



God Our Dwelling Place (Psalm 90)

A. Introduction

1. **The Changing World** - The current lockdown may go on longer. We have crossed the 1½ year mark since covid19 struck the world. It has caused a 'structural change' in our life and society.
 - i. Tokyo Olympic Opening Ceremony was held in an empty stadium. Travel will resume in the future, but the world is unlikely to go back to the pre-covid era.
 - ii. Israel's announcement of the mandatory vaccine is a deep concern.
 - iii. Paul K's dream of '2021-2022' – 'The world would change that the Jews would hesitate to meet openly in synagogues in the land of Israel.' We will see how things pan out, but I believe we have hit the point of acceleration for the end-time events and we need to face them directly.
2. **The Urgent Question We are Asking** - Do we have the promise of real 'security', 'safety' or 'protection?' For ourselves and our loved ones? The hot topic today is whether to 'vaccinate or not, but it is only a subset of the major issue. The deeper issue for God's people as we look into the future is – 'Does God offer real protection for His people from the dangers of life, covid, vaccine, earthquake, tsunami, etc? Do you personally trust that God would pull you through the challenges ahead victoriously? Ps 91 is often quoted today. The psalm is about our personal conviction and abiding faith. E.g., During WWII, we have differing reports from Christians who prayed Ps 91. Many were spared, but not everyone.
3. **Urgent Question God is Asking** – But what is God asking us? What is God saying to the church? '*Who can endure the day of His coming? **And who can stand when He appears?** For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness.*' (Mal 3:2-3 c.f. Rev 6:16 – '**Who is able to stand?**') The answer is provided by the vision given to John in Rev 7:9-10. It is very important that the church has the right attitude to 'stand' until the Lord's return, rather than to panic, run, or hide.

We see the two different responses from the earth in the book of Revelations.

- i. The world leaders and rulers panic and try to hide, but they cannot hide from the Lord (Rev 6:15).
- ii. God's people stand in praise and victory with palm branches in the greatest procession march to the throne of God. '*Who can stand?*' *If you are prepared, the question of security is settled.* (Rev 7:9-10)

B. Psalm 90 – A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God

Ps 91 is the psalm of security, but Ps 91 is connected to Ps 90. We need to look at Ps 90 and 91 together, for the prayers of Ps 90 are answered in Ps 91.

1. Ps 90 is the prayer of Moses the man of God (the only psalm), who has lived through the ten plagues of God's judgment on Egypt. They correlate to the endtime disturbances in Revelation. (c.f. Mal 4:4, The song of Moses sung by those who had been victorious over the mark of the beast in Rev 15:3-4). Moses lived through the time when God's judgment was on the earth, and he experienced God's supernatural protection over His people. The ten plagues came on Egypt, but they did not touch Israel in Goshen who followed God's instruction. Just as Moses had prayed, God made a 'distinction' between His people who belonged to Him, and the people of the world who did not (c.f. Ex 33:16). What was in Moses' heart who lived through that unique history? What kind of prayers did Moses pray? We who are living in the last days are facing the same kinds of pressures and challenges. Indeed, God's word instructs us to remember Moses and Elijah (Mal 4:4). So here we turn to Ps 90, the prayer of Moses the man of God.
2. **Both Ps 90 & 91 opens with strikingly bold statements!**

Ps 91:1 - He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Ps 90:1 - You have been our dwelling place in all generations.

God Himself has been the dwelling place for His people throughout all generations! However, this is a 'secret place' hidden under the 'shadow of Almighty' (Ps 91:1 c.f. 'womb' 139:15) which few men and women of God have discovered. Deep in the heart of God somewhere, there is an unassailable place of complete safety and tranquillity over every situation for every generation. It is a place perfectly carved out to fit you and me if we are prepared to make the journey to that place to dwell in it.

3. Moses found that place when God hid him in the cleft of the rock and put His hand over him ('the shadow of Almighty') and passed by him, proclaiming all His goodness - God's very DNA, His very nature, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sins, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation' (Ex 34:6-7).
4. King David spoke of the Lord as his rock, fortress, shield, stronghold, and the horn of salvation he could run to and hide in times of trouble (Ps 19:1-2). C.f. 'For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion. In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide Me. He shall set me high upon a rock.' (Ps 27:5)
Moses says this secret place is that timeless, unchanging place in God which is for His people from everlasting to everlasting (90:1-2). However, most of the earth dwellers grope outside of that eternal place to perish in the sand of time, just like grass in the desert, like a fleeting dream, and like a sigh.

C. The Frustrations of Living Outside the Secret Place in God (90:3-11)

1. **Our Insecurity outside of God** – We are faced with the fragility of our life. We are like a fleeting dream that is quickly forgotten after we wake up. We are like the desert grass that withers quickly. We finish our years like a 'sigh' All that's left behind is a few lines on our tombstones. 'The days of our lives are seventy years and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labour and sorrow. For it is soon cut off and we fly away' (Ps 90:10). There is the mystery of aging. The clock is set the moment we are born. Why? Death is not due to sickness, but sin. It is the event of God's judgment on our sin and iniquity.
2. **Our Iniquity before God** – The problem of our fragility is compounded by the fear of God's anger towards our iniquity. If we are to find real answers to the problems of life, we must get real with God and get real with ourselves. We have done things in our lives that angers God. 'For we have been consumed by Your anger and by Your wrath we are terrified. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.' (90:7-8)
3. **Our Inability without God** – Left to our own devices we are unable to enjoy life at all. Some people toil all their life just to meet basic needs. Some people possess many material blessings, yet are desperately sad, lonely, angry, and miserable. It is the gift of God when we can enjoy the simple blessings of life. It is a tragedy that our world is full of desperately unhappy people groping for security and joy outside of God, and come to the end of their life's journey lost and without God.

D. Moses' Prayers (90:12-17)

What kind of life do you want to live? Most of us would answer, 'a happy, fulfilling, meaningful life.' Moses would not be disagreeing with us at all. He prays for a whole lot more than that.

1. **'So teach us the heart of wisdom'** (90:12) To number our days rightly. So we can have the right aim early on in life, that we will not regret later. 'Satisfy us in the morning' - early each morning or in the 'morning phase' of our life. If we divide 75 years into 24 hour-day, then for those of us 50 years old, it is 4 pm.
2. **'Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, the years in which we have seen evil.'** (90:15) This is a prayer for God's compassion to balance the days of afflictions in our lives with the days of gladness. C.f. The prayer of Jabez (1 Chr 4:9-10). This is a fair prayer because the ability to enjoy life comes from God. We will never be happy unless God gives it to us. There is a difference between enjoying the 'fleeting pleasure of sin' and having 'joy and contentment in life.' By the grace and mercy of God, I enjoy Mia and my son every day. There is a difference between joy and happiness. Joy is internal and independent of external circumstances, but happiness is external and conditional on those very things.

3. **'Establish the work of our hands for us.' (90:16-17)** Even though we came into this world empty-handed, we do not have to leave with the world with empty hands. Jesus said, *'Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me to give to everyone according to his work.'* (Rev 22:12) Don't we all want to do something with our life, that is worthwhile and of lasting value? Many try to do it by building a monument to themselves, 'I was here.' But that is not the way. Instead, let God do something for you. **Let God's work appear to you so that you can do something eternally meaningful.** Before you can do something useful, you must become usable. Then God will establish something of lasting value for you. That is why Moses said, *'Lord, let your work appear to us [first]...[and then] you will establish the work of our hands for us.'* (90:16-17). It is only when God does something deep within us, that the work of our hands will last. That is God's way.
4. **'Let the beauty of the Lord be upon us.' (90:17)** What is the beauty of the Lord? It is the transcendent spiritual beauty and the holiness of God, that manifests to adorn and beautify His people's lives (Rev 4:8). Moses' prayed for the work of his hands not only to be enduring, but also his life to become beautiful, adorned in the intimate relationship with the Lord. At the end of it all, I want the beauty of the Lord to define my life. Don't you? (C.f. Ps 27:4; Phil 3:10 – *'That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death...'*)
5. **'The glory of the Lord to rest upon our children.' (90:16)** Moses prays for his children to have the glory of the Lord as their inheritance. Do you want to have your children know the glory of God that you have known? Do you want that to be your legacy? Would this life satisfy you, a life that is meaningful, worthwhile, and beautiful? Life directed by the wisdom of God, a life of joy balancing out the days of sorrow, a life of eternal value where our work endures into eternity, life adorned with the beauty of the Lord, and our children walk in His glory. Would you say this person has made God their dwelling place?

E. Bridging the Gap

1. The problem is how do we bridge the gap between 'God's anger' burning against our iniquity and having the beauty of the Lord to be upon us? If we want to know the love of God, we must also know the anger of God against our iniquities and have an answer for it. **That answer is the 'work of God' that has appeared to us in time** so that now we are able to move our dwelling from the vanity of this world to the eternal God. God has sent His own Son Jesus Christ to this world and God has provided the total answer for you and me to deal with our sins and iniquities once for all. Jesus has become the perfect sacrifice offered to God and He has turned away the wrath of God that rested on us as the children of wrath. Therefore, when we come to God based on what Jesus Christ has done for us, our sins are removed from us as far as the east is from the west, and we no longer are the children of wrath but the beloved sons and daughters of the Almighty God. This is where our journey begins.
2. According to Ps 90:1 and Ps 91:1, what does life look like for the one who has made the everlasting God his dwelling place? It is the life of divine protection and deliverance (Ps 91:1-13).

Here is God's direct speech about the man who has made God his dwelling (Ps 91:14-16).

¹⁴ 'Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. ¹⁵ He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. ¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation.'

The key is 'setting our love (affection) on God' where loving God and knowing God becomes the goal of our life. *'If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.'* (Col 3:1-4)