrating how God's mercy reaches out to people in various trials—whether they are lost, imprisoned, sick, or in danger—showing His faithful intervention, rescue, and restoration.

Each section of Psalm 107 describes a specific scenario where people face hardships and cry out to God for help, and He delivers them. Here are examples from the psalm:

### **1. The Wanderers (Verses 4-9):**

- SITUATION: A group of people wander in the desert, hungry, thirsty, and lost.
- GOD'S LOVE: They cry out to the Lord, and He leads them to a safe place with water and food.
- REFLECTION: This shows God's love in guiding those who are lost and providing for their needs.

"Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress. He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle" (Psalm 107:6-7).

### **2. The Prisoners (Verses 10-16):**

- SITUATION: Some are imprisoned in darkness, suffering because of their rebellion and sin.

- GOD’S LOVE: They cry out to God, and He frees them, breaking their chains.
- REFLECTION: God’s love is demonstrated in His forgiveness and redemption, even for those who are trapped by their wrongdoings.

“For He shatters the doors of bronze and cuts through the bars of iron” (Psalm 107:16).

### **3. The Sick (Verses 17-22):**

- SITUATION: Some are suffering from illness due to their foolishness and sin.
- GOD’S LOVE: They call out to God, and He heals them, restoring their health.
- REFLECTION: This illustrates God’s love in healing and restoring those who are broken, both physically and spiritually.

“Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them from their distress. He sent out His word and healed them; He rescued them from the grave” (Psalm 107:19-20).

### **4. The Storm Tossed (Verses 23-32):**

- SITUATION: Sailors face a fierce storm, with their lives in danger.
- GOD’S LOVE: They cry to God, and He calms the storm and brings them safely to shore.
- REFLECTION: God’s love is evident in His protection and provision in life-threatening situations.

“Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed” (Psalm 107:28-29).

## 5. **God’s General Mercy (Verses 33-43):**

- SITUATION: The psalmist reflects on God’s general mercy in changing the course of nature, turning deserts into pools, and making cities flourish.
- GOD’S LOVE: This section emphasizes that God’s love is not just for specific people but is available to all, transforming the world around them.
- REFLECTION: It demonstrates that God’s love and power extend over all creation, bringing life and restoration.

“He turns rivers into a desert, and springs of water into thirsty ground... He turns a desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into flowing springs” (Psalm 107:33-35).

Each of these examples shows a distinct aspect of God’s love in action, whether through provision, deliverance, healing, or protection.

The psalmist recounts various groups of people—prisoners, the hungry, the sick, and the lost—who have been restored by God’s grace. “Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them from their distress” (Psalm 107:13).

This psalm paints a vivid picture of God's grace as one that brings wholeness to the broken, whether through physical healing, release from bondage, or deliverance from despair.

God's grace in restoration is comprehensive, addressing the body, mind, and spirit.

Jesus came to fulfill what Psalm 107 portrays—God's grace bringing restoration to the broken, the captive, the sick, and the lost. Just as the psalmist describes people crying out to God in their distress and being saved, Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of this saving grace, offering spiritual, physical, and emotional restoration. His ministry was not only about healing diseases and freeing people from physical chains but also about breaking spiritual bondage, restoring the lost, and bringing wholeness to those in despair (Luke 4:18-19).

Through Christ, the restoration described in Psalm 107 reaches its fullest expression, as He brings eternal redemption to all who cry out to Him. John 8:36 affirms this truth: "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

### **The Grace of Restoration and Renewal in Community: Psalm 114 & Psalm 126**

Psalm 114 recalls the miraculous deliverance of Israel from Egypt, emphasizing the power of God's grace to restore His people to a place of freedom and blessing.



"When Israel came out of Egypt, Jacob from a people of foreign tongue, Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel His dominion" (Psalm 114:1-2). The grace of God is evident in the dramatic restoration of Israel's identity as God's chosen people. The psalmist reflects on how God's intervention in Israel's history brought them out of oppression and into a place of covenant blessing. The grace of God is portrayed here as a powerful force that not only rescues but also restores and establishes.

In Psalm 126, the psalmist reflects on the restoration of Israel's fortunes after their return from exile: "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy" (Psalm 126:3). This psalm speaks of the joy and celebration that accompany the restoration process. For those who have experienced hardship, the grace of restoration is marked by an overflow of joy. The psalm also emphasizes that restoration involves not just the return to former glory but a renewed vision and hope for the future: "Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy" (Psalm 126:5). The grace of restoration brings a new perspective, a renewed hope, and the promise of greater joy to come.

### **Healing and Renewal for the Weary (Psalm 147)**

Psalm 147 beautifully captures God's restorative grace toward His people, especially those who are weary or broken. "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).

God's grace is portrayed as a healing balm, soothing the pain of the afflicted and restoring them to wholeness. The psalmist goes on to declare that God's grace is evident in His care for the entire created order: "The Lord sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground" (Psalm 147:6). In this psalm, we see that restoration is a holistic act of God, addressing both individual needs and the needs of His people as a whole.

### **The Ever-Restorative Grace of God**

The grace of restoration is one of the most beautiful aspects of God's character. Through the Psalms, we see that God's grace brings healing, renewal, and rebuilding in every area of life, whether in the wake of sin, sorrow, or failure.

God's grace is always available, ready to restore those who are broken, weary, or lost.

As we reflect on the Psalms of Restoration, we are reminded that God's grace is not limited by our failures or past mistakes. It is a grace that can heal the deepest wounds, renew the most broken spirits, and rebuild what has been lost or destroyed. Just as God restored the psalmists, so He offers the same grace to us today. Whatever we face, whether it be personal sin, pain from past mistakes, or the weight of sorrow, God's grace can restore us, renew us, and rebuild us in ways that bring joy, peace, and lasting transformation. Let us, like the psalmists, turn to God in faith and humility, trusting in the overflowing grace of His restoration.

### **How Restoration Works for Us Today**

- Through faith in Christ, we are restored to a right relationship with God.

- “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).
- Through God’s grace, He restores what sin, suffering, and the enemy have stolen.
  - “I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten” (Joel 2:25).
- Through the Holy Spirit, we are transformed and made whole, able to live in victory.
  - “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Corinthians 3:17).
- Through God’s promises, we have the assurance of full and final restoration in eternity.
  - “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:4).
- God’s restoration is always greater than what was lost—it brings spiritual renewal, deeper intimacy with Him, and an eternal future of wholeness in His presence.
  - “Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours” (Isaiah 61:7).

When we consider the fullness of God's restoration, it reflects this concept of "double completeness." When the Lord restores, He always gives more than what was lost, bringing about a greater, more profound healing and fulfillment than we could ever imagine.

**Chapter 19:**  
**The Grace of God's Promises**  
**Psalm 49, Psalm 84, Psalm 89, Psalm 119,**  
**Psalm 132**



## **Chapter 19: The Grace of God's Promises**

God's promises are not just words—they are divine guarantees, more valuable than gold and more secure than the strongest vault. Each one is a priceless deposit of His unfailing commitment to His people. Throughout the Psalms, we see the deep connection between God's promises and His grace. The psalmists often remind us that the covenant promises God made to His people are sustained and fulfilled by His grace. These promises, from the promise of salvation to the promise of His faithful presence, serve as a constant source of hope and comfort. In this chapter, we will explore the grace that undergirds God's promises, particularly His covenant promises, and how they offer assurance and strength to His people.

Key psalms such as Psalm 49, Psalm 84, Psalm 89, Psalm 119, and Psalm 132 provide profound insights into how God's promises are woven throughout Scripture and offer a glimpse into the rich depth of grace that sustains them.

### **The Assurance of God's Covenant: Psalm 49 & Psalm 89**

In Psalm 49, the psalmist reflects on the fleeting nature of wealth and the vanity of trusting in earthly possessions. The underlying message is that the promises of God are far more enduring and substantial. "But God will redeem me from the realm of the dead; He will surely take me to Himself" (Psalm 49:15).

Here, the psalmist declares that the promise of redemption, which is at the heart of God's covenant with His people, is secure. It is not based on human power or wealth but on God's grace and faithfulness. The psalm calls the believer to trust in the eternal promises of God, which offer lasting hope in contrast to the transitory nature of material things.

Psalm 89 emphasizes God's covenant with David and His enduring faithfulness. "I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations" (Psalm 89:4). This psalm is a reminder of the promises God made to David, which are ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Son of David. The covenant promises were not conditional on David's faithfulness but on God's unchanging grace. Despite human frailty and failure, God's promises stand firm because of His grace and sovereignty. The psalmist speaks of God's faithfulness even when circumstances seem to challenge the realization of those promises, highlighting the grace that sustains God's covenant.

You can trace the covenants back from the Davidic Covenant to the Adamic Covenant and all the covenants in between, illustrating a continuous thread of God's grace and faithfulness. Here's how they connect:

### 1. The Adamic Covenant (Genesis 3:15)

The first covenant, given to Adam after the fall, is often seen as the protoevangelium (first Gospel), where God promises a Redeemer. In Genesis 3:15, God declares that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent, pointing forward to the coming of Jesus Christ, who would defeat Satan and sin. This promise is the foundational promise upon which all subsequent covenants are built.

- Connection: The Adamic Covenant introduces God's plan of redemption through the offspring of Eve, which is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus, the Son of David (as He is the fulfillment of God's promise to David).

## 2. The Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9:9-17)

After the flood, God made a covenant with Noah and all of creation, promising never to destroy the Earth with a flood again. The rainbow is the sign of this covenant. This covenant shows God's commitment to creation, maintaining His purposes for humanity despite the fall.

- Connection: The Noahic Covenant upholds God's faithfulness to His creation and sets the stage for the covenants to come, including the Davidic Covenant, as part of God's redemptive plan.

## 3. The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3, 17:1-8)

God makes a covenant with Abraham, promising to make his descendants a great nation and bless all nations through him. This covenant includes the promise of land, descendants, and blessing. The covenant with Abraham is foundational for the people of Israel, pointing toward the coming Messiah through his lineage.

- Connection: The Abrahamic Covenant directly ties into the Davidic Covenant, as both David and Jesus come from Abraham's line. God's promise to bless all nations through Abraham finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus, who is the descendant of David and the one who brings salvation to all.



#### 4. The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19:5-6, 24:7-8)

God makes a covenant with the people of Israel at Mount Sinai, giving them the Law and setting them apart as His holy people. This covenant, while conditional on Israel's obedience, reveals God's desire to dwell with His people and make them a light to the nations.

- Connection: The Mosaic Covenant sets the framework for the coming of the Davidic Covenant, as the Law points to the need for a perfect king who would uphold God's justice and grace. The Davidic Covenant promises a king from David's line who would rule according to God's heart, ultimately fulfilled in Jesus.

#### 5. The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 89:3-4)

In the Davidic Covenant, God promises David that his throne will endure forever and that one of his descendants will rule as an eternal king. This covenant emphasizes God's faithfulness to David and His unchanging promise that the Messiah will come from his line.

- Connection: The Davidic Covenant builds on the promises given in the Abrahamic Covenant (the Messiah will come from Abraham's descendants) and the Mosaic Covenant (the Messiah will be the perfect king who fulfills the Law). This covenant is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Son of David, who establishes God's eternal Kingdom.

### **Connecting the Covenants to Psalm 89**

Psalm 89 highlights God's faithfulness to His covenant with David, declaring that His promise to David's line will stand forever. The psalmist acknowledges that while David's descendants may fail, God's grace ensures that His covenant with David will remain intact. This is a reminder that God's promises, rooted in the Adamic Covenant, are based not on human faithfulness but on God's sovereign grace.

- Connection: The Davidic Covenant points to the Adamic Covenant's promise of redemption through the seed of the woman, as Jesus, the ultimate fulfillment of the Davidic line, brings the restoration promised to Adam. Jesus, the Son of David, fulfills God's promise to both David and all humanity, as He conquers sin and death, securing the eternal restoration of God's people.

In this way, God's covenants are progressively revealed and fulfilled, each building upon the previous one, with the Davidic Covenant serving as a key marker that ultimately points to Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan.

### **The Beauty of God's Presence in His Promises: Psalm 84**

In Psalm 84, the psalmist exalts the beauty of God's presence and the blessings that come with living under His promises. "Better is one day in Your courts than a thousand elsewhere" (Psalm 84:10). This psalm reveals the profound joy and satisfaction that come from living in the presence of God.

The promises of God, particularly the promise of His nearness and fellowship, are not just theological abstractions—they are tangible and life-giving. The psalmist longs to dwell in God's presence because it is through God's grace that His promises are fulfilled. Under the Old Covenant, access to God's presence was limited—confined to the Temple and mediated by priests. But for those in Christ, the New Covenant offers an unparalleled advantage: we are permanently indwelt by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). The psalmist also declares that "No good thing does He withhold from those whose walk is blameless" (Psalm 84:11), emphasizing that God's promises are a grace-filled gift to those who follow Him. Under the Old Covenant, this promise was tied to obedience to the Law, but under the New Covenant, we are made blameless in Christ, not by our works, but by His grace (Colossians 1:22).

Psalm 84 describes the Valley of Baka as a place of dryness and difficulty, yet those who trust in God turn it into a place of springs (Psalm 84:6). The Valley of Baka, used as a metaphor for hardship, represents seasons of spiritual drought and suffering. However, God strengthens His people in these trials, bringing refreshment and renewal even in desolate places.

In Psalm 81:16, God declares:

"But you would be fed with the finest of wheat; with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

Just as God brought water from a rock to sustain Israel (Exodus 17:6), He also promises more than just survival—He offers sweetness and abundance to those who trust Him.

In Exodus 17:6, God commanded Moses to strike the rock, and water flowed out to quench the thirst of Israel in the wilderness. This was a picture of God's abundant provision, even in desolate places.

### **Jesus as the Rock That Was Struck**

The Apostle Paul directly connects this event to Jesus in 1 Corinthians 10:4:

"They drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ."

Just as the rock in the wilderness was struck to give water, Jesus, the true Rock, was struck on the cross to bring living water—eternal life and salvation. His suffering and sacrifice opened the way for us to receive God's abundant grace, not just survival, but full spiritual nourishment.

### **Tying It to "Honey from the Rock": Psalm 81:16**

Psalm 81:16 speaks of honey from the rock, symbolizing not just provision but a supernatural blessing. While water represents life-sustaining grace, honey represents the sweetness and richness of life in Christ. Through Jesus, we receive not only forgiveness and salvation (water) but also deep joy, peace, and abundance (honey). Psalm 119:103 says, "How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

### **Jesus' Words on Living Water**

Jesus Himself makes this connection in John 7:37-38: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."

Just as God provided water from the rock, He now provides spiritual life through Jesus. The striking of the rock in Exodus foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice, and the promise of honey from the rock reminds us that in Him, we find not just sustenance, but overflowing abundance.

Hardships are inevitable, but in Christ, they become opportunities for growth, strength, and ultimately, victory. Jesus affirms this truth in John 16:33: "In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." He transforms our valleys of dryness into places of spiritual abundance, sustaining us even in life's hardest moments.

### **God's Word as a Promise Fulfilled: Psalm 119**

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm, and its central focus is on God's Word—His promises contained in Scripture. The psalmist meditates on God's statutes, commandments, and promises throughout the psalm, acknowledging the beauty and reliability of God's Word: "Your Word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens" (Psalm 119:89). Here, the psalmist recognizes that God's promises are revealed in His Word, which is a constant source of guidance, hope, and renewal. The entire psalm reflects on how God's promises sustain the believer during trials and how grace is experienced as we walk in the truth of God's revealed promises.

One way to face isolation (Psalm 119:19), scorn, contempt, and slander (Psalm 119:22-23) is by seeking wise counsel. The Bible itself serves as a wonderful counselor (Psalm 119:24), but we can only see its wonders if God opens our eyes (Psalm 119:18).

Paul speaks of a spiritual veil that blinds our minds (2 Corinthians 3:14-15)—we may grasp facts from the Bible, but without the Spirit’s illumination, we cannot see its full glory or the beauty of Christ Himself. Yet, when we turn to Christ, the Spirit removes the veil, transforming us into His likeness (2 Corinthians 3:16-18). Ask God to open your eyes to the wonders of His Word (Psalm 119:18), and as He does, Scripture becomes the physician of your soul, bringing wisdom, healing, and life.<sup>110</sup>

Psalm 119 is the most well-known example of an alphabetic acrostic in the Psalms. It is a long psalm (176 verses), and each section of eight verses begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, from Aleph to Tav. This psalm is a celebration of God’s Word, with the psalmist expressing a deep love for and devotion to God’s Law. Each verse highlights a different aspect of God’s commandments, precepts, or statutes.

The psalmist speaks of the deep longing and dependence on God’s promises: “I will meditate on Your wonders” (Psalm 119:27).

“The Earth is filled with Your love, LORD; teach me Your decrees” (Psalm 119:64). The psalmist declares that God’s steadfast love permeates all creation. This means that every part of existence—nature, human relationships, even life’s challenges—is touched by God’s unwavering love. It is not fleeting or conditional but constant and abundant.

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<sup>110</sup>Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller. *A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms: The Songs of Jesus*. P.306. Viking Publication. 2015.

God's Word is a source of grace, offering wisdom, strength, and encouragement. The psalmist also expresses how God's promises are a lamp to their feet and a light to their path (Psalm 119:105). The grace that comes through God's Word is the assurance that His promises will never fail, no matter the circumstances.

### **God's Word Directs Our Paths**

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet, a light on my path" (Psalm 119:105).

Let's start by asking, what is the Word—or better yet, who is the Word? When many believers read Psalm 119:105, they may think of the Bible as a lamp for our feet, a light on our path. And while that's true, there's more to it. I've heard pastors refer to the Bible as "**B**asic **I**nstruction **B**efore **L**eaving **E**arth" (B.I.B.L.E.), but I think they are missing something important here. Is the Bible simply a collection of instructions for life? Is it just a guide to help us find our way? If we reduce it to that, we're missing the deeper truth. Many people approach Scripture with this mindset—seeking a verse to help them make a decision: "What school should I attend? Which house should I buy? Which job should I take?" But when we understand that the Word is more than just a guide, that it reveals the very One who walks with us on this journey of life, everything changes.

"The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

So, who is the Word? The Word is Jesus Christ. And when we read Psalm 119:105 in this light, it changes everything: “Your Word is a lamp to my feet, a light on my path”—it’s not just talking about the Bible as a book of guidance through life, but about Jesus Himself, our guiding light. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” Words on a page can’t be alive unless the Word is a living person—Jesus Christ.

Scripture, which points us to Jesus, is alive and active because it reveals Jesus, the Word become flesh. Jesus can guide us, lead us, and transform our lives. The psalmist is not talking about some distant or theoretical light in Psalm 119:105. He speaks of a light that transforms the way we see everything. C.S. Lewis beautifully captures this: “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.”<sup>111</sup>

The Message version of Psalm 119:105 reads, “By Your words I can see where I’m going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path.” This verse highlights a central theme in Scripture: divine guidance through God’s Word. In the Old Testament, we encounter theophanies—moments when Christ appeared before His incarnation in the first century. These divine encounters pointed to the living presence of God guiding His people, just as His Word illuminates our path.

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<sup>111</sup>C.S. Lewis. The closing sentence of “Is Theology Poetry?” in *They Asked for a Paper* (London: Bles, 1962), 150-165.



Psalm 119 echoes this truth, emphasizing the guiding light of God's instruction. We see the same idea reflected in Proverbs 6:23: "For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light, and reproofs for discipline are the way of life." This consistent imagery reveals that God's Word not only informs but also transforms, showing us the way forward, especially in darkness.

Psalm 119:105 marks a significant turning point in this chapter. It begins a new section under the Hebrew letter Nun (נ), part of the acrostic structure of this rich and meditative psalm. With 176 verses, Psalm 119 was so foundational to the faith that Hebrew children were required to memorize it. By the time they arrived at verse 105, they would have already developed a deep reverence for the life-giving guidance found in God's Word.

Now, let's look at Psalm 119:105 through the lens of the New Testament...

"When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'" (John 8:12).

When you read "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105), you can hear Jesus declaring, "I am the light of the world." The very Word that illuminates our path is Christ Himself.

As the Good Shepherd, Jesus doesn't just reveal the way—He is the way (John 14:6). He promises never to leave us or forsake us, ensuring that the path He leads us on is not just good but the best path for our lives.

So, when you feel lost, uncertain, or overwhelmed, remember this: Jesus is the light shining on your path. He isn't just lighting the way for your future; He is actively guiding you in every step today. Whether it's a small decision or a life-changing crossroads, His light is ever-present, illuminating the way forward.

Just as the psalmist declares in Psalm 119:105, Jesus never leaves you in the dark—He walks with you, lighting your path with His presence, His truth, and His unfailing love.

There is deep peace in knowing that God's plans for us are secure. As Ephesians 2:10 declares, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

I remember a season in my life when this truth became a breakthrough for me. During struggles, I realized something life-changing: nothing takes God by surprise. Even when circumstances didn't go as I expected, His plans for me remained in motion. I didn't have to fear the unknown or feel lost in uncertainty because God was still leading me. That's why I could rejoice—not because of the hardship itself, but because I knew God was working all things together for my good (Romans 8:28). And the same is true for you. Your struggles do not derail God's purpose for your life. His plan hasn't stopped—it's still unfolding, even in the waiting, even in the unexpected detours. The good works He has prepared for you are still ahead.

This truth has freed me from the burden of micromanaging every detail of my life. I still make plans, but I hold them with open hands, trusting in God's greater wisdom.

As Proverbs 16:9 reminds us, “We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.”

Some of the best things in my life have been the things I never planned. That’s why I choose to trust that Jesus will light my path ahead. His plans are always greater, and His timing is always perfect.

### **God’s Eternal Covenant with His People: Psalm 132**

Psalm 132 is a psalm of remembrance, reminding God’s people of His promise to David and His faithfulness to that covenant. “The Lord has sworn an oath to David, a sure oath that He will not revoke” (Psalm 132:11). This psalm reflects on the unbreakable nature of God’s promises, emphasizing that God’s covenant with David is eternal and that it will be fulfilled in God’s perfect timing. The psalm also calls on God to remember His promises to His people, trusting that His grace will be evident as He fulfills His word.

Psalm 132 beautifully ties God’s grace with His promises, showing that God’s grace enables the fulfillment of promises that were made long ago. The psalmist’s confidence in God’s faithfulness reflects the hope that arises from trusting in the grace that sustains God’s covenant promises. The psalmists understand that God’s promises are a source of comfort and strength, especially in times of trouble. “For the Word of the Lord is right and true; He is faithful in all He does” (Psalm 33:4). In this way, grace is the foundation of all of God’s promises—His grace makes His promises possible, reliable, and eternal.

## **Grace and the Fulfillment of God's Promises in Christ**

As believers in the New Covenant, we can look back on these psalms with a deeper understanding of how God's promises have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises to David, to Israel, and to the world. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Christ brings to fruition the promises of salvation, eternal life, and God's abiding presence. Jesus is the fulfillment of the covenant promises made in the Psalms, and His grace is the means by which we inherit these promises through faith.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 1:20, "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ." Jesus is the "Yes" to all the promises God has made, and through Him, we receive the grace that guarantees their fulfillment. Every promise of God finds its ultimate expression in Christ, and His grace brings these promises to life for all who trust in Him.

### **Living in the Promise of Grace**

The grace of God's promises is a living, breathing reality that sustains and empowers believers. The psalms call us to remember and trust in God's promises, knowing that His grace ensures their fulfillment. As we reflect on these psalms, let us be encouraged to live in the assurance that God's promises are sure, and His grace is sufficient to carry us through every trial. Whether we are in times of joy or hardship, we can rest in the grace of God's promises, knowing that He will never fail to keep His word.

God's promises are a constant source of hope, and His grace is the foundation upon which they stand. As we hold fast to the promises of God, let us remember that it is His grace that sustains them—grace that never falters, never fades, and always leads us to the fulfillment of His divine purposes.

**Chapter 20:**  
**Grace in the Midst of Waiting**  
**Psalms 27, Psalm 39, Psalm 130**



## **Chapter 20: Grace in the Midst of Waiting**

Waiting is one of the most challenging experiences in the life of a believer. Whether we are waiting for guidance, deliverance, healing, or the fulfillment of God's promises, seasons of waiting often feel long, uncertain, and filled with frustration. Yet, throughout the Psalms, we see how grace is intricately woven into the experience of waiting. God's grace does not abandon us in these times but is a sustaining force that helps us endure, trust in His timing, and hold on to hope.

The theme of grace and waiting is deeply reflected in Psalm 27, Psalm 39, and Psalm 130, where the psalmists cry out to God, longing for His intervention yet choosing to trust in His timing. These psalms reveal that waiting is not passive—it is an active trust in God's grace to sustain, strengthen, and fulfill His promises.

Paul echoes this idea in Philippians 4, where he speaks of learning to be content in every circumstance. His contentment is not based on circumstances changing but on the sufficiency of Christ: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Just as the psalmists find peace in trusting God while they wait, Paul finds peace in the grace of Christ, whether in abundance or need.

Together, these passages show that God's grace is not just about providing what we want but sustaining us as we wait. His presence is enough, His timing is perfect, and His grace gives us the strength to remain steadfast, whether we are waiting for deliverance, direction, or simply the next step.

In this chapter, we will explore how God's grace empowers us to wait with patience and expectation. We will look at key psalms such as Psalm 27, Psalm 39, and Psalm 130, which all reveal the grace of waiting. These psalms remind us that grace is not only present in the answer we long for but also in the waiting itself.

### **The Grace of Waiting with Confidence: Psalm 27**

In Psalm 27, David expresses a profound confidence in God even while facing the uncertainty of his circumstances. "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14). This verse reflects a posture of trust, rooted in the understanding that God's timing is perfect, even when we do not see the end of our waiting.

### **Biblical Waiting Timelines**

Here's a timeline of significant periods of waiting in the Bible, showing how God's people had to trust in His timing for the fulfillment of His promises:

#### **Abraham & Sarah – Waiting for a Child (25 years)**

- **Promise Given:** God promised Abraham (Abram) that he would have a son and become the father of many nations (Genesis 12:2, Genesis 15:4-5).
- **Fulfillment:** Isaac was born 25 years later when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 (Genesis 21:1-3).



## **Joseph – Waiting for His Destiny (13+ years)**

- **Promise Given:** Joseph had dreams as a teenager that he would one day be in a position of great authority (Genesis 37:5-10).
- **Fulfillment:** After being betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, falsely accused, and imprisoned, Joseph became second in command of Egypt at age 30—approximately 13 years later (Genesis 41:46).

## **Israel in Egyptian Slavery – Waiting for Deliverance (400+ years)**

- **Promise Given:** God told Abraham that his descendants would be enslaved in a foreign land but would later be delivered (Genesis 15:13-14).
- **Fulfillment:** After over 400 years, God raised up Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus (Exodus 12:40-41).

## **Israel in the Wilderness – Waiting for the Promised Land (40 years)**

- **Promise Given:** After leaving Egypt, Israel was supposed to enter the Promised Land.
- **Delay:** Because of their unbelief and rebellion, they wandered 40 years in the wilderness (Numbers 14:33-34).
- **Fulfillment:** Joshua led the next generation into the Promised Land (Joshua 1:1-2, Joshua 3:17).

## **David – Waiting to Be King (15+ years)**

- **Promise Given:** Samuel anointed David as king while he was still a shepherd boy (1 Samuel 16:12-13).
- **Fulfillment:** David endured years of running from Saul before finally becoming king of Judah at age 30, around 15 years later (2 Samuel 2:4), and later king over all Israel (2 Samuel 5:3-4).

### **Israel – Waiting for the Promised Messiah (1000 + years)**

- **Promise Given:** Prophets like Isaiah and Micah foretold the coming of the Messiah (Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6-7, Micah 5:2).
- **Fulfillment:** Jesus was born over 700 years after Isaiah's prophecy (Luke 2:4-7). The book of Psalms contains many prophecies of the coming Messiah, which happened around 1,000 years later. If you include the prophecy of Jesus in Genesis 3:15, it took around 4,000 years from the first promise God made to be fulfilled.

### **Disciples & Early Church – Waiting for the Holy Spirit (50 days after the Resurrection)**

- **Promise Given:** Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4-5).
- **Fulfillment:** The Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus' Resurrection (Acts 2:1-4).

### **The Church – Waiting for Christ's Second Coming (Over 2,000 years and counting)**

- **Promise Given:** Jesus promised to return (John 14:2-3, Acts 1:11, Revelation 22:12).
- **Fulfillment:** Although the church will first be raptured (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17), we are still waiting to return with Him, but His coming is sure (2 Peter 3:8-9, Revelation 22:20).

Waiting in God's timeline is never wasted time—it is a season of trust, refinement, and deepening faith. David's confidence in waiting is not based on his strength or wisdom but on the grace of God. He understands that God's presence, guidance, and protection are with him during the waiting process. Earlier in the Psalm, David declares, "The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear" (Psalm 27:1)?

While waiting for God's intervention, David finds refuge in God's character—His light, salvation, and strength. His waiting is not passive despair, but active trust in God's faithfulness.

Grace in the waiting, according to Psalm 27, is found in God's presence. It is the assurance that He is with us, guiding us, and working on our behalf, even when we cannot yet see the full picture. God's grace sustains our hope, enabling us to wait with courage and trust. We are not abandoned in our waiting; rather, we are held in the grace of His timing, knowing that He will act at the right moment.

### **The Grace of Reflecting on Our Shortness of Life: Psalm 39**

In Psalm 39, David reflects on the fleeting nature of life and the brevity of our days.

“Show me, Lord, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is” (Psalm 39:4). This psalm highlights how waiting, at times, confronts us with our frailty and mortality.

Yet, even as David contemplates the brevity of life, he acknowledges that his hope is in the Lord. “But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in You” (Psalm 39:7). In this waiting period, David is not just lamenting over the brevity of life; he is redirecting his gaze to the Lord, where his true hope lies. There is grace in recognizing our limitations and trusting in God’s sovereign control over our lives. Waiting forces us to confront the truth that we are not in control and that our timing is not always aligned with God’s.

In this psalm, grace is found in the space between the present moment and the uncertainty of the future. It is in acknowledging that God holds our lives in His hands (John 10:28-29) and that His timing and plans are perfect. David’s prayer of waiting is not one of passive resignation but of active trust, as he entrusts the unknown to a faithful God. Grace empowers us to let go of the desire for control and embrace the peace that comes from resting in God’s sovereignty.

### **The Grace of Hope in the Darkness: Psalm 130**

One of the most powerful expressions of grace in waiting is found in Psalm 130. The psalmist is in a place of deep longing and despair, but there is an unmistakable thread of hope that runs through the psalm. “I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in His Word I put my hope” (Psalm 130:5). The psalmist waits, not in hopelessness, but in hopeful expectation of God’s mercy and deliverance.

Psalm 130 teaches us that waiting is not about passively sitting by in despair, but about actively placing our hope in God's promises. The psalmist acknowledges the depths of his sinfulness and need for God's mercy, but even in his wait, he declares, "With the Lord is unfailing love and with Him is full redemption" (Psalm 130:7). Grace is seen here not only in the future redemption that the psalmist anticipates but also in the present waiting, where God's mercy is already being experienced in the waiting itself.

This psalm underscores that grace is not just in the answer we long for, but in the waiting process itself. The grace of waiting transforms our hearts, giving us the ability to hope in God's unfailing love even when answers don't come quickly. It is in this period of waiting that we are invited to deepen our trust and grow in our dependence on God's timing and goodness.

### **Waiting as a Spiritual Discipline**

Waiting is often viewed negatively as a time of inactivity or frustration. But the Psalms show us that waiting can be a grace-filled experience. Grace in waiting is not about idleness or passivity, but about actively trusting in God's perfect plan and timing. Just as a farmer waits for the crops to grow and ripen, so we wait for God's purposes to unfold in His time. Waiting requires patience, faith, and hope—all of which are empowered by God's grace.

In Psalm 130, the psalmist's waiting is an active waiting, grounded in the trust that God will redeem His people.

In Psalm 27, waiting is framed as an exercise in strength and courage, as the psalmist learns to take heart and trust in God. In Psalm 39, waiting serves as a humbling reminder of the brevity of life, leading us to put our full hope in God's unfailing promises.

### **Grace in the Waiting: A New Covenant Perspective**

For believers in the New Covenant, the grace in waiting is even more profound. As we wait, we do so with the full assurance that Jesus Christ has already come and that He will come again to make all things right. While waiting in the Old Covenant was marked by longing and anticipation of God's promises yet to be fulfilled, in the New Covenant, we wait in hope, knowing that God's promises have already been sealed in Christ.

As we wait for Christ's return, we do so with the grace of knowing that we are already secure in Him. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 8:25, "But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently." This patience is not a passive endurance but an active, grace-fueled trust that the fulfillment of God's promises is certain, even if the timing is not yet clear.

### **The Grace of Waiting with Hope**

Waiting can be difficult and disheartening, but the Psalms teach us that grace is present in the waiting. God's grace sustains us when we feel weary and encourages us to trust in His perfect timing. We are reminded that our waiting is never in vain because it is part of God's sovereign plan.

While waiting, we can rely on God's presence, trust in His promises, and find peace in the grace that enables us to endure. As we wait for answers, we can rest assured that God is working all things for our good (Romans 8:28). The grace of waiting transforms us—it molds us into people who trust more deeply, hope more fully, and rest more completely in the timing and sovereignty of our loving, faithful God.

Grace does not leave us while we wait; rather, it is the very thing that sustains us in our waiting and keeps our hearts focused on the hope of what is to come. As we wait, we are being shaped by God's grace, growing in faith and trust as we look forward to the fulfillment of His perfect plan.

### **The Grace of Waiting: A Call to Perseverance**

Waiting can often feel like a trial of endurance, but the Psalms give us a powerful perspective on how waiting can cultivate perseverance. In Psalm 27, the psalmist writes, "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart" (Psalm 27:14), and this call is not a passive plea but an active command to hold on with courage and strength. Waiting can seem like a period of inactivity, but it is a time when our faith is tested, refined, and made stronger. Each moment spent waiting is an opportunity to trust God more deeply, to cling to His promises, and to depend on His grace to sustain us.

Persevering in waiting isn't about simply enduring frustration or giving in to resignation. It's about trusting that God is working behind the scenes, even when the full picture hasn't yet come into view. In 1 Peter 5:10, we are reminded, "And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and

steadfast.” God’s grace is the source of our strength, and it is through waiting that we are shaped to be stronger, more faithful, and more Christlike. Just as a tree grows deep roots during periods of drought, so our souls are deepened and strengthened through the seasons of waiting.

In our own experiences of waiting, we must embrace this truth—that the grace of God will not only carry us through but will also make us more resilient in the process. The strength we need to persevere through waiting is a gift from God. It is in these moments of uncertainty and longing that His grace is most evident, sustaining us when we feel we cannot go on. The Apostle James encourages us in James 1:4, “Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” Waiting, though challenging, is a tool in God’s hands to mature our faith and refine our character, making us more fully formed into the likeness of Christ.

### **The Fruit of Grace in the Waiting Process**

As we wait, it is important to recognize that God is not absent or distant. His grace is working in us, often in ways that are invisible but deeply transformative. Waiting gives us space to reflect, to grow in patience, and to bear fruit. In Galatians 5:22-23, we are reminded of the fruit of the Spirit, which is cultivated in us as we wait with grace. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” These are the very qualities that God seeks to grow in our hearts during times of waiting.

As we wait for God’s intervention or the fulfillment of His promises, we are invited to lean into His grace, allowing it to shape our hearts and our reactions.



Rather than becoming bitter or anxious in the waiting, we can respond with peace and joy, knowing that God's timing is perfect. Our waiting becomes a fertile ground for the fruit of the Spirit to grow, as we choose to trust God's grace rather than our understanding.

In the same way that a gardener patiently waits for fruit to ripen, we too can patiently wait for the fruit of grace to manifest in our lives. And just as the process of growth requires both time and nourishment, so the grace of waiting requires us to continually seek God's presence, trust in His promises, and depend on His timing. Though the fruit may not be immediately visible, we can rest assured that the work God is doing in us is good, and in time, the fruit will be evident to all.

Waiting is never without purpose; it is a period of transformation, a time when God refines our character and deepens our relationship with Him. In the end, we can trust that the grace of God will not only help us endure the waiting but will also bring about the good fruit of perseverance, patience, and deepened faith.

"But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

Did you know the Hebrew word for "renew" means to change for the better?<sup>112</sup> Isaiah 40:31 could be understood as "But those who wait (or expect) in the Lord will exchange their strength for something better." This means that the strength God gives us isn't just a replacement—it's an upgrade from what we had before.

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<sup>112</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2498/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2498/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

Challenges in life aren't just obstacles; they are opportunities for spiritual growth. The struggles we face teach us to trust in the Lord more deeply, and in that trust, we gain a strength greater than before. Every trial becomes a testimony of God's faithfulness, reinforcing our confidence in Him when we face new difficulties.

Romans 5:3-5 reminds us of this powerful truth: "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

Through every trial, God is shaping us, refining our character, and strengthening our hope—a hope that never disappoints.

### **Waiting in Grace: Spending Time with Jesus, Who Bears Remarkable Fruit in Our Lives**

Waiting in grace is not just about enduring a difficult season or simply waiting for something to happen—it is about spending time with Jesus, allowing Him to shape us and bear remarkable fruit through our lives. As we wait, we have the opportunity to draw closer to Christ, deepen our relationship with Him, and experience the transformative power of His grace in ways that we could never anticipate.

When we wait in grace, we are choosing to spend time in His presence, trusting that He will do the work in us that we cannot do on our own.

Jesus Himself teaches us in John 15:4-5, "Remain in Me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit."

In the waiting seasons of life, we are invited to remain in Jesus, to abide in Him, and to trust that as we do, He will bear fruit in and through us. It is in our connection to Jesus, the true Vine, that we find the strength, patience, and peace to endure. Just as a branch cannot produce fruit apart from the vine, we cannot bear fruit on our own. It is only through a deep, intimate relationship with Jesus that we can produce the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). This fruit is not something that we can manufacture by our efforts; it is the outgrowth of spending time with Jesus, of allowing His grace to work in us, and of resting in His perfect timing. When we wait in grace, we are not just waiting for circumstances to change—we are waiting for God to do something in us that will bear eternal fruit. The waiting period becomes a time of spiritual growth and deepening intimacy with Christ, as we lean into His presence and trust that He is working in ways we cannot always see.

As we wait, we may feel that nothing is happening, but just like a tree that appears dormant in winter, there is growth happening beneath the surface. The roots of our faith are being strengthened, and our hearts are being molded into His image. Through these seasons, Jesus is cultivating in us the very qualities that will bear remarkable fruit in our lives and the lives of others.

Waiting in grace, therefore, is an active invitation to spend time with the One who brings lasting transformation. The grace we experience in the waiting is not simply for our endurance, but it is part of God's plan to make us more like Christ. As we abide in Him, He makes our lives fruitful, and in time, the fruit of grace will be visible to those around us. In the end, waiting in grace is about trusting that Jesus is at work in our hearts. He is not idle while we wait; He is cultivating fruit that will bring glory to God, bless others, and deepen our relationship with Him. As we learn to wait in grace, we can have confidence that, in His time, He will produce something beautiful in us and through us.

### **Small Groups Week 7: Restoration, God's Promises, & Waiting**

- Chapter 18: The Grace of Restoration (Psalm 30, 51, 71, 80, 85, 107, 114, 126, 147)
- Chapter 19: The Grace of God's Promises (Psalm 49, 84, 89, 119, 132)
- Chapter 20: Grace in the Midst of Waiting (Psalm 27, 39, 130)

Question #1: Restoration Through Mourning: In Psalm 30, David sings of God turning his mourning into dancing (Psalm 30:11). What role does worship play in our process of restoration, especially during seasons of grief or loss? How might God be inviting us to bring our sorrow to Him in a way that allows His joy to transform our circumstances?

Question #2: The Power of Hope in Restoration: David's hope in Psalm 71 was anchored in God's faithfulness, despite the challenges he faced. How does the difference between "deferred hope" (as in Proverbs 13:12) and "fulfilled hope" (as seen through the life and death of Jesus Christ) shape your understanding of restoration today? How does this hope sustain us during life's struggles?


Question #3: How does the reality of God's unshakable promises impact your trust in His grace during difficult or uncertain seasons of your life? In what ways can remembering God's covenant promises help transform your perspective on challenges and encourage deeper faith? Also, what is a promise God made in the Psalms that you can hold onto in a difficult season, and how does it give you hope or strength?

Question #4: In Psalm 27, David speaks of waiting for the Lord with confidence, saying, "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14). In what ways can we cultivate this active trust in God's timing during seasons of uncertainty or frustration? How does the assurance of God's presence sustain us in waiting, and how can this change our perspective on the process of waiting itself?

Question #5: Psalm 130 teaches that waiting is not passive but an active trust in God's mercy and redemption. How does recognizing the grace found in the waiting process change our approach to challenges and unanswered prayers? In your own experience, what has been a moment where waiting revealed deeper trust in God, and how did that shape your faith or understanding of His timing?

Additional Questions/Comments/Notes:

**Chapter 21:**  
**The Grace of God's Righteous Judgment**  
**Psalm 9, Psalm 14, Psalm 26, Psalm 37, Psalm**  
**52, Psalm 58, Psalm 75, Psalm 76, Psalm 82,**  
**Psalm 94, Psalm 101**



**The LORD executes  
righteousness and  
judgment for all that are  
oppressed.**

**—Psalm 103:6**



## **Chapter 21: The Grace of God's Righteous Judgment**

The concept of judgment often evokes fear and uncertainty, especially in the context of a broken world where injustice, suffering, and wrongdoing seem to reign. But in the psalms, God's righteous judgment is presented as an expression of His grace. Think about this—God judged our sin on Jesus, the perfect Lamb, so that we could be declared righteous. This is the most profound example of grace. Justice and mercy met at the cross, where Jesus took the punishment we deserved and gave us His righteousness in return.

In the Psalms, we see that God's righteous judgment is not separate from His grace, but an expression of it. His judgments are not random acts of wrath, but divine acts of restoration, protection, and faithfulness. Psalm 9:8 declares, "He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity." For the believer, this is good news—God's judgment means He will make all things right, defend the oppressed, and bring justice with perfect wisdom and love.

Because of Jesus, we do not stand condemned under God's judgment. Instead, we stand redeemed, covered in grace, and secure in the righteousness Christ has given us (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is through God's judgment that order is restored, the oppressed are vindicated, and His justice shines through the darkness. In this chapter, we will explore the intersection of grace and justice in the Psalms, examining how God's righteous judgment is not opposed to His grace, but is, in fact, an essential part of it.

We can rest in God's judgment for Jesus is the perfect righteous judge, so we don't have to try and be. We can release our grudges and let our desire for revenge go. "Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:9).

The Psalms provide us with a vivid portrayal of God's justice as an integral aspect of His character. Key psalms such as Psalm 9, Psalm 14, Psalm 37, Psalm 52, and Psalm 94 reveal that God's judgment is not arbitrary or capricious. Instead, it is a perfect, righteous response to evil, injustice, and oppression. Through judgment, God establishes His reign, defends the helpless, and upholds the moral order of the universe. Far from being a contradiction to grace, God's judgment is an essential component of His grace, bringing peace, order, and justice to a fallen world.

### **God's Judgment as a Manifestation of His Justice: Psalm 9**

In Psalm 9, David gives thanks to God for His righteous judgment. "The Lord reigns forever; He has established His throne for judgment. He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity" (Psalm 9:7-8). David acknowledges that God's judgment is an expression of His perfect justice, bringing fairness and balance to a world that is often marked by sin and corruption.

In this psalm, God's judgment is not portrayed as an act of cruelty or anger, but as an essential function of His character—His reign is characterized by righteousness and equity.

This judgment protects the oppressed and punishes the wicked, ensuring that God's justice prevails. The psalmist declares that God is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble (Psalm 9:9). Grace is evident in the fact that God's judgment is always tempered with mercy for those who are wronged and who turn to Him for refuge.

The grace of God's righteous judgment is seen in His provision of justice for those who suffer. God's judgment offers hope to those who are oppressed, knowing that He will not allow injustice to go unpunished. God's judgment, therefore, is a grace to the marginalized, ensuring that their cries for justice do not go unheard.

Psalm 14 paints a sobering picture of humanity's fallen state, declaring that fools deny God's existence and live in corruption. The psalmist observes that no one does good on their own, emphasizing the universal need for God's grace. Yet, amid this bleak reality, there is hope—God is with the righteous, and He will be the refuge of His people. The psalm ends with a longing for salvation to come from Zion, a foreshadowing of the redemption found in Christ.

**Key Verse:** "Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord restores the fortunes of His people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad" — Psalm 14:7 (ESV).

This psalm highlights the grace of God in offering salvation despite human sinfulness, reminding us that our hope and righteousness come from Him alone.

Psalm 26 is a heartfelt prayer for vindication, as David appeals to God based on his integrity and trust in the Lord. He contrasts his commitment to righteousness

with the deceitful ways of the wicked, refusing to associate with those who do evil. Instead, he delights in God's presence and worships with a grateful heart. The psalm ends with a confident declaration that he will stand on solid ground, trusting in God's grace and faithfulness.

**Key Verse:** "But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me" — Psalm 26:11 (ESV).

This psalm beautifully reflects God's grace in redeeming and upholding those who walk in His ways, assuring them of His presence and steadfast love.

### **Grace and Judgment Intertwined: Psalm 37**

Psalm 37 provides a profound understanding of the relationship between grace and judgment. The psalmist contrasts the fate of the wicked with the fate of the righteous. "For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake His faithful ones. Wrongdoers will be destroyed; the offspring of the wicked will perish" (Psalm 37:28). While the wicked seem to prosper for a time, the psalmist assures that God's judgment will ultimately prevail, and the righteous will inherit the land.

In this psalm, judgment is not an end in itself but is tied to the restoration of justice and peace. God's judgment on the wicked is a grace to the righteous, as it brings an end to evil and allows God's people to flourish. The judgment of God is restorative, bringing about the peace and righteousness that God desires for His people. Grace, in this sense, is found in the eventual triumph of God's justice over evil and oppression.

The psalmist also reminds us that while judgment is coming, God's people should remain patient and trust in His timing. "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways" (Psalm 37:7). Grace enables us to trust in God's perfect timing and justice, knowing that He will set things right, even when the world seems to be upside down.

David begins this Psalm with a common struggle we all face: the temptation to be envious of those who seem to have it all, even though they aren't necessarily good people. "Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong" (Psalm 37:1).

We've all experienced moments when someone who doesn't seem to deserve success appears to have all the fortune, and we can't help but feel frustrated. I remember watching a show years ago about lottery winners, and one particular individual stood out, not in a good way. He was arrogant, and selfish, and openly talked about all the extravagant ways he planned to spend his newfound wealth. I couldn't help but think, "This guy doesn't deserve this."

Then, as if the timing had been orchestrated, a commercial break aired a preview of the upcoming news. It featured a story about a beloved family in the community—people known for their kindness and generosity, despite having very little. Tragically, their home had just burned down. At that moment, I couldn't shake the thought: "Why couldn't they have won the lottery instead?" We've all had moments like this—extreme or not, where we think, "Why do the wicked prosper, and the good people suffer?"

But Psalm 37 reminds us: “Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong.”

It’s easy to become envious of others, especially in a world where social media highlights the best moments of people’s lives. It’s in those moments when envy can take root, and we can forget to trust in God.

Envy, at its core, is a lack of trust in God’s provision. When we allow envy to take over, we stop feeding on God’s faithfulness. We forget that God has a plan for us, and that plan is better than any fleeting success or possession. Envy often arises from feeling like we’re missing something—a desire unfulfilled or something we long for that others seem to have. But instead of chasing after what others possess, God calls us to delight in Him. As we do, our hearts will begin to align with His, desiring what truly matters. When we place our trust in God, we can be confident that He will fulfill the desires of our hearts, in ways far better than we could ever imagine.

David shows us that envy is ultimately a form of unbelief. The antidote to envy is faith—trusting God, delighting in Him, and rolling our burdens onto the Lord. When we trust in God, He promises that we will find peace and contentment. Just like a shepherd leads his sheep to green pastures, God will guide us to a place where our desires are fulfilled.

Psalm 37:4 offers a beautiful promise: “Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” The Hebrew word for delight, “aw-nag” is to be happy about or to make merry over.<sup>113</sup> The more

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<sup>113</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h6026/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h6026/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

we delight in God and place our trust in Him, the more our desires align with His will. We no longer view the successful, undeserving lottery winner with envy but with compassion, knowing that true wealth isn't measured by money or possessions. True wealth is found in knowing God. We begin to pray, "Lord, help them realize how empty they are without You. May they come to know You as Lord."

When we read Psalm 37:4, it can initially seem like the psalmist is saying, "Get happy in the Lord, and He'll give you everything you want." While that's close, it's not quite the full picture.

So, what desires is God promising to fulfill? The word "desires" in this verse, *miš'ālâ*, refers to requests or petitions—those heartfelt longings that align with God's will for our lives.<sup>114</sup>

We see the New Testament echo of this in Matthew 6:33: "But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things [the necessities of life] will be given to you as well." When we truly delight in the eternal things of God, something transformative happens—our desires begin to align with His, and we find that we are never left wanting.

The key to fulfillment is not in seeking what the world offers, but in seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness every day (Matthew 6:33). As we delight in the Lord, our hearts change, and our desires shift. We are no longer driven by selfish ambition but by a longing for the things of God.

As we delight in God's heart, our hearts will begin to mirror His. And the fullness of God's heart is revealed

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<sup>114</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4862/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4862/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

in His Son, Christ Jesus. As you grow in knowing Christ more deeply, your worship will deepen, because your worship will only be as deep as the depths to which you know Christ.

When we make Him our priority, we can trust that He will fulfill our desires in ways far beyond what we could ask or imagine.

So, the next time envy creeps in, turn to Psalm 37:4. Remember God's promise and find joy in Him. As you delight in His presence, your desires will transform, and you'll experience peace, knowing that His plans for you are far greater than anything the world can offer.

Many delight in wealth, status, material possessions, and other temporary things of this world, but they are never satisfied. They never truly get what they want, hence the reason they are always wanting more. This is the lesson King Solomon learned in his pursuit of earthly treasure: "Everything is meaningless" (Ecclesiastes 1:2)! On the other hand, delighting in the Lord is a true treasure indeed: "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6).

1 John 2:15-17 says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever." We will never be deeply fulfilled or "happy" with the things this world has to offer. God does an amazing thing as we delight in His Son, our hearts' desires begin to match up with His will.



A few decades ago, pastor John Piper introduced the idea of what he calls “Christian hedonism” — that life is about finding your pleasure and delight in God, who designed us to be satisfied in Him.<sup>115</sup>

Shawne Thomas wrote: “The basic problem most of us have is that we are seeking to find our delight in something besides the Lord.”<sup>116</sup> This started in the very beginning, in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3:6, Satan tempted Eve with the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and she “saw that it was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise” (underlined emphasis is mine).

“A delight to the eyes”! She delighted in the wrong fruit; she thought that the forbidden fruit would bring her delight, and she chose to delight in that fruit over obeying God, and finding her delight in Him. And of course, like all of Satan’s temptations, it was a trap. Delighting in that fruit instead of God did not give Eve great delight; it brought great pain to her and her husband and her children, and the whole world ever since. And ever since, the whole world has followed in the footsteps of our ancestors, Adam and Eve. The search for delight is the background story of the history of all mankind. Everyone is trying to find “delight.” But just like in the garden, most people are seeking to find their primary delight in things other than the Lord, and they end up unfulfilled and hurting as a result.

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<sup>115</sup>John Piper. Christian Hedonism: Forgive the Label, But Don’t Miss the Truth. January 1, 1995. [www.desiringgod.org/articles/christian-hedonism](http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/christian-hedonism)

<sup>116</sup>Shawne Thomas. Delight Yourself in the Lord. August 15, 2011. [www.shawnethomas.com/2011/08/15/delight-yourself-in-the-lord/](http://www.shawnethomas.com/2011/08/15/delight-yourself-in-the-lord/)

Kenneth Koh says: “Under the Old Covenant of Law, which the psalmist was under when he wrote that psalm, it was that God blesses based on your works. Only if you have the right behavior and make the right sacrifices, including the sacrifice of praise, will God bless you. However, the fullness of God’s blessing was never in all this. This way of thinking was a shadow of things to come. A shadow is transitory, unsubstantial. If we try to grab a shadow, it will only end in frustration. The most precious thing God was waiting to reveal to the world at the fullness of time was His ultimate expression of grace through the finished works of Christ Jesus on the cross.”<sup>117</sup>

“Delight yourself in the Lord” —God wants us to find our delight in Him because He knows that only in Him can we find our ultimate delight. Man’s problem is not that we are seeking pleasure and delight. God made us for pleasure and delight! The problem is that we usually try to find it in the wrong places. We will discover our delight in Jesus, as we seek first His Kingdom. The secret to getting your heart’s desire is to delight in the Lord.

- “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14:13–14).
- “Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:23–24).

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<sup>117</sup>Kenneth Koh. Letters to a Modern-Day Job. August 27, 2021.  
[www.letterstoamoderndayjob.com/2021/08/27/dont-miss-the-great-revelation-behind-delight-yourself-in-the-lord-and-he-will-give-you-the-desires-of-your-heart-psalm-374/](http://www.letterstoamoderndayjob.com/2021/08/27/dont-miss-the-great-revelation-behind-delight-yourself-in-the-lord-and-he-will-give-you-the-desires-of-your-heart-psalm-374/)

- “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them” (Mark 11:24).

## **God’s Judgment and the Vindication of the Righteous: Psalm 52**

In Psalm 52, David contrasts the fate of the wicked with that of the righteous. He laments the prosperity of the evil man, Doeg the Edomite, who has brought harm to David and his followers. David calls on God to act swiftly in judgment, “Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin” (Psalm 52:5). Yet, in the very next verses, David declares his trust in God’s justice, stating that he will praise God forever for His judgment, which restores the balance.

In 1 Samuel 18-19, David faced intense opposition and jealousy from King Saul after David’s success in battle. David initially served in Saul’s court, but as Saul grew more envious of David’s popularity, he sought to kill him. David was forced to flee for his life, and the tension and betrayal he experienced during this time are reflected in Psalm 52.

Psalm 52 is attributed to David and is believed to have been written after the events involving Doeg the Edomite, who informed Saul that David had visited the priest Ahimelech at Nob (a city near Gibeah). Saul, in his jealousy and anger, ordered the massacre of the priests at Nob, and David later reflects on this betrayal in Psalm 52.

This psalm is a reflection on the deceit and wickedness of Saul’s actions (as represented by Doeg), and David contrasts this with the steadfast love of God. The opening lines highlight the theme of wickedness:

“Why do you boast of evil, you mighty man? Why do you boast all day long, you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God” (Psalm 52:1)?

In the context of David’s time in Gibeah, the Psalm expresses David’s frustration and lament over Saul’s deceitful behavior and his faith in God’s eventual judgment and justice.

David’s prayer reveals the heart of God’s grace in judgment. Even though God’s judgment brings destruction to the wicked, it brings vindication and deliverance to the righteous. For David, judgment is not merely about punishment but about the salvation and restoration of those who trust in God.

In this context, grace is seen in God’s willingness to protect His faithful ones and execute judgment on behalf of the oppressed. The psalmist declares, “I trust in God’s unfailing love forever and ever” (Psalm 52:8). This assurance of God’s justice is a grace-filled comfort for the believer, knowing that God is always at work to right the wrongs of the world.

Psalm 58 is a passionate appeal for divine justice against corrupt leaders who pervert righteousness. David condemns those who speak lies and act wickedly, showing no regard for truth or fairness. He calls upon God to judge the evildoers and assures that the righteous will ultimately see His justice prevail. Though injustice may seem powerful for a time, God’s grace ensures that He will defend His people and bring about true righteousness.

**Key Verse:** “Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God who judges on Earth” — Psalm 58:11 (ESV).

This psalm highlights God's grace in ensuring that wickedness will not go unpunished and that those who trust in Him will be vindicated.

Psalm 75 is a declaration of God's sovereignty and justice. The psalmist praises God for His righteous judgment, affirming that He holds the world in His hands and will bring down the proud while lifting the humble. He emphasizes that God's timing for judgment is perfect and that He will establish justice when the time is right. The psalm ends with a call to praise God, acknowledging that He alone is the ultimate judge.

**Key Verse:** "For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another" — Psalm 75:6-7 (ESV).

This psalm highlights God's grace in His perfect and just judgment, assuring His people that He will right the wrongs of the world at the appointed time.

Psalm 76 is a song of praise for God's power and His victory over the enemies of Israel. The psalmist celebrates God's awe-inspiring presence in Zion, where He brings deliverance and protection to His people. It speaks of God's righteous judgment upon the wicked and how even the most powerful rulers are helpless before Him. The psalm concludes with a call to honor God for His greatness, acknowledging that He alone is worthy of reverence.

**Key Verse:** "You are to be feared! Who can stand before You when once Your anger is roused" — Psalm 76:7 (ESV)?

This psalm showcases God's grace in delivering His people and administering justice, reminding believers of His ultimate power and sovereignty over all nations.

Psalm 82 is a reflection on God's judgment against corrupt rulers and unjust authorities. The psalmist reminds earthly judges that they are accountable to God, who stands in their midst and will judge them for their injustice. It emphasizes that God alone is the ultimate judge, and those who abuse their power will face His righteous wrath. The psalm concludes with a plea for God to rise and judge the earth, establishing justice for His people.

Psalm 82 highlights God's judgment against corrupt rulers, reminding them that they are accountable to Him. But how do we reconcile this with the New Testament command to pray for our leaders?

1 Timothy 2:1-2 instructs us: "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

While Psalm 82 calls out unjust rulers, it also affirms that God alone is the ultimate judge. As believers, our role is not only to recognize injustice but also to bring our leaders before God in prayer. We pray that they will lead with wisdom, justice, and righteousness.

Even when leaders fail, we can trust that God is sovereign and that He will ultimately establish justice. Praying for leaders is not an endorsement of their actions but an acknowledgment that only God can change hearts and direct the course of nations

(Proverbs 21:1). In praying for them, we align with God's purposes—seeking His will, justice, and mercy, while also trusting in His final judgment over all earthly authorities.

**Key Verse:** “Arise, O God, judge the earth; for You shall inherit all the nations” — Psalm 82:8 (ESV)!

This psalm highlights God's grace in ensuring that He will bring justice to the oppressed and hold rulers accountable for their actions, offering hope that His perfect justice will one day prevail.

### **Judgment as a Sign of God's Sovereignty: Psalm 94**

Psalm 94 speaks directly to the issue of injustice and suffering. The psalmist cries out to God for justice, asking, “How long will the wicked, Lord, how long will the wicked be jubilant” (Psalm 94:3)? The psalmist sees the world around him filled with unrighteousness and cries for God to take action. But the response from God is clear: “The Lord is a God who avenges. O God who avenges, shine forth” (Psalm 94:1).

God's judgment, as portrayed in this psalm, is an act of His sovereignty. It is an affirmation that God rules over the earth and will bring all things to justice. Grace is seen here in God's patience and long-suffering. Though evil may seem to thrive for a time, God's judgment is assured, and His justice will prevail. In the meantime, God's grace empowers His people to trust in His judgment, to wait for His timing, and to persevere amid injustice. His protection is not just physical but spiritual and eternal, fully complete and perfect in Christ, our champion.

## **The Grace of Judgment in the New Covenant**

For us living in the New Covenant, the grace of God's righteous judgment takes on even more significance. As mentioned earlier in the book, we live in the tension between the "already" and the "not yet"—Christ has come, and His work of redemption is complete, but we still await the full manifestation of His Kingdom. The judgment of God, which was so evident in the Psalms, is now understood through the lens of the finished work of Christ.

In the New Covenant, God's judgment was fully poured out on Jesus on the cross. Jesus took on the judgment that we deserved, absorbing the wrath of God so that we might experience His grace. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him" (John 3:17). In Christ, we see the ultimate expression of God's righteous judgment and His grace. Through His sacrifice, we are freed from the penalty of sin, but we also see that God's justice is not compromised; it is fulfilled in Christ.

God's future judgment will be the final and complete establishment of His Kingdom, where all things are made right. As believers, we can look forward to this judgment with hope because it means the end of evil, the vindication of the righteous, and the establishment of peace and justice. It is a grace-filled promise that assures us that God will make all things new.

## **Psalm 101: The Grace of God's Righteous Judgment**



Psalm 101 is a commitment to holy living and righteous leadership, written by King David. He vows to walk with integrity (v.2), reject evil (v.3-4), and surround himself with faithful and blameless people (v.6). This psalm highlights God's grace in judgment—He upholds righteousness and removes wickedness, ensuring justice prevails.

David's desire to rule with integrity reflects God's perfect justice, showing that true righteousness is rooted in His character. Ultimately, this psalm points to Jesus, the perfectly righteous King, whose judgment is both just and full of grace (John 5:30). Through Christ, believers are empowered to live in holiness and integrity, reflecting God's righteousness in a fallen world.

**Key Verse:** "I will ponder the way that is blameless. Oh when will You come to me? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house" — Psalm 101:2 (ESV).

Psalm 101 is a commitment to live a life of integrity, righteousness, and justice. David, the psalmist, expresses his determination to govern with fairness and purity, both in his public and private life. He resolves to avoid wickedness, deceit, and those who do evil, pledging to uphold godly values in his actions. The psalm concludes with a prayer for God's guidance in maintaining such integrity. This psalm highlights God's grace in empowering His people to walk in integrity and righteousness, setting a standard for how believers should live in a world that often embraces unrighteousness.

## **Grace Through God's Judgment**

God's judgment is a crucial aspect of His grace. It may seem counterintuitive, but it is through God's righteous judgment that He establishes order, vindicates the oppressed, and restores peace to a broken world. The psalms teach us that God's judgment is not a sign of His wrath against humanity, but a sign of His love and grace for His people. It is through His judgment that we are protected, that justice is served, and that God's Kingdom is brought into its fullness.

For the believer, the grace of God's righteous judgment is both a comfort and a call to trust in God's perfect plan. We know that in the end, God's justice will prevail, and His grace will bring about the redemption of all things. As we face the injustices of this world, we are reminded that God's judgment will one day make all things right, and in that, we find hope, peace, and grace.

**Chapter 22:**  
**Grace in the Psalms of Victory**  
**Psalm 18, Psalm 20, Psalm 21, Psalm 60,**  
**Psalm 108, Psalm 144, Psalm 149**



## **Chapter 22: Grace in the Psalms of Victory**

Victory is a theme that runs throughout the Psalms, often emerging in the context of personal struggle, national warfare, and battles against external enemies. The psalmists regularly recognize that their triumphs are not merely the result of their strength or effort but are a gift of God's grace. In this chapter, we'll explore how God's grace empowers believers to overcome, whether in moments of personal hardship or external conflict and how the psalmists consistently recognize God as their ultimate source of deliverance.

Throughout the Psalms, the expression of victory is not just about personal achievement or military success; it is about the recognition that every victory, no matter how great or small, is a manifestation of God's grace. This perspective shifts the focus away from human pride and self-sufficiency and directs it toward God's faithful intervention on behalf of His people. It is His grace that enables believers to overcome adversity, and it is His grace that should be acknowledged in the celebration of any victory.


As we see in Psalm 107, God's Word is sent out to heal, deliver, and transform His people. When God's Word goes forth, God is glorified, and you are helped, healed, delivered, and transformed. God's Word will not return to Him void (Isaiah 55:11). This powerful truth is evident throughout the Psalms, where God's Word brings deliverance from enemies, healing from affliction, and restoration from brokenness.

The victories described are not mere human achievements but are the result of God's Word fulfilling its purpose—bringing glory to Him and equipping His people for victory. Whether through direct intervention or promises spoken over His people, God's Word remains an effective, transformative force for good, ensuring that those who trust in Him will never be forsaken.


We see this clearly in the life of David. When faced with overwhelming challenges, David would inquire of the Lord, seeking guidance through God's Word. In response, the Word from the Lord would instruct him and give him the direction he needed, ensuring victory over his enemies. Whether through direct intervention or promises spoken over His people.

### **Key Victories God Gave David**


#### **1. Victory Over Goliath – God empowered David to defeat the Philistine giant with a single stone.**

 **1 Samuel 17:45-50** – “David said to the Philistine, ‘You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty...’”


#### **2. Victory Over Wild Beasts – David testified that God had already given him victory over a lion and a bear while tending sheep, preparing him for future battles.**

 **1 Samuel 17:34-37** – “The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”


#### **3. Victory Over Saul's Pursuit – God protected David from King Saul's relentless attempts to kill him, leading him safely through many dangers.**

 **1 Samuel 23:14** – “Saul searched for him every day, but God did not give David into his hands.”


**4. Victory at Keilah – David, with God’s guidance, delivered the city of Keilah from the Philistines.**

 **1 Samuel 23:2-5** – “David inquired of the Lord, saying, ‘Shall I go and attack these Philistines?’ The Lord answered him, ‘Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah.’”


**5. Victory Over the Amalekites at Ziklag – David sought the Lord, pursued the enemy, and recovered everything that had been taken from him and his men.**

 **1 Samuel 30:6-8, 18-19** – “David inquired of the Lord, ‘Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?’ ‘Pursue them,’ He answered. ‘You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.’”


**6. Victory Over the House of Saul – After Saul’s death, David’s reign was challenged, but God established His throne over all of Israel.**

 **2 Samuel 3:1** – “The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.”


**7. Victory Over the Jebusites (Taking Jerusalem) – David conquered Jerusalem and made it the capital of Israel.**

 **2 Samuel 5:6-7** – “Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David.”


## **8. Victory Over the Philistines (Twice) – God gave David victory over the Philistines when they attacked him after he became king.**

 **2 Samuel 5:19-25** – “So David inquired of the Lord, ‘Shall I go and attack the Philistines?’ The Lord answered him, ‘Go, for I will surely deliver the Philistines into your hands.’”


## **9. Victory in Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem – David successfully brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, signifying God’s presence with Israel.**

 **2 Samuel 6:12-15** – “David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing.”


## **10. Victory Over the Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, and Syrians – David expanded Israel’s territory by defeating surrounding nations.**

 **2 Samuel 8:14** – “The Lord gave David victory wherever he went.”

## **11. Victory Over Rebellion (Absalom’s Revolt) – David’s son, Absalom, attempted to overthrow him, but God restored David’s kingdom.**

 **2 Samuel 18:6-14** – “The battle spread out over the whole countryside, and the forest swallowed up more men that day than the sword.”

## **12. Victory Over His Sin Through God’s Mercy – David repented after his sin with Bathsheba, and though he faced consequences, God still fulfilled His covenant with him.**

 **Psalm 51:1-2** – “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love.”

These victories show how God’s grace, guidance, and power worked throughout David’s life to lead him to triumph in every season.

### **Victory in God’s Strength: Psalm 18**

In Psalm 18, David provides a powerful testimony of God’s deliverance and the victory He grants. This psalm, attributed to David after God delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and the hand of Saul, is a psalm of thanksgiving and praise. David begins by acknowledging the source of his strength: “I love you, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer” (Psalm 18:1-2). He recognizes that his victory is not due to his own ability or military prowess, but rather because of God’s grace.

David continues to recount how God intervened on his behalf, describing God’s response as a powerful act of grace: “He reached down from on high and took hold of me; He drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me” (Psalm 18:16-17). The psalmist’s victory is a testimony to God’s grace and power, highlighting that God is the true source of deliverance and triumph.

“To the faithful You show Yourself faithful, to the blameless You show Yourself blameless” (Psalm 18:25). “The word ‘faithful’ refers to pledged love between covenant partners.”<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller. A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms: The Songs of Jesus. P. 28. Viking Publication. 2015.



This psalm teaches us that victory comes through God's strength, not our own. His grace equips us with what we need to overcome the battles we face, whether they be spiritual, emotional, or physical. Every victory is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate God's faithfulness, grace, and power. Salvation is given to us by grace alone (Ephesians 2:8-10), leading us to have inner joy, and empowering us to great works, which reveals that the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

### **Psalm 18:49 → Romans 15:9**

"Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the nations, and sing praises to Your name."

- In Romans 15:9, Paul quotes Psalm 18:49 in connection with the Gentiles' praise of God. This reflects the fulfillment of God's promise that His salvation would extend beyond Israel to the nations, a key theme in Paul's ministry.

### **The Grace of Victory in the Battle: Psalm 20**

In Psalm 20, David offers a prayer for victory in battle. The psalmist pleads for God's intervention on behalf of His people, declaring that ultimate victory is only assured by God's grace: "May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you" (Psalm 20:1). The psalm moves from prayer to the proclamation of trust in God's ability to grant victory: "Now I know that the Lord saves His anointed; He answers him from His holy Heaven with the saving power of His right hand" (Psalm 20:6). The word "saves" and the "saving power of His right hand" point to something even greater—Jesus (Yeshua), the very embodiment of salvation.

This truth is reinforced in Psalm 91:16, where God promises, “With long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation.” The Hebrew word for salvation here is “Yeshua”—the very name of Jesus.<sup>119</sup> This means God’s ultimate promise of deliverance is not just about temporary victories, but about the fullness of salvation found in Christ Himself. In Jesus, we see the power of God’s right hand stretched out to save, redeem, and bring us into eternal security. Salvation isn’t just something God gives—it’s who He is.

This psalm emphasizes that victory is not a matter of human power or strategy but of divine grace. How easy it is for us to put our hope in things other than the Lord. But Christians can instead look to Jesus, our anointed King, knowing that God the Father always honors His sacrifice for us (Psalm 20:1-4, Hebrews 10:1-22). The Israelites would have recognized that their success in battle depended on God’s favor and mercy, not on their military strength. The victory was a gift from God, and they trusted in His sovereignty to grant them deliverance.

The grace of God’s victory is seen in His willingness to intervene on behalf of His people, providing strength and protection in their time of need. As believers today, we are reminded that victory in any area of life is ultimately a gift of God’s grace, whether that battle is fought on our knees in prayer, in personal relationships, or situations of struggle and adversity.

### **The Victory of the King: Psalm 21**

Psalm 21 is a royal psalm of thanksgiving that reflects on God’s provision and victory for the king.

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<sup>119</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3444/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3444/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

"You have granted him his heart's desire and have not withheld the request of his lips. You came to greet him with rich blessings and placed a crown of pure gold on his head" (Psalm 21:2-3). This psalm highlights the relationship between God's grace and the success of the king, acknowledging that the king's victory is a result of God's gracious provision.

The king's victory is not a result of personal achievement, but a reflection of God's faithfulness to His covenant promises. The psalmist's praise emphasizes that victory in battle, security in rule, and honor are all gifts of God's grace: "Through the victories You gave, his glory is great; You have bestowed on him splendor and majesty" (Psalm 21:5).

This psalm also points to the ultimate victory that believers experience in Christ, our eternal King. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus secured the ultimate victory over sin and death, offering His followers eternal life. The victory we experience in Christ is entirely the result of God's grace, and we are called to live in gratitude for His grace, which has won us the ultimate victory.

### **The Role of God's Grace in National Victory: Psalm 60**

In Psalm 60, David reflects on a time when the nation of Israel experienced defeat but ultimately turned to God for deliverance. The psalm begins with a cry of desperation: "You have rejected us, God, and burst forth upon us; You have been angry—now restore us" (Psalm 60:1)! David quickly acknowledges that God's grace is the key to their victory. "With God we will gain the victory, and He will trample down our enemies" (Psalm 60:12).

This psalm highlights that victory is not guaranteed through military might, political alliances, or human effort. It is a gift from God, and the ultimate source of victory lies in God's grace. David's confidence in God's intervention illustrates the truth that God alone is the one who provides triumph, even after times of failure or hardship. This chapter invites us to trust in God's grace during moments of national or personal struggle, knowing that He alone is the One who can bring us victory.

"In the Old Testament, whenever the children of Israel sacrificed a lamb for a burnt offering as they faced a strong enemy, they knew victory was theirs. We see an example of this in 1 Samuel 7:7–11 when the Philistines were coming against them, the prophet Samuel offered a lamb as a burnt offering. Every time something bad happened to the children of Israel, by offering a lamb sacrifice, they were proclaiming the Lord's death, and the battle would turn in their favor.

Similarly, by partaking in the Lord's Supper, we proclaim His death and emerge victorious.

Every time you partake of the bread and wine, you declare to the principalities and powers of darkness that the Lord's death avails for you. Every time you partake in communion, you are saying that because Jesus has been judged and punished in your place, you cannot be judged and punished. And because He conquered death and stripped the devil of his powers, you will not be defeated. The victory is already yours!

This is why the Psalmist David declared, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies" (Psalm 23:5).

The Lord's table is set for you even amid opposition because as you partake of the bread and wine, you will see your enemies tremble and scatter. By proclaiming the Lord's death through Holy Communion, you remind the devil and his forces of their decisive defeat at Calvary's cross (Colossians 2:15)!<sup>120</sup>

### **Psalms 108 & 144: Abundant Grace in the Psalms of Victory**

Psalm 108 is a declaration of confidence in God's victory, blending praise, trust, and the anticipation of deliverance. David begins by offering his whole heart in praise to God (v.1-5), acknowledging His greatness and faithfulness. He calls upon God for help in battle, trusting that God will give him victory over his enemies (v.6-13).

This psalm reflects God's grace in granting victory, not through human strength, but by His power and sovereignty. David's confidence is rooted in God's promises and His past faithfulness. It demonstrates that victory, both physical and spiritual, is a gift of God's grace. Ultimately, this points to Christ's ultimate triumph over sin and death, where God's grace is fully revealed in the victory of the cross.

**Key Verse:** "With God we shall do valiantly; it is He who will tread down our foes" — Psalm 108:13 (ESV).

Psalm 108 is a song of praise and trust in God's victory over enemies. The psalmist expresses confidence in God's faithfulness and power, declaring that with God's help, they will triumph over their foes. It combines both a reflection on God's past

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<sup>120</sup>Dr. Matthew Webster. *Grace at the Table: A New Covenant Guide to the Passover Seder*. Kindle Direct Publishing. 2024. Pages 112-113.

faithfulness and a plea for His continued intervention. The psalm emphasizes the need to trust in God's strength rather than human power.

This psalm highlights God's grace in being the ultimate source of victory and deliverance, assuring His people that with Him, they can face any challenge with confidence.

Psalm 144 is a poetic and powerful expression of David's praise and dependence on God. While it is not an acrostic psalm like Psalm 119, where each stanza follows a sequential letter of the Hebrew alphabet, Psalm 144 does exhibit a beautiful thematic progression. David begins by praising God as his rock and deliverer, then shifts to acknowledging human frailty and pleading for divine intervention. The psalm ends with a vision of national blessing and peace.

This structure creates a literary arc:

- **Verses 1–2:** Personal praise for God's strength and deliverance.
- **Verses 3–4:** A confession of human smallness and God's greatness.
- **Verses 5–8:** A passionate plea for deliverance from foreign enemies.
- **Verses 9–10:** A commitment to praise God with a "new song."
- **Verses 11–15:** A prayer for prosperity, peace, and flourishing among the people.

Though not alphabetically arranged, Psalm 144 carries the depth and intentionality found in David's finest poetry, combining intimate trust in God with national hope for restoration and blessing.

Flowing from this poetic depth is a profound recognition: that true victory doesn't come from human strength but from God's gracious hand.

David recognizes that victory is not something earned, but a gift from God, and he rejoices in the assurance of God's continued provision and protection. As Timothy Keller put it, "A thankful spirit combines humility (because you see God's answer as a sheer gift) with confidence (because you know a loving God always hears prayer)."<sup>121</sup> That confidence is rooted in the truth of James 5:16: "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." But this righteousness isn't something we attain by our efforts—it is freely given to us through Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Because we've been made righteous in Christ, we can approach God with boldness, fully assured that our prayers are heard, not because of our merit, but because of His grace. A heart filled with gratitude understands that every answered prayer is not just a response, but a gift, met with God's perfect wisdom, love, and timing.

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<sup>121</sup>Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller. *A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms: The Songs of Jesus*. P.356. Viking Publication. 2015.

Psalm 144 highlights that true victory comes not from human strength, but through God's grace—His faithfulness and power at work. David trusts in God for deliverance from his enemies and the establishment of peace and well-being for His people. This foreshadows the ultimate victory we have in Christ, who conquered sin and death on our behalf, securing eternal hope for all who trust in Him.

**Key Verse:** "Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle" — Psalm 144:1 (ESV).

### **Victory in Praise and Worship: Psalm 149**

Psalm 149 celebrates the triumph of God's people through His grace, calling them to joyful praise for His deliverance: "Sing to the Lord a new song, His praise in the assembly of His faithful people" (Psalm 149:1). It invites Israel to honor God with singing, dancing, and music, recognizing His justice and faithfulness, while also looking forward to the future victory over their enemies.

This psalm emphasizes that the ultimate victory, whether over external enemies or personal struggles, should lead the believer to worship and praise. "Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds" (Psalm 149:5).

Victory, according to this psalm, is not only a physical or military conquest but also a spiritual one. The believer's response to victory should be worship and thanksgiving. The grace of God's deliverance is acknowledged as the source of triumph, and the psalm encourages the faithful to celebrate God's grace through joyous praise.



It serves as a reminder that all victories—whether in battle or ordinary life—are meant to lead us to a deeper worship of the God who gives us the grace to overcome.

This psalm highlights God's grace in providing His people with victory and the freedom to worship joyfully, both in public and in private. It reminds believers to celebrate God's goodness in every aspect of life.

### **Grace in the Victory of the Believer**

While the psalmists celebrated victories over personal and national battles, we, too, can rejoice in victory, not only over external adversaries but also over sin and death itself. The ultimate victory was won by Jesus Christ on the cross, where He triumphed over the powers of darkness, securing our eternal salvation.

As believers, we can now approach every battle in life—whether spiritual, emotional, relational, or physical—with the assurance that victory is ours, through God's grace. Our triumph is assured through Christ, who has already won the greatest victory on our behalf. Christ's victory is a present reality that empowers us to live in the fullness of His grace, peace, and restoration.

### **Grace in Every Victory**

In the Psalms, victory is a recurring theme, but it is never portrayed as a result of human strength alone. Consider Psalm 20:7 (ESV): "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God."

This verse highlights the core message of the Psalms: true victory is not about earthly resources but about complete reliance on God's power. The grace of God is what turns the tide of battle, whether against physical enemies, spiritual opposition, or inner struggles.

Every victory is attributed to God's grace—His intervention, His protection, and His provision. The Psalms remind us that triumph, whether over personal struggles or external enemies, is a gift of grace, and that we are called to respond with worship, gratitude, and trust in God's continuing faithfulness.

In the book of Acts, believers grasped the unmatched power and authority found in the name of Jesus. They knew that everything in Heaven and on Earth is subject to His name, just as Philippians 2:9–11 declares—that at the name of Jesus, every knee must bow. Think about that: every sickness, every chain, every addiction, every struggle, every financial burden, every broken relationship—nothing can stand against the power of His name.

One of the most powerful weapons in our spiritual arsenal is worshiping the Lord and giving Him thanks, even before we see the victory. Confident in the authority of Jesus' name and the impact it has when we pray in His name, we are encouraged to present our requests to God "with thanksgiving" and, in doing so, experience His peace that "surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:6-7).

A powerful example of this principle is found in the story of King Jehoshaphat. When enemy armies came against the people of Judah, Jehoshaphat instructed the worshipers to go before the army and praise the Lord.

Even before the victory was seen, they proclaimed: "Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever" (2 Chronicles 20:21-23).

And what happened? As they lifted the name of the Lord, God set ambushes to defeat their enemies! What a profound lesson for us today—though the enemies we face are real, we can experience overwhelming victory when we magnify and praise the Lord. Jehoshaphat taught us to give thanks before the victory.

As believers, we are encouraged to recognize that all victories—big or small—are evidence of God's grace in our lives. We will face battles in this life, but we can take heart knowing that victory is already ours through the grace of God, who fights for us, equips us, and grants us triumph in the name of Jesus Christ.

One of the clearest examples of grace in victory is found in Psalm 44:3 (ESV): "For not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm save them, but Your right hand and Your arm, and the light of Your face, for You delighted in them." The Israelites' success was not due to their strength but because of God's favor and delight in them. Their victories were gifts of grace, reminders that God Himself was their defender.

Even in personal battles—whether fear, doubt, temptation, or hardship—the Psalms remind us that grace is at work. Psalm 18:35 (ESV) declares, "You have given me the shield of Your salvation, and Your right hand supported me, and Your gentleness made me great." Here we see that God's gentle care secures our victory.

The right hand of God the Father is a title and position that belongs to Jesus Christ. Throughout Scripture, being at the right hand signifies a place of power, authority, and honor. Jesus, after His resurrection and ascension, is repeatedly described as being seated at the right hand of God, demonstrating His divine authority and completed work of redemption.

## **Biblical Evidence That Jesus Is the Right Hand of God**

### **1. Jesus Is Seated at the Right Hand of God**

- Hebrews 1:3 (ESV) – “After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”
- This shows that Jesus’ work of salvation is finished, and He now reigns with the Father.

### **2. Jesus Has Authority Over All Things**

- Ephesians 1:20-21 (ESV) – “That He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.”
- This confirms that Jesus has supreme authority over all creation.

### **3. Jesus Intercedes for Us at the Right Hand**

- Romans 8:34 (ESV) – “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”

- Jesus not only reigns but also intercedes for believers, securing our victory through grace.

#### 4. **Jesus Fulfills the Prophecy of Psalm 110**

- Psalm 110:1 (ESV) – “The Lord says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’”
- This is fulfilled in Christ, as confirmed in Matthew 22:44, where Jesus applies this verse to Himself.

#### **What Does This Mean for Us?**

Since Jesus is at the right hand of the Father:

- **Our salvation is secure**—His finished work is enough.
- **We have an advocate**—He intercedes on our behalf.
- **We live in victory**—His authority guarantees the defeat of every enemy.
- **We will reign with Him**—as He is seated in glory, we are seated with Him in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6).

Jesus is not only at the right hand of God—He is the right hand of God, the very manifestation of God’s power, grace, and authority!

Because of His grace, we do not fight for victory—we fight from victory, resting in the finished work of our Savior. As we experience His triumph in our lives, our response should be worship, gratitude, and unwavering trust in His continuing faithfulness.

## **The Battle and the Banner: A Grand Illustration of Victory**

Imagine standing in the middle of an intense battle. The ground beneath you is shaking with the clash of swords, the air is thick with smoke, and your enemies surround you, overwhelming you from all sides. Your strength is failing, your resources are dwindling, and it seems like the battle is lost. You've fought hard, but victory feels out of reach.

But then, in the distance, you see it—the banner of your King, flying high above the fray. Its colors shimmer with glory and power, and as you gaze upon it, a sense of hope floods your heart. You know what that banner represents: your King's presence, His victory, His promise of deliverance. With every wave of the banner, your courage is renewed, your strength is restored, and you feel the weight of your enemies begin to lift. The King's Word has gone forth, and His victory is assured.

This banner is like the Word of God—it is the banner of grace that is raised over our lives during every battle we face. Just as David sought the Lord's guidance and strength, as seen in Psalms like Psalm 18, Psalm 20, and Psalm 144, we too are called to lift our eyes to God's Word, our banner of victory. In every trial, whether personal or external, God's Word is not just a word; it is a banner of grace that goes before us, ensuring that we will be helped, healed, delivered, and transformed.

The psalmists consistently remind us that victory belongs to the Lord, and it is through His grace and His Word that we are equipped to overcome.

Just as a general would never send his troops into battle without a battle plan, so God sends us into the battles of life with His Word as our strategy—a Word that brings healing to our hearts, restoration to our souls, and deliverance from our enemies. We are also equipped for victory through the armor of God, as described in Ephesians 6:10-18. God provides us with spiritual armor—the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. With these tools, we are made strong in the Lord and in His mighty power, able to stand firm against the schemes of the enemy. It is through right believing that we fully grasp the power of this armor and walk in the victory God has already secured for us. The victory in every psalm isn't about human strength or military might; it's about God's grace made manifest through His Word, which will never return void.

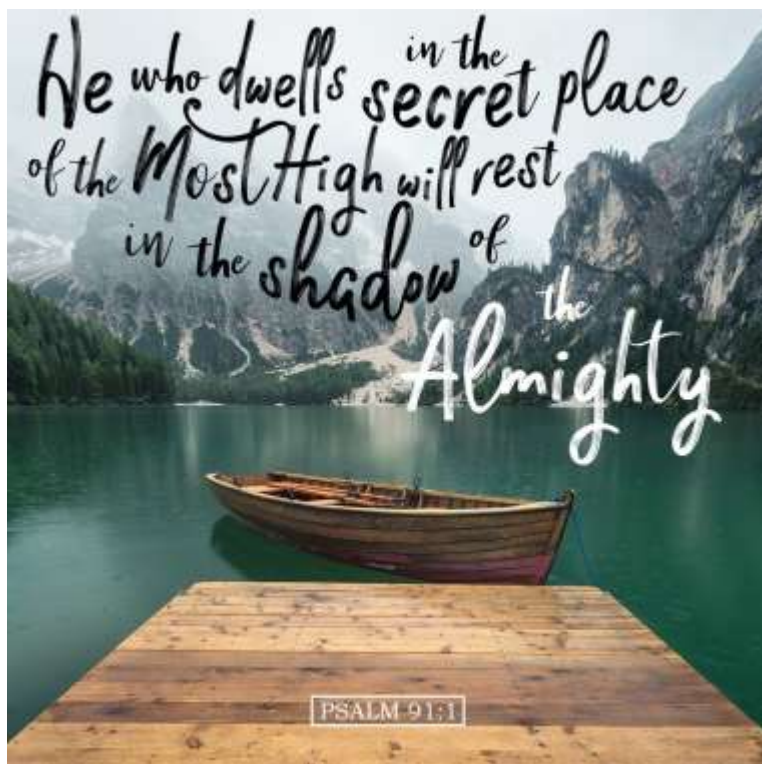
Additionally, we are empowered through praying in the Spirit. Ephesians 6:18 instructs us to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.” This kind of prayer deepens our communion with God, aligning our hearts with His will and inviting His power to work in and through our lives. It is an essential part of our spiritual armor, enabling us to walk in God's wisdom, receive His guidance, and experience His intervention in the battles we face.

Through right believing—displayed in the armor of God—and prayer in the Spirit, we are fully equipped for victory. When we believe rightly—that God's Word is living and active, that His armor prepares us for every challenge, and that His strength is made perfect in our weakness, we are empowered to face every trial with confidence in the Lord.

So, when you encounter challenges—whether in your personal life, your relationships, or the spiritual battles around you—remember this: the banner of victory has already been raised. That banner is the living Word of God. It equips you, transforms you, and leads you through every battle into triumph. You are never fighting alone. The King has already secured the victory. His Word is your weapon, your shield, and your promise of victory.



**Chapter 23:**  
**The Grace of God's Protection**  
**Psalms 48, Psalm 91, Psalm 121, Psalm 124,**  
**Psalm 125**



## **Chapter 23: The Grace of God's Protection**

In a world filled with dangers—both seen and unseen—God's protection stands as a constant, comforting reality for His people. The Psalms frequently reflect on God's protective grace, revealing that His presence is a shield that guards believers from harm, danger, and even emotional or spiritual distress. God's protection is not limited to physical safety but extends into the realm of emotional and spiritual well-being, providing a refuge from life's trials, fears, and adversities.

In this chapter, we will explore how God's grace provides protection in all aspects of life. From physical dangers to spiritual warfare and emotional struggles, the Psalms consistently emphasize that God's protective grace is a vital part of the believer's life. Through His love and faithfulness, He guards His people, offering security in life's uncertainties.

### **The Foundation of Protection- God as Our Refuge: Psalm 48**

Psalm 48 is a Psalm of Praise that celebrates God as the refuge and protector of His people. The psalmist sings about the beauty and security of Jerusalem, a city that symbolizes the protection and presence of God: "Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, His holy mountain. It is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole Earth" (Psalm 48:1-2). Jerusalem, in its splendor, is not just a physical city; it is a picture of God's protective care over His people.

Psalm 48:1-2 describes Zion as the “city of our God” and “His holy mountain,” emphasizing God’s presence there. Psalm 48:9 speaks of meditating on God’s steadfast love in His Temple, pointing to Jesus as the ultimate Temple (John 2:21). Psalm 48:12-14 encourages believers to consider and walk in Zion, showing its enduring significance, which finds fulfillment in the church as God’s dwelling place (Ephesians 2:19-22).

### **Connection to the New Testament Theme:**

- In the Old Testament, Zion/Jerusalem was where God’s presence dwelt in the Temple.
- In the New Testament, Jesus is the true Temple (John 2:21).
- Through faith, believers become a living Temple where God dwells (Ephesians 2:19-22).
- Just as Psalm 48 praises Zion as God’s holy dwelling, the church (Body of believers) is now His spiritual dwelling place on Earth.

Thus, Psalm 48 foreshadows the greater reality in Christ, where God no longer dwells in a physical Temple but in Jesus and His people.

The psalmist continues to recount the way God has protected the city, even in times of battle: “For that is what God is like. He is our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to the end” (Psalm 48:14).

God's protection is constant, eternal, and reliable. He is the one who shields His people from both physical dangers and spiritual threats. This psalm reminds us that we can find refuge and protection in God's presence, where He guards us from the enemy and provides strength for every situation.

In the same way, believers today can trust in God's unchanging nature as their ultimate refuge. The grace of His protection is not bound by geography or time but is available to all who call upon His name.

### **God's Protection in Times of Danger: Psalm 91**

Psalm 91 is one of the most beloved psalms when it comes to the theme of divine protection. It paints a vivid picture of God's sheltering care and His faithfulness in guarding His people from harm:

"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust'" (Psalm 91:1-2). The psalmist speaks of the safety and security found in God's protective embrace, emphasizing that He shields His people from both physical dangers and spiritual threats.

The psalm goes on to describe how God protects from perilous situations: "He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart" (Psalm 91:4). This image of God as a mother bird sheltering her young is a powerful reminder of the tenderness and care with which God watches over His people.

In Psalm 91, two contrasting metaphors illustrate God's protection:

1. A Fortress of Strength – “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust” (Psalm 91:2).
  - This portrays God as a mighty stronghold, a place of security and defense against all threats.
2. A Mother Bird’s Tender Care – “He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart” (Psalm 91:4).
  - This shows God’s gentle, sacrificial love like a bird shielding her young while bearing the elements herself.

At the cross, these two aspects of God’s nature—righteous power and tender, sacrificial love—are fully displayed. His justice is satisfied, and His mercy shines brilliantly, as Christ both conquers sin and lays down His life for us.

Moreover, the psalmist describes God’s protection from various dangers, such as deadly diseases, nighttime terrors, and even the attacks of enemies: “You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday” (Psalm 91:5-6). God’s grace is the protective covering that shields believers from the many threats in life, providing peace and security amid uncertainty.

As believers, we are invited to take refuge in God’s protection, knowing that His grace surrounds us, keeps us safe, and guides us through the trials of life. When we face danger or fear, we can rest assured that God’s presence will keep us secure.

Psalm 91:1 says, "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty." In this verse, the Psalmist uses two different names for God: Most High and Almighty. The Hebrew name for God as Most High is "Elyon," which means extremely exalted, sovereign, and high God.<sup>122</sup> The one who dwells in the secret place of the extremely exalted, sovereign, high God shall abide under the shadow of "El Shaddai"—the Almighty, meaning the One who is absolute in power.<sup>123</sup>

As believers, we dwell and find rest in the protection of the One who has absolute power. When we understand our position in Christ and the fact that we are under the protection of the all-powerful God, what is there to fear? Of course, wisdom teaches us not to do foolish things, like jumping off a cliff without a parachute, but as we follow God's guidance, we will still face dangers. However, His protection is always there for us.

"Will rest in the shadow of the Almighty". The word REST or ABIDE in this context means to stay permanently, to remain.<sup>124</sup> Our permanent dwelling place in Christ is under the shadow of the Almighty. This is where we find the protection of the Lord. That's why the visual of Jesus as our Good Shepherd is so comforting—like vulnerable sheep surrounded by danger, we need the protection of the Almighty One.

Let's continue with the Psalmist's declaration: "This I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; He is my God, and I trust Him" (Psalm 91:2). Do you, like the Psalmist, trust in the Most

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<sup>122</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5945/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5945/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>123</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7706/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7706/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>124</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3885/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3885/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

High? Do you trust that He loves you and has, and will continue to take care of you? Do you trust Him with your life?

A few years ago, both of my children developed a deep fear of coyotes. Despite my reassurances, their worry only grew— even though they slept upstairs, where the height off the ground provided an extra layer of protection from any potential danger. I tried to reason with them, explaining that coyotes don't leap 20 feet into the air or hold secret meetings to plot their way into our home. But logic didn't ease their fears. Finally, I had to say, "You have to trust me. I won't let anything happen to you. You are safe in our home."

This is the same message the psalmist is conveying—there's a lot to fear, but we can place our trust in the One who has absolute power and is wild about us. Some believers haven't reached the point of declaring, "The Lord is my refuge." Instead, they say things like, "The Lord gives me troubles to humble me," or "The Lord gives me sickness to teach me a lesson." But the psalmist says, "The Lord is my refuge." He is our place of safety from the evils of this world. "My God, in Him I will trust."

This is a declaration of faith, for those who truly understand who God is—a God who loves us and wants to protect us. Jesus Himself affirmed this when He said, "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him" (Matthew 7:11)! How can we take refuge in someone we think is the source of our troubles or diseases? No, our God is a good Father who desires to bless, protect, and provide for us.

Psalm 91:3 tells us, “For He will rescue you from every trap.” God’s protection is like that—it guards us from dangers we can’t even see coming, the traps of the enemy.

Psalm 91:4 continues, “He will cover you with His feathers, and shelter you with His wings. His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”

A rampart is a defensive wall, a fortification built around you. God’s faithfulness is the shield that surrounds you, protecting you at all times. God never takes a break from His protection.

When we believe and trust in God’s protection, verses 5 and 6 become our reality: “You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.” God’s protection covers us at all times—whether it’s the dangers of the night, the arrows of the day, or disasters that strike unexpectedly (even midday).

Psalm 91:7 says, “Though a thousand fall at your side, though ten thousand are dying around you, these evils will not touch you.” What great news! When we receive God’s love and protection, fear is cast out.

It’s amazing how God’s promise of protection speaks directly to our fears, many of which we weren’t even born with. “Experts have found that babies are born with only two innate fears: the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises.”<sup>125</sup> Yet as we grow, we learn to fear so many other things. By the time we reach adulthood, we have developed a plethora of fears. But

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<sup>125</sup>Nadia Kounang. What is the Science Behind Fear? October 29, 2015. CNN.com [www.cnn.com/2015/10/29/health/science-of-fear/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/29/health/science-of-fear/index.html)



Psalm 91 reminds us that we don't need to fear. We are created for trust, for faith in our Creator.

One of the clearest pictures of this struggle between fear and trust can be seen in the heart of a child. This reminds me of the story about a little boy who was afraid of the dark. One night, his mother asked him to go out to the back porch and bring her the broom. The boy hesitated, saying, "I don't want to go out there. It's dark." His mother reassured him, "You don't have to be afraid of the dark. Jesus will be out there to protect you." The boy asked, "Are you sure He'll be out there with me?" The mother replied, "Yes, He's always with you, ready to help you when you need Him." The boy, still uncertain, cracked the door open just enough to stick out his hand and asked, "Jesus, if You're out there, could You please hand me the broom?"<sup>126</sup>

This story beautifully illustrates the childlike faith and trust that can emerge when we're uncertain, even in the face of fear. Just like that boy hesitated at the threshold, sometimes we too need to be reminded that God is with us, even when we can't see Him. Psalm 91:11-12 assures us of God's protection, saying, "He will command His angels concerning you... lest you strike your foot against a stone."

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<sup>126</sup>Funnies Garden: At God's Little Acre. Afraid of the Dark.  
[www.godslittleacre.net/funnies/afraid\\_of\\_the\\_dark.html](http://www.godslittleacre.net/funnies/afraid_of_the_dark.html)

Interestingly, these very verses were quoted by Satan during the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:6; Luke 4:10–11), twisting God’s Word in an attempt to provoke a reckless act. But Jesus did not fall for the trap—He responded with truth, showing that faith in God is not about testing Him but trusting Him. Just as the boy called out for help, we too can call on our Heavenly Father, knowing we are never alone and that God’s care surrounds us in every moment.

### **Psalm 91:11-12 → Matthew 4:6; Luke 4:10-11**

“He will command His angels concerning you... lest you strike your foot against a stone.”

- Satan misquotes this Psalm to tempt Jesus to jump from the Temple.

Here’s how Satan distorts the Scripture:

#### **1. He omits an important phrase.**

- Psalm 91:11 says, “For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.”
- The phrase “to guard you in all your ways” refers to walking in God’s will, not reckless testing of God. Satan leaves this out, twisting the meaning to justify testing God rather than trusting Him.

#### **2. He misapplies the promise.**

- Psalm 91 is about trusting God’s protection in the course of faithful obedience.

- Satan tries to use it to justify an act of presumption, forcing God's hand instead of submitting to His will.

### 3. **Jesus corrects the deception.**

- Jesus responds with Deuteronomy 6:16, saying, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'" (Matthew 4:7).
- This shows that trusting God does not mean acting recklessly or manipulating His promises for selfish gain.

Satan knows Scripture but manipulates it to deceive. This is a reminder for us to know God's Word in its full context so we can stand against deception, just as Jesus did.

In the face of trouble, we have to choose trust over fear. Psalm 91:15-16 offers reassurance: "He will call on Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation."

Psalm 91 teaches that we won't have an absence of trouble, but that God will deliver us through it. "Deliver" here means to rescue<sup>127</sup>, and "honor" means to give weight to our words and our lives.<sup>128</sup> Sometimes, the challenges we endure give depth to our words, allowing us to speak with authority because we have experienced firsthand the power of our Deliverer.

Jesus, our High Priest, prayed for us in John 17:15: "Father, I pray not that You take them out of the

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<sup>127</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2502/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2502/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>128</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3513/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3513/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

world, but that You protect them from the evil in the world.”

God’s protection isn’t about escaping trouble—it’s about being protected in the midst of it.

If you want to live a life free from fear, declare with the Psalmist, “I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress. My God, in Him I will trust.’”

We stand on victory ground, not striving to reach it, but already secured in it. We don’t fight for victory; we fight from victory. Our confidence is in Him, and our rest is found in His finished work.

In Psalm 91:14-16, God makes seven promises to those who love and trust Him:

1. “I will rescue him” – God promises deliverance from danger.
2. “I will protect him” – Divine covering and security for those who acknowledge His name.
3. “He will call on me, and I will answer him” – A guarantee that God hears and responds.
4. “I will be with him in trouble” – Assurance that we are never alone in hardship.
5. “I will deliver him and honor him” – God saves and lifts up His beloved children.
6. “With long life I will satisfy him” – A promise of fullness and blessing.
7. “And show him My salvation” – The ultimate gift: eternal salvation.

In Hebrew thought, the number seven represents perfection, completion, and divine fulfillment.<sup>129</sup> God's seven promises in Psalm 91 signify perfect protection—not partial or temporary, but total, complete, and lacking nothing. This echoes what Jesus said in John 10:28, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of My hand."

Through these seven promises, we see that God's protection is not just physical, but spiritual and eternal, fully complete and perfect in Christ.

Psalm 91 concludes with a powerful statement: "With long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation."

And that salvation is Yeshua—Jesus, our Savior.<sup>130</sup> The final word in Psalm 91 is the name of Jesus, reminding us that in Him, we find our salvation.

Are you glad to know the name of Jesus? He is our salvation, and in Him, we find our rest, our safety, and our hope. When we face life's troubles, we know that we are under the protection of the Most High God, the Almighty, and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

### **God's Ever-Present Protection: Psalm 121**

Psalm 121 is a psalm of ascent, traditionally sung by pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. It is a psalm of assurance and trust in God's constant protection.

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<sup>129</sup>Dr. Matthew Webster. *How to Renew Your Mind and Receive Total Well-Being of Body, Mind, and Spirit*. Kindle Direct Publishing. 2026. Page 216.

<sup>130</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3444/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3444/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

Pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem would often sing Psalm 121 as they journeyed along the rugged and dangerous paths leading to the Holy City. This psalm, known as a “Psalm of Ascent,” was sung by travelers to remind themselves of God’s protection and to strengthen their faith. The path they traveled was not an easy one. The journey to Jerusalem was fraught with physical and spiritual challenges, and there were many dangers along the way.

One of the most treacherous routes was the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, which passed through the wilderness and steep hills. This road was famously known as “The Bloody Way” because of the frequent ambushes and attacks by robbers who hid in the rocky terrain.

Pilgrims would often face threats from thieves, wild animals, and the harsh elements. The road itself was difficult, winding through valleys and high elevations, making it a perilous trek for travelers.



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<sup>131</sup>Stephen M. Miller. On the Jericho Road. [www.stephenmillerbooks.com/on-the-jericho-road/](http://www.stephenmillerbooks.com/on-the-jericho-road/)

In the Old Testament, the Law required that Jewish males travel to Jerusalem for key festivals, such as Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. The distance they needed to cover could be considerable—often around 15 miles, depending on where they lived. In Deuteronomy 16:16, we see that males were required to appear before the Lord at the place He would choose (Jerusalem) during these festivals: “Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place He will choose: at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Tabernacles.” This meant that many pilgrims had to endure long and arduous journeys, often traveling on foot, to fulfill this command.

Psalm 121 would have been especially comforting to these pilgrims, offering reassurance of God’s constant care and protection during their journey. As they ascended the hills to Jerusalem, they would lift their eyes to the mountains, aware of the potential dangers, and declare their trust in God’s safeguarding power. “I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and Earth” (Psalm 121:1-2). This psalm serves as a reminder that, despite the dangers of the road, God was their keeper, watching over them as they traveled. It speaks of God’s protection, not just from physical harm, but also from spiritual threats along the way.

Psalm 121 begins with the question, “I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?” (Psalm 121:1), and the answer follows with confidence: “My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and Earth” (Psalm 121:2).

Self-help religion tells you, "If you want God's help, you have to earn it. You have to clean yourself up and impress the Lord."

But look at the people Jesus chose to help, and you'll see that God is nothing like that. Jesus helped the sick, the powerless, the marginalized, and the outcasts. He reached out to the disabled, the widows with no support, the sick children, and even the paralyzed servants.

Jesus even helped the dead.

God doesn't help those who have it all together. He helps the helpless.

He helps those whose lives are a mess. The ones whose cars won't start, whose kids are sick, and who haven't had time to even take care of themselves.

God helps those who are willing to ask for help.

While God desires to help everyone, only those who recognize their need for help receive it.

On one occasion, people were bringing their babies to Jesus to bless them. Jesus said, "Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

Jesus also said, "Whoever humbles themselves like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:4).

In this world, success is often marketed as the result of hard work and perseverance. It's for the self-made person.

But in God's Kingdom, the path to greatness is found in weakness and humility. It's for those who are too



broken to pretend, too tired to keep striving, and too honest to hide. True success—the kind that lasts and brings peace—is for those who cry, “God, help!”

“My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and Earth” (Psalm 121:2).<sup>132</sup>

The psalmist reminds the believer that God’s protection is ever-present, constantly guarding His people:

“He will not let your foot slip—He who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep” (Psalm 121:3-4). God is vigilant and attentive, always on watch to protect His people from harm. The grace of His protection is not a temporary measure, but a continuous, unbroken promise that He will be with us through every circumstance.

As the psalmist continues, the protection of God is extended to both the physical and spiritual realms: “The Lord will keep you from all harm—He will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore” (Psalm 121:7-8). Whether we are embarking on a journey, facing spiritual challenges, or encountering moments of distress, God’s grace remains with us, keeping us safe from all danger.

### **God’s Protection from the Enemy: Psalm 124**

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<sup>132</sup>Paul Ellis. God Helps the Helpless. Escape to Reality. March 30, 2017. [www.escapetoreality.org/2017/03/30/god-helps-the-helpless/](http://www.escapetoreality.org/2017/03/30/god-helps-the-helpless/).

Psalm 124 is another psalm of praise that celebrates God's protection from the enemy. The psalmist acknowledges that if God had not been on their side, they would have been overwhelmed by their enemies: "If the Lord had not been on our side—let Israel say—if the Lord had not been on our side when people attacked us, they would have swallowed us alive" (Psalm 124:1-3). The psalmist emphasizes that the victory and protection they experienced were the result of God's grace, not their strength or strategy.

The psalm continues to describe how God intervened and provided protection: "The Lord has rescued us from the snare of the fowler; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped" (Psalm 124:7).

God's grace provides the protection needed to overcome the traps and schemes of the enemy. In moments when we face spiritual or physical danger, God's grace offers the protection we need to stand firm and triumph over adversity.

This psalm is a reminder that God's protection is not just a passive presence, but an active force that rescues and delivers us from the dangers that seek to harm us.

### **God's Unshakable Protection: Psalm 125**

Psalm 125 is a psalm of confidence in God's protection. It begins with a declaration of trust: "Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever" (Psalm 125:1). This shows us that as we trust in the Lord, our vantage point in life is improved immeasurably. The psalmist likens those who trust in God's protection to an immovable mountain, secure and unshaken because God is their refuge and strength.

Psalm 125 continues to describe how God's protection ensures that the righteous are safe, while the wicked are ultimately destined for defeat: "As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people both now and forevermore" (Psalm 125:2). Just as the mountains provide a natural barrier of protection around Jerusalem, God's grace surrounds His people, providing unshakeable security.

This psalm offers a comforting picture of God's protection—one that is steadfast, reliable, and permanent. When we place our trust in Him, we are surrounded by His grace, which keeps us safe from harm and preserves us through life's trials.

### **Trusting in The Grace of Protection in Our Lives Today**

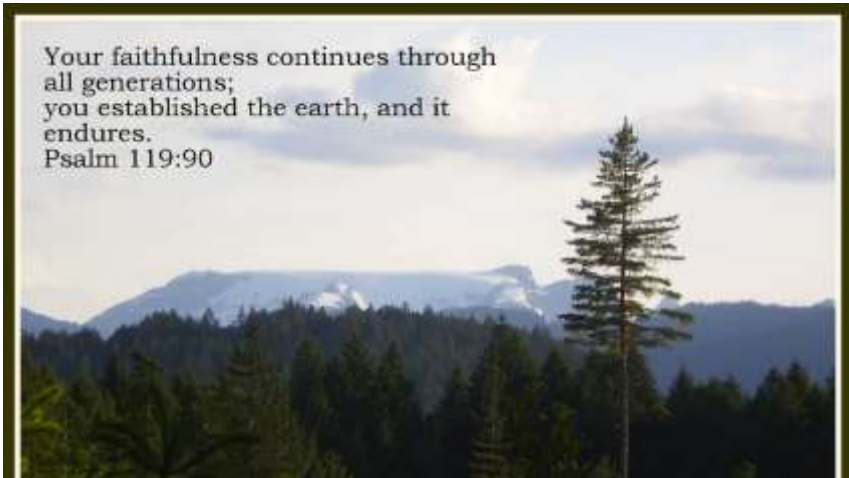
For us New Covenant believers, God's protective grace is not only a shield in times of danger but also an assurance that nothing can separate us from His love and care. In Christ, we have the ultimate protection from the greatest enemy—sin and death. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus secured our eternal safety, guaranteeing that we will never be separated from the love of God.

God's grace extends to every part of our daily lives. Whether we face physical threats, emotional struggles, or spiritual warfare, we can rest in the assurance that His protection is always with us. His grace surrounds us, shields us, and gives us peace.

As we journey through life, we're called to trust in God's protective grace, confident that He equips us to face whatever challenges come our way. In Him, we find lasting security and the promise that He will never leave us.

**Chapter 24:**  
**Grace for Generations**  
**Psalm 67, Psalm 72, Psalm 78, Psalm 87,**  
**Psalm 133, Psalm 145**

Your faithfulness continues through  
all generations;  
you established the earth, and it  
endures.  
Psalm 119:90



## **Chapter 24: Grace for Generations**

One of the most beautiful aspects of God's grace is that it is not limited to one person or one generation. His faithfulness and love transcend time, extending from one generation to the next, weaving a legacy of grace that influences not just our lives but also the lives of our children, grandchildren, and beyond. Throughout the Psalms, we see the recurring theme of generational grace—God's unending faithfulness passed down through the ages.

In this chapter, we will explore how the Psalms reflect God's grace for generations. From the earliest covenant promises to the psalms that call for worship from future generations, we will discover how the grace of God invites believers to consider not only their present relationship with Him but also the spiritual legacy they leave behind. God's grace is not only personal but also communal, extending to future generations as a continual blessing of His love, provision, and faithfulness.

### **The Blessing of God's Grace for the Nations: Psalm 67**

Psalm 67 is a psalm of blessing that speaks of God's grace reaching far beyond the individual to impact the nations. The psalm begins with a prayer for God's blessing: "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face shine on us" (Psalm 67:1).

Psalm 67:1 echoes the priestly blessing found in Numbers 6:24–26, which says: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24–26).

This blessing is not intended for one generation alone but for the world at large: “so that Your ways may be known on Earth, Your salvation among all nations” (Psalm 67:2).

True enjoyment of God should naturally lead to a desire to share that joy with others, to help them recognize the beauty of Jesus.

The psalmist expresses a desire for God’s grace to extend beyond Israel to the entire earth. The grace of God, in this context, is a global and generational force—one that impacts nations, cultures, and families, carrying His blessings across generations.

This divine plan unfolds clearly in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 11:12: “Because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!”

God does not show favoritism, and His choosing of Israel was never about exclusion—it was about inclusion. By choosing a people who, in large part, would reject Him, God created a divine opening for the Gentiles to be grafted in. In doing so, He revealed His heart: to bless all nations through His covenant. God's choice of Israel was not the end, but the means through which His grace would overflow to the whole world.

In the New Covenant, the prayer of Psalm 67 is realized as the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed to all nations, inviting all generations to receive God’s grace through faith in Christ, just as Jesus said, “This Gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed

throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

As believers, we are entrusted with the mission to pass on the knowledge of God’s grace to those we encounter in life. Our lives and actions can serve as conduits of God’s blessings, ensuring that His grace continues to spread throughout the generations.

As Christ’s ambassadors, you are a minister of *katallagē*—the restoration of the favor of God to sinners who repent and put their trust in the expiatory death of Christ.<sup>133</sup>

This divine reconciliation brings peace between God and humanity, as Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:18–19: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”

Wherever God has placed you, whatever gifting He has given to you, it shall be used to tell others the good news of Jesus, that in Christ there is favor with God forever.<sup>134</sup>

## **A Song of Grace for Future Generations: Psalm 72**

Psalm 72 is a royal psalm that envisions the reign of a just king and prays for his blessings to extend to future generations.

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<sup>133</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G2643&t=KJV](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G2643&t=KJV)

<sup>134</sup>Dr. Matthew Webster. *Making Disciples Through Sharing the Good News*. Kindle Direct Publishing. 2022. Page 25.

It begins with a prayer for the king's wisdom and justice: "Endow the King with Your justice, O God, the royal Son with Your righteousness" (Psalm 72:1). The psalm also speaks of the King's reign extending to all generations: "May He endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations" (Psalm 72:5).

Psalm 72 is a messianic psalm that ultimately points to Jesus. While it may have originally been written as a prayer for King Solomon, its descriptions go far beyond any earthly ruler.

- Psalm 72:1 asks God to endow the King (the "royal Son") with justice and righteousness—qualities that perfectly describe Jesus, the ultimate King (Jeremiah 23:5-6, Isaiah 9:6-7).
- Psalm 72:5 speaks of the King enduring "as long as the sun" and "through all generations," which aligns with the eternal reign of Christ (Luke 1:32-33, Revelation 11:15).
- Later, Psalm 72:8 says, "May He rule from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the Earth," which again points to the universal reign of the Messiah.

Psalm 72 reflects the desire for God's grace to cover not only the present generation but also the future ones. The King's reign is envisioned as one that will bring peace, justice, and prosperity to all people, ensuring that God's grace touches generations far beyond his own life. As the psalmist prays for blessings on the king and his kingdom, it is clear that the hope is for God's grace to flow from generation to generation, bringing about a lasting legacy of peace and justice.



In the New Covenant, we can look forward to the fulfillment of this psalm in Christ, knowing that God's grace is passed down through generations to all who place their faith in Him.

### **A Legacy of Wisdom and Grace: Psalm 78**

Psalm 78 is a powerful reminder of how God's grace has been demonstrated throughout history and how it is meant to be passed down to future generations. Yet history shows us how quickly the memory of God's faithfulness can fade. Despite all that God had done for Israel—miracles, deliverance, provision—their hearts often turned away.

That's why this psalm serves as both a celebration and a warning. Remembering isn't passive; it's intentional. The psalmist calls on the people of Israel to actively teach God's mighty works to their children, saying, "We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done" (Psalm 78:4) so that they might trust in Him and not repeat the mistakes of the past.

This call to pass down God's mighty works echoes through Scripture, even into the words of Jesus. Just as the psalmist speaks of telling the next generation through teaching and remembrance, Jesus continues this tradition of imparting spiritual truths through stories. He says in Psalm 78:2, "I will open my mouth in a parable", a declaration that finds its fulfillment in Matthew 13:35, where Jesus speaks to the crowds in parables to reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom.

### **Psalm 78:2 → Matthew 13:35**

"I will open my mouth in a parable."

- Jesus uses this to explain why He teaches in parables.

Jesus taught about 40 different parables recorded in the Gospels. A parable is a short, simple story that conveys a spiritual or moral lesson. The exact number varies slightly depending on how one defines a parable. Some shorter sayings or metaphors are considered parables by some scholars but not by others. Below is a categorized list of Jesus' parables:

## **1. Parables About the Kingdom of God**

1. **The Sower** – Matthew 13:3-9, Mark 4:3-9, Luke 8:4-8
2. **The Weeds (Tares) Among the Wheat** – Matthew 13:24-30
3. **The Mustard Seed** – Matthew 13:31-32, Mark 4:30-32, Luke 13:18-19
4. **The Leaven (Yeast)** – Matthew 13:33, Luke 13:20-21
5. **The Hidden Treasure** – Matthew 13:44
6. **The Pearl of Great Price** – Matthew 13:45-46
7. **The Dragnet (Fishing Net)** – Matthew 13:47-50
8. **The Growing Seed** – Mark 4:26-29

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## **2. Parables About God's Love, Grace, and Forgiveness**

9. **The Lost Sheep** – Matthew 18:12-14, Luke 15:3-7

10.      **The Lost Coin** – Luke 15:8-10
  11.      **The Prodigal Son** – Luke 15:11-32
  12.      **The Workers in the Vineyard** – Matthew 20:1-16
  13.      **The Two Debtors** – Luke 7:41-43
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### **3. Parables About Prayer and Faith**

14.      **The Friend at Midnight** – Luke 11:5-8
  15.      **The Persistent Widow (Unjust Judge)**  
– Luke 18:1-8
  16.      **The Pharisee and the Tax Collector** –  
Luke 18:9-14
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### **4. Parables About Judgment and Accountability**

17.      **The Wise and Foolish Builders** –  
Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 6:47-49
  18.      **The Rich Fool** – Luke 12:16-21
  19.      **The Barren Fig Tree** – Luke 13:6-9
  20.      **The Wedding Feast (Great Banquet)** –  
Matthew 22:1-14, Luke 14:16-24
  21.      **The Ten Virgins (Wise and Foolish Bridesmaids)** – Matthew 25:1-13
  22.      **The Talents (Minas)** – Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 19:12-27
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### **5. Parables About the End Times**

23.       **The Watchful Servants** – Mark 13:33-37, Luke 12:35-40
24.       **The Faithful and Wise Servant** – Matthew 24:45-51, Luke 12:42-48
25.       **The Sheep and the Goats** – Matthew 25:31-46
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## **6. Parables About Wealth, Generosity, and Responsibility**

26.       **The Shrewd (Dishonest) Manager** – Luke 16:1-13
27.       **The Rich Man and Lazarus** – Luke 16:19-31
28.       **The Unmerciful Servant** – Matthew 18:23-35
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## **7. Parables About Obedience and True Righteousness**

29.       **The Two Sons** – Matthew 21:28-32
30.       **The Wicked Tenants (Vineyard Owner's Son)** – Matthew 21:33-46, Mark 12:1-12, Luke 20:9-19
31.       **The New Cloth on an Old Garment** – Matthew 9:16-17, Mark 2:21-22, Luke 5:36-39
32.       **The Good Samaritan** – Luke 10:25-37
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## **8. Short Illustrative Parables**

33. **The Lamp on a Stand** – Matthew 5:14-16, Mark 4:21-25, Luke 8:16-18
34. **The Eye as the Lamp of the Body** – Matthew 6:22-23, Luke 11:34-36
35. **The Speck and the Log** – Matthew 7:3-5, Luke 6:41-42
36. **The Unclean Spirit Returning** – Matthew 12:43-45, Luke 11:24-26
37. **The Children in the Marketplace** – Matthew 11:16-19, Luke 7:31-35

Jesus used parables to communicate deep spiritual truths in simple, relatable ways. These stories often reveal the mysteries of God's Kingdom, offering a glimpse into its values and principles. Additionally, many parables illustrate the transformative power of God's grace, the importance of living with faith and wisdom, and the contrast between worldly pursuits and eternal rewards.

Just as Jesus used parables to pass on profound spiritual truths to future generations, Psalm 78 emphasizes the importance of sharing the stories of God's faithfulness and grace with those who come after us. It is a call to not only reflect on God's past grace but also to make it known to the next generation. The psalmist recounts the ways God provided for Israel, delivered them from their enemies, and gave them His laws, all of which should serve as a testimony to God's enduring grace. God's patience is mentioned in Psalm 78:38-39, not wanting anyone to perish, which is echoed by Peter in 2 Peter 3:9.

As believers today, we are called to remember God's grace in our own lives and ensure that the next generation hears the stories of His faithfulness. This is not merely about teaching historical facts but about passing on the deep, transformative power of God's grace that can shape lives, change hearts across time, and lead people into the salvation of the Lord.

### **Psalms 87: The Universal Call to Zion-God's Grace for All Nations**

Psalms 87 is a joyful celebration of God's special relationship with Zion, which symbolizes His people and His divine presence. The psalmist declares the uniqueness and glory of Zion, the city where God has established His dwelling.

Remarkably, this psalm not only focuses on Israel but proclaims that people from all nations—such as Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, and Cush—will be counted as citizens of Zion, recognizing it as the city of God (Psalm 87:4-6). This vision of inclusion points to God's grace, showing that His love and salvation are not limited to one group but are extended to all who seek Him.

This prophetic theme is echoed in Psalm 67, where the psalmist prays, "that Your way may be known on Earth, Your salvation among all nations" (Psalm 67:2). Both psalms anticipate a time when the Gentiles would be brought into God's Kingdom, a promise fulfilled in the New Testament:

#### **1. Jesus as the Light to the Nations**

- Luke 2:30-32: "My eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the

sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles.”

- Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s plan to bring all nations into His Kingdom.

## 2. Gentiles Becoming Citizens of Zion

- *Ephesians 2:19-20*: “You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of His household.”
- Just as Psalm 87 prophesied, people from all backgrounds are now counted as part of God’s holy city, His family in Christ.

## 3. The Great Commission & Global Worship

- Matthew 28:19-20: “Go and make disciples of all nations.”
- Revelation 7:9-10: “A great multitude ... from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.”
- Both Psalms 87 and 67 find their ultimate fulfillment in the Gospel spreading to all the world and in the final vision of a redeemed, multi-ethnic people worshiping before God’s throne.

Psalm 87 also paints a picture of God’s people being honored and elevated, where their identity is intimately tied to Zion. The passage celebrates the blessing of belonging to this sacred city and the promise of God’s presence among them. In a broader sense, it can be seen as a foretaste of the New

Jerusalem, a place where God's people from every nation will dwell with Him in eternal peace and joy.

**Key Verse:** "Glorious things of you are spoken, O city of God" — Psalm 87:3 (ESV).

This verse captures the central theme of the psalm, acknowledging Zion as the place where God's glory resides and where His grace is freely given to all who come. It's a beautiful reminder of the inclusivity of God's grace, inviting all to join in the blessings of His Kingdom, and pointing forward to the ultimate gathering of God's people from all nations.

### **Unity in God's Grace: Psalm 133**

Psalm 133 beautifully portrays the unity that comes when God's grace flows through His people. The psalm begins with the declaration: "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity" (Psalm 133:1)! This unity is a direct result of God's grace working in and among His people, knitting them together as a community.

In the New Testament, this theme of unity finds its fulfillment in Christ, who unites both Jews and Gentiles into one body:

- Ephesians 2:14-16 – "For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... His purpose was to create in Himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace."
- Galatians 3:28 – "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."



- John 17:21 – Jesus prays, “that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You.”

Just as Psalm 133 describes unity as being like precious oil running down Aaron’s beard (Psalm 133:2), the New Testament shows that our unity is made possible through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, poured out on all believers (Acts 2:1-4).

### **The Oil and Its Ingredients**

The anointing oil was a special blend given by God in Exodus 30:22-25:

- **Myrrh** – Symbolizing purification and healing.
- **Cinnamon & Cassia** – Representing sweetness and fragrance.
- **Calamus (Aromatic Cane)** – Signifying humility and submission.
- **Olive Oil** – The base, often a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

This oil was poured on the head of the High Priest (Exodus 29:7), running down his beard and robes, signifying a full covering of God’s blessing and empowerment.

### **2. The Purpose of the Anointing Oil**

- **Consecration for Priesthood** (Exodus 30:30)  
– It set apart Aaron and his descendants for holy service to God.
- **Symbol of the Holy Spirit** – Just as oil covered Aaron, the Holy Spirit covers and fills believers (Acts 2:3-4, 1 John 2:20).

- **Representation of Unity & Blessing** – Psalm 133 compares brothers dwelling in unity to this oil flowing down, showing that unity is a divine blessing that comes from God’s anointing.

### **3. New Testament Fulfillment in Christ**

- **Jesus, the Anointed One** – The Hebrew word “Messiah” and Greek “Christos” both mean “Anointed One” (Psalm 2:2, Luke 4:18, Acts 10:38).
- **The Church as a Royal Priesthood** – Believers are now anointed by the Holy Spirit, just as Aaron was anointed with oil (1 Peter 2:9, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22).
- **Unity through the Spirit** – The same Spirit that anointed Jesus now unites all believers (Ephesians 4:3-6).

In Christ, we are knit together in love (Colossians 2:2), reflecting the goodness and beauty of God’s grace at work among His people. Just as oil brings refreshment and life, so does God’s grace bring unity and life to His people across generations.

God’s grace is meant to unite believers in a common purpose, one that transcends time and generations. As we experience the grace of God, we are called to extend that grace to others, creating a legacy of unity, love, and fellowship that will endure from one generation to the next.

### **God’s Faithfulness to All Generations: Psalm 145**

Psalm 145 is a Psalm of Praise that highlights God's greatness and His enduring faithfulness to all generations. The psalm begins with an expression of personal commitment to praise God: "I will exalt You, my God the King; I will praise Your name for ever and ever" (Psalm 145:1). The psalmist quickly moves to affirm God's generational faithfulness: "One generation commends your works to another; they tell of Your mighty acts" (Psalm 145:4).

This psalm speaks to the eternal nature of God's grace and the way it is passed down from one generation to the next. The psalmist exalts God for His greatness and for the fact that His mercy, kindness, and goodness are available to all who call upon Him, in every generation.

The psalm ends with a confident statement of God's unchanging love: "The Lord is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made" (Psalm 145:13).

As believers today, we can take comfort in knowing that God's grace remains steadfast across the generations. We are not alone in our journey of faith, for we are part of a long legacy of believers who have experienced and proclaimed God's grace.

### **Embracing the Legacy of Grace**

The grace of God is not a fleeting or temporary gift—it is an enduring blessing that spans generations. From the Psalms, we learn that God's faithfulness extends to future generations, calling us to reflect on the legacy of grace that we are part of and that we, in turn, pass on to others.

The grace that has been extended to us should not only shape our lives but also become a legacy that we pass down to those who follow.

“We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the Law in Israel, which He commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds but would keep His commands” (Psalm 78:4-7).

**Chapter 25:**  
**The Grace of God's Strength**  
**Psalm 28, Psalm 29, Psalm 112**



## **Chapter 25: The Grace of God's Strength**

Life often brings us to moments of weakness—whether physical, emotional, or spiritual—when we feel overwhelmed and unable to face the challenges before us. During such times, we are reminded of God's grace, which does not simply offer comfort but actively provides strength to those who are weary, weak, or in distress. The Psalms powerfully testify to how God's grace is intertwined with His provision of strength, empowering believers to stand firm, overcome trials, and endure hardships with renewed courage. This chapter explores how God's grace sustains us in our moments of personal weakness, offering us not only the strength to persevere but also the assurance that we do not face these struggles alone.

### **God's Strength as Our Shield: Psalm 28**

Psalm 28 is a heartfelt prayer for help in times of distress. The psalmist begins by crying out to God for mercy and deliverance: "To You, Lord, I call; You are my Rock, do not turn a deaf ear to me" (Psalm 28:1). Amid personal weakness, the psalmist acknowledges that his strength does not come from his abilities but from God alone, who is his Rock and his shield.

In verses 7-8, the psalmist expresses how God's grace becomes a source of strength: "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and He helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise Him."

Here, God's strength is not just an abstract concept—it is something personal and tangible. His grace strengthens the psalmist's heart, filling him with joy and praise even during trials. It is not the absence of difficulties that brings joy but the presence of God's grace, which empowers the believer to face challenges with strength and trust.

This psalm teaches us that God's grace sustains us when we are weak and weary. We do not need to rely on our strength but can find rest and confidence in God's unwavering support. His grace is not just a comfort but a source of empowerment that equips us to face life's difficulties with courage and faith.

### **David Finds Strength in God at Horesh**

- **The Situation:** After fleeing from Saul, David found himself in the wilderness of Ziph, a place whose name, meaning "battlement,"<sup>135</sup> evokes a sense of conflict and struggle, and Saul was actively pursuing him. In this difficult and dangerous time, David was likely weary and discouraged (1 Samuel 23:14).
- **Jonathan's Visit:** In this moment of exhaustion and isolation, Jonathan, Saul's son, visits David at Horesh. Jonathan came to strengthen David's hand in God (1 Samuel 23:16).
  - 1 Samuel 23:16: "And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God."
  - Jonathan's words to David were encouraging: "Do not be afraid. My father

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<sup>135</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2128/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2128/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you" (1 Samuel 23:17).

- **God's Grace in Weakness:** In David's weariness and uncertainty, God sent Jonathan to remind David of God's promise and to encourage him in the Lord.

### **How This Connects to God's Grace Sustaining Us**

- God's grace is often expressed through others, like Jonathan, who reminds us of God's promises when we are discouraged or weary.
- David did not rely on his strength but found strength in God through the encouragement of his friend.
- This episode illustrates how God's grace empowers and sustains us through the support of others and the reminder of His promises.

### **The Mighty Voice of God: Psalm 29**

Psalm 29 focuses on the power and majesty of God's voice. It portrays God as a mighty and commanding presence whose voice shakes the Earth, bringing both creation and chaos to attention: "The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic" (Psalm 29:4).

The psalmist goes on to describe how God's voice causes natural phenomena, such as thunder and storms, to obey His command, demonstrating His unmatched power.

However, the psalm also reveals that this powerful God uses His strength to bless and strengthen His



people: "The Lord gives strength to His people; the Lord blesses His people with peace" (Psalm 29:11). The same voice that commands the forces of nature is also the One that speaks peace and grants strength to those who belong to Him. This truth is beautifully reflected in the New Testament when Jesus calms the storm with just a word: "Peace! Be still" (Mark 4:39)! In an instant, the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. God's grace is seen in His use of almighty power not to overwhelm, but to provide strength in our weakness and peace in our chaos. His strength is not distant or impersonal—it is actively present and available to His people in every storm they face.

### **The Voice of God in Scripture**

God's voice is not one-dimensional—it is multifaceted, revealing His power, peace, guidance, and personal care. Throughout Scripture, we encounter the voice of God in various forms, each expressing a different aspect of His character and His relationship with us.

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#### **1. The Voice of Creation and Power**

From the very beginning, God's voice demonstrates creative authority:

- **Genesis 1:3** – "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."  
God's voice initiates creation itself, establishing that His word has the power to bring things into existence.
- **Psalms 29:3-9** – "The voice of the Lord is over the waters... it breaks the cedars... it strikes with flashes of lightning..."  
This psalm vividly portrays the majesty and

might of God's voice as it commands the natural world, shaking earth and sky alike.

- **Revelation 1:15** – "His voice was like the sound of rushing waters."  
In John's vision, Christ's voice is described as overwhelming and powerful, echoing the thunderous imagery of Psalm 29—unmistakable and sovereign.
- **Hosea 11:10** – "He will roar like a lion... His children will come trembling."  
God's voice is also likened to a lion's roar—a call that demands attention and reveals His unmatched authority.

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## 2. The Voice of Comfort and Peace

Yet, the same God who thunders also speaks with tenderness:

- **Psalm 46:10** – "Be still, and know that I am God."  
Here, God's voice brings calm in the storm, inviting us to rest in His sovereignty.
- **Isaiah 40:1-2** – "Comfort, comfort My people... speak tenderly to Jerusalem..."  
His words bring healing and hope, reminding us of His compassion and forgiveness.
- **Matthew 11:28-30** – "Come to Me... and I will give you rest."  
Jesus echoes this gentleness, offering peace and restoration to the weary through His voice of invitation.

### 3. The Voice of Guidance and Instruction

God's voice also leads us on the right path:

- **Psalm 32:8** – “I will instruct you and teach you... I will counsel you with My loving eye on you.”  
His voice is both personal and purposeful, directing our steps with care.
- **John 10:27** – “My sheep hear My voice... and they follow Me.”  
Jesus confirms that His followers recognize and respond to His guidance—an ongoing relationship built on trust and familiarity.

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### 4. The Voice of the Shepherd

God's nurturing care is expressed through the imagery of a shepherd:

- **Psalm 23:1-2** – “The Lord is my shepherd... He leads me beside quiet waters.”  
The shepherd's voice is one of provision, safety, and peace, gently guiding us to rest and renewal.
- **John 10:3-4** – “The sheep listen to His voice... He calls His own sheep by name.”  
Jesus emphasizes the personal nature of His leadership. His voice is not distant—it is intimate, calling each of us by name.

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### 5. A Gentle Whisper

Finally, God's voice is sometimes heard in the quietest moments:

- **1 Kings 19:11-12** – After wind, earthquake, and fire, Elijah hears a gentle whisper. This powerful scene reminds us that God often chooses stillness to speak into our souls. His whisper invites closeness and offers clarity during confusion and fear.
  - **Psalms 62:1** declares, “Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from Him.”
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Whether thundering from heaven or gently whispering in our hearts, the voice of God is always present, purposeful, and filled with grace. He speaks powerfully to create, tenderly to comfort, wisely to guide, lovingly to shepherd, and personally to commune.

And it’s this multifaceted voice—mighty and merciful—that reminds us we are never alone; in every circumstance, He offers us not just words, but strength through His grace. In moments of personal struggle, the knowledge of God’s infinite power and His willingness to share that power with His people should encourage us. God’s grace is a source of strength that comes from His unshakable authority, and it is available to us in our times of need. His strength is not given based on our merit but is part of the lavish grace He pours out on His children.

### **The Righteous Are Strengthened by Grace: Psalm 112**

Psalm 112 describes the blessed life of the righteous person who fears the Lord and delights in His commands.

The psalmist portrays the righteous as people who, through God's grace, are strengthened in the face of challenges: "They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord" (Psalm 112:7). In a world filled with uncertainty and adversity, the righteous person remains steadfast because they draw strength from God's grace.

The psalm continues to show how those who trust in God's strength are firmly established: "Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear; in the end they will look in triumph on their foes" (Psalm 112:8). This confidence is not rooted in human strength but in the sustaining grace of God. It is the grace of God that provides the foundation for a steadfast heart—one that does not waver in fear but stands firm with the assurance that God's power is at work.

The grace of God strengthens the righteous to endure trials, stay faithful, and emerge victorious. This strength is not the result of self-reliance but is a direct outpouring of God's grace in the believer's life. When we are weak and vulnerable, it is God's grace that steadies us and empowers us to live in a way that reflects His goodness and strength.

"They will have no fear of bad news." That's next-level living. Imagine reaching a place where, no matter what bad news comes your way, your first reaction is to choose not to fear. That's the kind of life I want to live. And we'll see that this kind of fearless living comes from making a conscious choice to trust in something greater than the news itself.

Looking at this verse through the lens of the original audience gives us even more depth. Let's break it down in Hebrew. "They will have no fear of bad news"—the Hebrew word used for "bad" in Psalm

112:7 is “Ra”, which means evil or bad things.<sup>136</sup> Interestingly, Ra is also the name of the Egyptian god of the sun and the father of all Egyptian gods.<sup>137</sup> So when the Psalmist says, “They will have no fear of bad news,” it’s a subtle reminder to the Israelites that the god they once feared has already been defeated. The god of the sun, Ra, was drowned in the Red Sea along with his worshippers. Just as God led His people into the Promised Land through Joshua and Caleb, He has also led you into the Promised Land through Christ. So today, no matter what bad news comes your way, choose to trust in God, because in Christ, your enemies have already been defeated.

If we want to live free from fear of bad news and evil, we look to the cross, where sin and death were conquered.

“Their hearts are steadfast”—the Hebrew word here is “Kuwn”, meaning firm, stable, and established.<sup>138</sup> In times of crisis, it’s surprising how often our hearts seem to betray us. You can even see this physically, like when I wear my Apple Watch to track my heart rate. One day, after receiving troubling news, my heart rate spiked so much that the watch registered it as a workout. Why? Because bad news has the power to make our hearts race. But the Psalmist offers a way to remain steady, even in the face of the worst news. So, how can we keep our hearts unwavering when life gets truly difficult?

A steadfast heart doesn’t come from our courage or strength—it comes from knowing that God is with us. With Him, whom shall we fear? We see this truth in

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<sup>136</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7451/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7451/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>137</sup>Sasha Blakeley. Egyptian Sun God Ra| Story, Symbols, & Powers. [www.study.com/learn/lesson/ra-sun-god-symbol-story.html](http://www.study.com/learn/lesson/ra-sun-god-symbol-story.html). November 21, 2023.

<sup>138</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3559/kjv/wlc/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3559/kjv/wlc/0-1/)

Psalm 112:8: "Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear; in the end, they will look in triumph on their foes."

Putting it together: "They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD" (Psalm 112:7). When our hearts are firmly anchored in the Lord, we have no fear, knowing that, in the end, victory is ours.

When we fix our eyes on Jesus and see the depth of God's love for us, we have no reason to fear. The Holy Spirit testifies that we are more than conquerors in Christ. Because Jesus is our champion, we can be confident that victory is ahead. When you trust in the Lord, when you feel safe in Him, believing that His work is finished and He is the Victorious One, what is there left to fear?

When we place our trust in the Lord, we are anchored in His unshakable victory, yet the fleeting nature of human emotions can sometimes reveal a different side of our experience. This idea is reflected in an interesting article I came across from *Psychology Today*, where Noam Shpancer, Ph.D., shared a story about Nobel-winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer. After receiving news of his award, a reporter asked, "Are you surprised? Are you happy?" Singer answered, "Of course, I'm very surprised and happy." Ten minutes later, another reporter asked the same question, and Singer replied, "How long can a man remain surprised and happy?"<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>139</sup>Noam Shpancer, Ph.D. Psychology Today. Overcoming Fear: The Only Way Out is Through. September 20, 2010. [www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/insight-therapy/201009/overcoming-fear-the-only-way-out-is-through](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/insight-therapy/201009/overcoming-fear-the-only-way-out-is-through)

This anecdote illustrates something called habituation, which means that our nervous system becomes less reactive over time to familiar stimuli. In simple terms, things that are new or unexpected tend to spark a strong emotional reaction, but over time, those things become less surprising and easier to handle. This concept has been used to treat anxiety. Avoiding things that trigger fear only keeps them feeling fresh and arousing. Facing them, however, allows our nervous system to adapt and reduce the anxiety response.

This ties back to Psalm 112. The Israelites were encouraged to remember how God had already defeated their enemies. By reflecting on past victories, they built confidence in God's protection, leading to steadfast hearts during troubling times. In the same way, when we remember what Jesus has already done for us—defeating sin and death on the cross—we can build confidence that He will continue to give us victory over whatever comes against us. As Isaiah 54:17 reminds us, "No weapon formed against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you."

To defeat anxiety, we have to face it. The psalmist encourages us to look back at God's faithfulness and remember His victories. By doing so, we strengthen our trust in Him and build steadfast hearts, free from fear and secure in His love, allowing us to conquer anxiety with confidence.

Jesus also addressed this in Matthew 6:33-34: "But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own."



Seeking God's Kingdom first means making His reign the priority in our lives every day. But what defines the Kingdom of God? It's not about external rituals like eating or drinking. As Paul writes in Romans 14:17, the Kingdom of God is about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. It's the reign of Jesus in our hearts. When we seek His Kingdom, we experience the peace and joy that flow from His righteousness—a righteousness given to us as a gift, not something we can earn.

When we understand that righteousness is a gift we've already received, it becomes clear that no one, especially the devil, can take away the peace and joy that comes with it. The devil's tactic is not to steal our joy by force but to shift our focus to secondary issues, leading us away from the Kingdom of God. When we prioritize His Kingdom, we align ourselves with His peace and joy, keeping them intact.

When righteousness becomes our primary focus, everything else falls into place. Our identity in Christ, who we are in Him, is far more important than what we do. By focusing on His righteousness and seeking His Kingdom, we invite peace and joy into our lives and can face bad news without fear.

As you trust in Jesus and His finished work, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. In doing so, you will experience peace, joy, and a steadfast heart that trusts in the Lord—no matter what challenges come your way.

**God's Grace: Strength for the Weary and Overwhelmed**

In our everyday lives, we often face situations that leave us feeling exhausted, weak, and unable to continue. Whether it's physical fatigue from overwork, emotional exhaustion from trials, or spiritual weariness from a sense of distance from God, we may find ourselves wondering where our strength will come from. The Psalms remind us that God's grace is the source of the strength we need in our most vulnerable moments.

In our weakness, God does not abandon us. Instead, He promises to be our source of strength. As Psalm 28:7 says, "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and He helps me." This grace of strength is available to us when we feel overwhelmed. It is a grace that renews our spirits, revives our hearts, and empowers us to face the challenges that seem too great for us to handle on our own.

When we turn to God in weakness, He doesn't just offer words of encouragement—He infuses us with His strength. The grace of God in times of weakness is not only about comfort but about transformation. God does not leave us in our state of fatigue but meets us with the strength we need to rise above our circumstances and continue in faith.

### **Strength Through Grace**

The psalms invite us to lean on God's strength, knowing that it is sufficient for every need.

"But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

In times of weariness, we can rest in the assurance that God's grace is more than enough to sustain us. Like the psalmists, we can call out to God for help, trusting that He will respond with His powerful, sustaining grace. As we rely on His strength, we discover the ability to stand firm, face our struggles with courage, and continue the path He has set before us. As Hebrews 12:2 reminds us, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God"—a symbol of victory and ultimate grace.

God's grace is a constant reminder that, in our weakness, His strength is made perfect. It is not by our might or power that we stand firm, but by the grace of God, which strengthens us to rise above our circumstances and reflect His glory in our lives.

### **Final Reflections: Grace from Beginning to End**

As we have journeyed through the Psalms, we have seen that grace is woven into every aspect of our lives—in times of joy and sorrow, in waiting and victory, in moments of weakness and strength. The psalms reveal that grace is not just a theological concept but a living reality that sustains, strengthens, and transforms us.

We began by exploring the grace of God as our Shepherd (Psalm 23), leading us beside still waters and restoring our souls. We saw how grace sustains us in trials, gives us hope in the waiting, and strengthens us in the battles of life. Through the cries of the psalmists, we learned that God's grace meets us in our rawest, most vulnerable moments, offering refuge, renewal, and redemption.

Now, as we conclude, we are reminded that this grace is not just for the past or the present—it carries us into the future. The final verses of the Psalms declare a call to worship:

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord” (Psalm 150:6)!

This is our response to the grace we have received—praise. Our journey through life, much like the Psalms, will be filled with highs and lows, victories and struggles, but through it all, grace never runs out. His strength never fails. His love never ceases.

### **A Final Invitation**

As you close this book, my prayer is that you walk forward with a deeper awareness of God’s grace in your life. No matter what comes, you are never without grace. Whether you are in a season of rejoicing or wrestling with difficulty, know this:

- His grace goes before you.
- His grace sustains you.
- His grace is enough.

May you live with the confidence of Psalm 112:7—a heart that is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. May your life be a testimony of God’s grace in every season, pointing others to the goodness of our God.

Grace and peace to you, now and always. -Dr. Matthew Webster

### **Small Group Week 8: Righteous Judgment, Victory, Protection, Generations, & Strength**

- Chapter 21: The Grace of God's Righteous Judgment (Psalm 9, 14, 26, 37, 52, 58, 75, 76, 82, 94, 101)
- Chapter 22: Grace in the Psalms of Victory (Psalm 18, 20, 21, 60, 108, 144, 149)
- Chapter 23: The Grace of God's Protection (Psalm 48, 91, 121, 124, 125)
  - Chapter 24: Grace for Generations (Psalm 67, 72, 78, 87, 133, 145)
- Chapter 25: The Grace of God's Strength (Psalm 28, 29, 112)

Question #1: How can embracing the grace found in God's righteous judgment help us release our desire for revenge and find peace in trusting God's perfect timing, especially when faced with injustice or suffering in our own lives?

Question #2: How does acknowledging that every victory—big or small—is ultimately a gift of God's grace reshape the way we approach challenges in our lives? Think back to a time when you found great success in your life- how was that success given to you by God?

Question #3: How does understanding that God's protection is not just physical but also emotional and spiritual influence the way we respond to life's uncertainties or personal fears? Can you think of a time when you experienced God's protection in a way that went beyond physical safety?

Question#4: In what ways do you see God's grace impacting not just your own life, but the lives of those around you and the generations that will follow? How can we intentionally shape the spiritual legacy we leave for future generations?

Question #5: When facing personal weakness or challenges, how can we differentiate between relying on our strength versus fully trusting in God's grace to empower us? Can you share a time when you experienced God's strength in a way that transformed your situation?

Additional Questions/Comments/Notes: