

Psalm 90 has an inspired title, “A Prayer of Moses the man of God.” Moses was the composer. This Psalm is around 400 years older than those of David. It is a prayer (supplication) as before a judge. It was probably written in the wilderness after leaving Egypt with the Isrealites. It has, therefore, a special pathos as Moses thinks of his people with whom he had left Egypt after the ten Plagues and the Passover. They were destined, because of their lack of faith, to wander 40 years in the wilderness and **all die there without reaching the Promised Land.** They had repeatedly tried the patience of Jehovah and finally rejected His offer to take them directly into Canaan to possess it. Moses was sorrowfully watching his beloved people, that had been under his charge and care for over 40 years, live and die in the wilderness. Furthermore, though their children under 21 when they left Egypt were growing up and would finally enter Canaan, Moses himself was not allowed to enter with them. For, though noted as the meekest man in all the earth, he had lost his temper and struck the rock on a second occasion instead of simply speaking to it as God had directed him, Numbers 20:11. Though he appealed to God he was refused entry. (But God in His grace did show him the land from a mountain top.) How important God’s simple commands are to Him, even if we do not think them to be so important to us sometimes.

Though we do not know exactly when in Moses’ 120 year life span he wrote this Psalm, it was perhaps near the end of their homeless wilderness trek, for he begins by acknowledging God as **their dwelling place in all generations.** God had chosen and separated Israel out from other nations to be a people for a possession, Ex19:3-6, and designated a land for them to possess. Deut\_\_\_\_ Before leading them to Canaan He had them build Him a fenced, tented, traveling dwelling place for Him in their midst, Exodus 26 - 40. But here Moses says God was their dwelling place. What faith! Not Egypt, not Canaan, not the wilderness but God Himself. What a profound statement. What a place to dwell! Psalm 91 enlarges upon this concept. John 14:1-3 goes further and speaks of “My Father’s House.” And in John 15 the Lord says, “Abide in Me.” Moses, the author of Genesis, the book describing the original Creation, begins Psalm 90 by acknowledging God as being God before the Creation. The Eternal God. The Hebrew name for God given here is **“Elohim,”** a plural word denoting three or more. Yet He is spoken of here as One Being using a Hebrew pronoun in the singular tense translated **“Thou”** and referring to God also with a singular name **“Lord,”** Hebrew **“EL.”** This same curious combination of tenses occurs in Genesis 1:1 as well as other places in scripture. It signals the Trinity of the Godhead yet the totally One God. The children of Israel were given a unique ministry

to bear witness before all the other nations that there is one God. He was known in Hebrew as **“Jehovah”** and other singular names such as **“Adon”** and as **“Eloah.”** Noah and others preserved though the world wide deluge in the ark certainly knew that God (Elohim) was One and all-powerful. But with the retelling down though the generations that knowledge of God soon became diluted by men’s ideas and superstitions. While Moses was an eyewitness author of the four latter books of the Pentateuch he was not alive to witness the events recounted in Genesis. He most likely came into possession of original records written and preserved by the various patriarchs named in Genesis. God preserved these records down through the centuries and moved Moses to compile and edit them into a book – the book of Genesis. And while he was at it he wrote what became Psalm 90, which builds upon the facts presented in Genesis.

The Three Persons of Elohim, the Triune God of the Old Testament, are more fully revealed in the New Testament as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is God over the entire wonderful span of time, pictured for us as suspended between two eternities, just as God told Moses that He was “I AM,” Exodus 3:14. (While here on earth Jesus told us that He is “I AM,” John 8:24,28,58. He is Immanuel, “God with us,” Matthew 1:23.)

In Psalm 90 Moses describes at length God’s ways with Man, His most intelligent bodily creature, His only spiritual bodily creature. God does not let men just go on their own willful, sinful way but He intervenes! God is God (I AM), God is LIGHT, 1John 1:5, and God is Love, 1John 4:8,16. As God is Light He intervenes, much to Man’s inconvenience and displeasure. Being Love, He devotes Himself to faithfully and continually reminding Man of His holiness and love. Verses 3 though 12 beautifully portray those efforts to turn men back to Him, exposing our frailty, our fragility, our corruptibility, our mortality and the profoundly devastating brevity of our lives on earth. And, to top it off, He speaks of the vanity and emptiness of life for one without HIM. Solomon enlarges upon this theme throughout Ecclesiastes.

Moses states that a threescore and ten years (70) normal life expectancy for mankind, and allows 80 as an outside limit in cases of good ancestry, healthy habits and good living conditions (lack of wars, crime and plagues). We note that even the almost ideal conditions we have enjoyed in the United States have not eliminated the obvious evidence of aging and deterioration. We still get wrinkled, aches and pains and slowing of both physical and mental vim, vigor and vitality despite, on average, longer and higher quality life spans. See also Ecclesiastes 12. Moses himself lived 120 years and his immediate ancestors lived in the 130 plus range, Jacob 147 years Isaac 184. But these were mere youths compared to the

incredible 900 plus year life spans of Noah and Shem and those who preceded them. Meanwhile Jacob says it well. "Few and evil have been my days," Genesis 47:9. Life spans of 70 years, 140 years or even Adam's 930 years are not even a pin prick compared to eternity. We do well to heed Moses' admonition and use our brief time here on earth for the Lord who created us and saved us for eternity. But if you are still in your sins repent and turn to Him now, for He died on the cross for sinners.

People often say "life's too short" when confronted with trivial responsibilities or petty annoyances and even for some important issues. They try to prioritize their energy, time and emotional resources toward "important things." Life is too short indeed! Way too short if it falls short of eternal life. Way too short to more than begin to plumb the depths and heights of what God has for us.

Though there are afflictions, trials and troubles in this life God uses them for our blessing. So Moses says "Make us glad according to the days wherein thou has afflicted us." The Israelites who had been freed from Egypt were now suffering and dying in the wilderness. Yet they are here encouraged by Moses to accept their earthly fate (death in the wilderness) and to rejoice in God's presence with them though their afflictions. And they were to anticipate gladness after their decease, a gladness that corresponded to their affliction in the wilderness. And gladness that their children, now grown, would experience in the land. But this gladness would

only be enjoyed for faith that, turning to God, accepted the wilderness and His judgement upon them, as their just due. This beautiful outcome was offered them though this Prayer (intercession before the Judge) by Moses. Did some receive it by faith? Perhaps some did. If so they would have passed their hope on to their children who then would forthrightly enter, conquer and possess their Promised Land by faith. Paul agrees. In the New Testament we also tread the wilderness. See 1Corinthians 10:1-14. Also Paul writes

*Romans 5:3-5 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

While the words of this ancient Psalm are Old Testament in character they easily apply today and actually to all generations since Adam. For they embrace the hopes and fears and dreams of all humans. Seeking God is the only way toward fulfillment of our inborn spiritual aspirations. Once we have turned to Him in faith and accepted His Provision for our salvation, He will direct our hearts to His work and enable our hands to carry it out, Ephesians 2:8-10. He will establish it and what is lasting He will reward. 1Corinthians 3:14 and 4:5.

By Ron Canner, April 2,2008

### 139. This World Is A Wilderness Wide!

This world is a wilderness wide!  
We have nothing to seek or to choose;  
We've no thought in the waste to abide;  
We've naught to regret nor to lose.

The Lord is Himself gone before;  
He has marked out the path that we tread;  
It's as sure as the love we adore,  
We have nothing to fear nor to dread.

There is but that one in the waste,  
Which His footsteps have marked as His own;  
And we follow in diligent haste  
To the seats where He's put on His crown.

For the path where our Savior is gone  
Has led up to our Father and God,  
To the place where He's now on the throne,  
And His strength shall be ours on the road.

And with Him shall our rest be on high,  
When in holiness bright we sit down,  
In the joy of His love ever nigh,  
In the peace that His presence shall crown.

'Tis the treasure we've found His love  
That has made us now pilgrims below,  
And 'tis there, when we reach Him above,  
As we're known, all His fulness we'll know.

And Savior! 'tis Thee from on high  
We await till the time Thou shall come,  
To take those Thou hast led by Thine eye  
To Thyself in Thy heavenly home.

Till then 'tis the path Thou hast trod,  
Our delight and our comfort shall be;  
We're content with Thy staff and Thy rod,  
Till with Thee all Thy glory we see.

Author: UNKNOWN

Publication: Hymns for the Little Flock, Year: 1849