

Psalm 90

A Prayer of Moses the man of God. 神人摩西的祈祷。

This is “*A prayer of Moses, the man of God.*” The psalm titles are inspired Scripture. In a Hebrew Bible the title is v. 1. The verse numbers aren’t inspired, but the titles are.

This psalm is attributed to **Moses**, it’s the only psalm by him. It’s not in the first five books of the Bible, which we usually ascribe to Moses. I don’t know when the book of Psalms was compiled. Most of the psalms were written by King David and his contemporaries. If it was compiled then, that was about 500 years after Moses. So this Psalm of Moses, which is inspired Scripture, must have been on its own for a long time.

And this psalm is called “**a prayer.**” There’s a “Song of Moses” in Deuteronomy 32. That tells the story of how the Lord had helped Israel, and how they rebelled against Him. And in Revelation, we find out that we’ll only be singing two songs in heaven:

Revelation 15:3

“*And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.*”

唱神仆人摩西的歌，和羔羊的歌，说，主神，全能者阿，你的作为大哉，奇哉。

I don’t know what that song of Moses refers to. Is it the one in Deuteronomy 32, or this Psalm, or something else completely? We’re not going to know until we get to heaven.

And we see that this is “*A prayer of Moses the man of God.*” And that’s useful. When we find it difficult to pray, or simply want to know how to pray more effectively, it’s no bad thing to go to Scripture and find the prayers of men of God to help us.

Christ gave us a template how to pray in the Lord’s Prayer. We don’t recite it blindly in a superstitious way, but we use it as a template for our own prayers in our own words.

And we can do the same with many other prayers of men of God throughout Scripture. Abraham, Moses, David, Hezekiah, Daniel. There are many prayers in Scripture for our learning and benefit. So let’s look at this “*Prayer of Moses the man of God.*”

1 Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

主阿，你世代代作我们的居所。

A “*dwelling place*” is far more than a bed for the night. It’s a home. A place of comfort and security, where we can relax, away from the burdens of the world. But Moses’ dwelling place isn’t a home on this earth. It’s the Lord Himself. The one true God, Lord of heaven and earth is Moses’ dwelling place. But what does that mean?

Moses understood that any home we have on this earth is only ever temporary. He was brought up in Pharaoh's palace for 40 years, then he was a shepherd in the back side of the desert for another 40 years, followed by 40 years wandering in the wilderness. And then he died, without ever entering the land the Lord had promised the Israelites.

But he did enter the true promised land. The true land promised by God was never meant to be a piece of real estate at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. For a short time that was given as a temporary home for the Jews. But Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, all these people of faith, weren't looking for anywhere on this earth to be a home:

Hebrews 11:13-16

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

这些人都是存着信心死的，并没有得着所应许的，却从远处望见，且欢喜迎接，又承认自己在世上是客旅，是寄居的。说这样话的人，是表明自己要找一个家乡。他们若想念所离开的家乡，还有可以回去的机会。他们却羡慕一个更美的家乡，就是在天上的。所以神被称为他们的神，并不以为耻。因为他已经给他们预备了一座城。

And the Lord has made Himself a dwelling place, not just for Moses, but *“in all generations,”* for all His children in all ages, and that includes us. So, the true believer, the man of faith, doesn't have a home here, and we shouldn't try looking for one.

Hebrews 13:14

“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

我们在这里本没有常存的城，乃是寻求那将来的城。

But if the Lord is our dwelling place, we ought to know more about Him. Who is this God, that past men of faith had as their dwelling place, their real home? And we need to look at two things: His greatness and His holiness. Firstly, His greatness, how big He is.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

诸山未曾生出，地与世界你未曾造成，从亘古到永远，你是神。

God is *“from everlasting to everlasting.”* He is eternal. He was not only there before the earth was formed, but He created it in the first place. We're dealing with an eternal, all-

powerful Creator God. Many people don't want to believe such a God even exists. It makes them feel uncomfortable, because it would mean they're responsible to that God and can't get away from Him. So they'd rather invent their own smaller gods.

Or maybe they wouldn't invent gods at all, but fancy theories about the origin of the universe. If everything started at random by a big bang, without God being involved, then there'd be no responsibility, they can live how they please. Very convenient. But to believe in the concept of a big bang happening at random takes far more faith than simply believing in an all-powerful Creator God who created all things in the first place.

And I don't think we realise how big God actually is. If you've ever headed south-east in an aeroplane, you'll know that about 20 minutes after take off you fly over London, and you're at sufficient height to see the whole city out of the window. God is in control of everybody and everything that's going on down there. He knows every sparrow, and every hair on everybody's head is numbered. And He's ordaining all things to His greatest glory. And that's just a small city. He's in control of all things, at all times, everywhere. Too often we think of God as just a little bit bigger than ourselves:

Psalm 50:21

"thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" 你想我恰和你一样。

But, you may say, if this all-powerful Creator God exists, why is there death in the world? If He's created us, why do we die? That's a bit of a waste, to say the least, isn't it?

3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

你使人归于尘土，说，你们世人要归回。

All of us die. If God is a God of love, why doesn't He give us good things in this world, all the time, for ever? That's a common question. And to answer it, we really need to start looking at things from an eternal perspective. All we can see at the moment is our own, comfortable, cosy little lives. That's all we bother about. We can't see beyond our own death. We need to see things from God's perspective. Death is not the end.

4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

在你看来，千年如已过的昨日，又如夜间的一更。

To God, and compared to eternity, our lives are so very short.

2 Peter 3:8

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

亲爱的弟兄啊，有一件事你们不可忘记，就是主看一日如千年，千年如一日。

And that's actually quite a comfort to the Christian. To us, nothing seems to change very much from day to day. Whatever difficult situation we're in, we seem to be in it for far too long. It's as though the Lord isn't answering our prayers. Everything seems to be going by so slowly. We want answers now. But the Lord is at work, and speedily:

2 Peter 3:9

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

主所应许的尚未成就，有人以为他是耽延，其实不是耽延，乃是宽容你们，不愿有一人沉沦，乃愿人人都悔改。

The Lord's not slack. He's gathering His elect. He's shortening the days, for their sake:

Matthew 24:21,22

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

因为那时必有大灾难，从世界的起头，直到如今，没有这样的灾难，后来也必没有。若不减少那日子，凡有血气的，总没有一个得救的。只是为选民，那日子必减少了。

5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

你叫他们如水冲去。他们如睡一觉。早晨他们如生长的草。

6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

早晨发芽生长，晚上割下枯干。

We need to see the brevity of our life, in the light of eternity. Our lives are so short. We're like grass. It grows quickly, but it's either cut down or withers just as quickly.

1 Peter 1:24,25

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

因为凡有血气的，尽都如草，他的美荣，都像草上的花。草必枯干，花必凋谢。惟有主的道是永存的。所传给你们的福音就是这道。

So then we've got another question to ask: Why has God ordained our life in this world to be so brief? We've looked at God's greatness, compared to our smallness. Now we need to look at the second thing, His holiness, compared to our sinfulness. Let's suppose we did have everything we want in this world, for ever. What kind of people would we become? Selfish, conceited, proud, and without doubt we'd forget God altogether.

7 ¶ For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

我们因你的怒气而消灭，因你的忿怒而惊惶。

We're told in 1 John 4:8, 16 that God is love. So many people think that means that God will never be angry with us, He just loves everybody the way they are, and He just wants everyone to acknowledge Him. But that's not true. Here we find out death and decay are in the world because God's angry with us. We're sinners in the hands of an angry God.

Romans 6:23

"For the wages of sin is death." 因为罪的工价乃是死。

We ought to be troubled by this. There's a very popular teaching going around in the church today which teaches something like this: God loves everybody. All we need to do is realise God's love for us. The love's been there all along, we just don't realise it. We just need to recognise our "freedom in Christ" as they say. Now, what's the problem with that? Repentance is completely missing. And then we wonder why we're still in the mess we're in. With this illness, this family situation, this body of decay and death. It's because the wages of sin is death. It's not a question of realising God's love for us. It's a question of realising God wants us to repent. And these situations God puts us in, are Him telling us that. We can't just carry on regardless, we need to do something about it.

8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

你将我们的罪孽摆在你面前，将我们的隐恶摆在你面光之中。

We need to recognise we fall short of God's standards, and that we must repent, to change our ways. If we repent and put our trust in the Saviour God has provided, Jesus Christ, we'll be saved. Everything will be fine. We'll be saved to a new life, saved from the consequences of our sins. And we'll know we've been saved. That's what's necessary. Moses recognised that. He put his trust in the Saviour that, to him, was still to come:

Deuteronomy 18:15

"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken"

耶和華你的神要从你们弟兄中间给你兴起一位先知，像我，你们要听从他。

We must put our trust in the same Saviour, but we know who He is, Jesus Christ.

Many people would accept that they fall short of what they ought to be. “Nobody’s perfect,” they’d say. But here God delves deeper into our lives than we could ever do. He looks at our secret sins in the light of His countenance, His face. Oh dear!

Now, I just want to mention the doctrine of hell-fire, a place of everlasting torment for the wicked after death. We can’t avoid it because Christ spoke about it:

Mark 9:43

“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched”

倘若你一只手叫你跌倒，就把它砍下来。

Matthew 25:41

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”

王又要向那左边的说，你们这被咒诅的人，离开我，进入那为魔鬼和他的使者所预备的永火里去。

You’ve heard in the past of hell-fire preachers, who whip their audiences up with such a graphic description of hell-fire to make them so scared of it, that they then easily seem to turn to Christ. Is that how we should be preaching? Is that where we’re going wrong?

Well, it would be the truth. There **is** a place of eternal torment for the wicked after death, and coming to the Saviour **is** the only way to escape the wrath to come. And wherever truth is preached, God can work. Christ said:

John 8:32

“the truth shall make you free.” 真理必叫你们得以自由。

But I don’t think it’s necessary, or wise, to shout at people they’re going to hell. Even most Christians, have a problem with the doctrine of hell fire. They find it difficult to believe a loving God can send anybody there. And I can understand that. None of us can see the depth of our own sin straight away. It’s only as we grow in the faith, the closer we get to God, *“the light of His countenance,”* the more sin we see in ourselves, and the more we’ll come to accept that a place of eternal torment is just where I deserve to be.

Isaiah 64:6

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”

我们都像不洁净的人，所有的义都像污秽的衣服。我们都像叶子渐渐枯干。我们的罪孽好像风把我们吹去。

God sees everything we do, and think. We can't get away from the "*light of His countenance*." As Christ said to the man at the pool of Bethesda, we need to:

John 5:14
"*sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*"

不要再犯罪。恐怕你遭遇的更加利害。

9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

我们经过的日子，都在你震怒之下。我们度尽的年岁好像一声叹息。

We live our pathetic little lives, and it's just like a story that's told. Once we've read a story, it might have been exciting at the time, but after the story's over, who remembers it? Who's interested in it any more? It's boring. I've read that. Let's read something new, something more exciting. What empty lives we lead if we're just looking for the next thrill. If we're living purely for ourselves, we actually haven't achieved anything at all.

10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

我们一生的年日是七十岁。若是强壮可到八十岁。但其中所矜夸的，不过是劳苦愁烦。转眼成空，我们便如飞而去。

In the early days of our world, people lived a lot longer than they do now. Adam lived until he was 930, Noah lived until he was 950. But after the flood, our lifespan shortened considerably. Abraham died at 175, and Moses himself died at 120. But even in Moses day, we're told here, the average lifespan was as low as it is now, 70 or 80 years. Contrary to popular opinion, we're not living longer at all. We should realise the brevity of life, and that even the strength of this life is only "*labour and sorrow*." Those two words sum up life in this world. Why would anyone want to stay here for ever?

We're "*soon cut off, and we fly away*." There's nothing here about not existing after death. Many people today think there's nothing after death, so if their lives turn out to be a mess, that's all right, in the last resort they can just kill themselves and they think that'll be the end. No! When we die, we "*fly away*" to the next place, wherever that is.

And there are so many Christians too who've got a wrong view of this. Many believe that if we die knowing Christ we'll get eternal life, but if we die without Christ, we just cease to exist. But that's a terrible thought! Where's the incentive for anyone to give up their sin? Not coming to Christ isn't too great a deal, if there's nothing after death anyway.

1 Corinthians 15:32

“Let us eat and drink for to morrow we die.”

若死人不复活，我们就吃吃喝喝吧。因为明天要死了。

And just think of all the crimes that people commit in this world. If they don't get caught here, and many of them don't, they've got away with it if there's nothing after death. No! Even if we find it difficult to believe in a place of everlasting torment, we must at least agree that there is going to be a judgment after death. Otherwise God can't be just.

Hebrews 9:27

“it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”

按着定命，人人都有一死，死后且有审判。

11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

谁晓得你怒气的权势？谁按着你该受的敬畏晓得你的忿怒呢？

None of us can really understand the power and depth of God's anger against sin. He is so holy. So we should fear the Lord. *“Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.”* The depth of God's anger against sin is as great as the fear we should have for Him.

Psalms 111:10, Proverbs 9:10

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” 敬畏耶和华是智慧得开端。

12 ¶ So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

求你指教我们怎样数算自己的日子，好叫我们得着智慧的心。

And now, finally, we come to the petitions in this prayer. When we pray, too often our prayers are just asking for things and that's it. We've got our needs, and we need to tell the Lord about them, even though He knows everything we need anyway. There's nothing wrong with that. God encourages us to come to Him with our needs:

1 Peter 5:7

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

你们要将一切的忧虑卸给神，因为他顾念你们。

Philippians 4:6

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

应当一无挂虑，只要凡事借着祷告，祈求，和感谢，将你们所要的告诉神。

But when we pray, we need to get into a right frame of mind first. Christ said:

John 16:23

“Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.”

你们若向父求什么，他必因我的名，赐给你们。

From this verse, many people think we can ask for whatever we want and we'll get it. So we can ask for a million pounds and God will just give it to us. Of course that's not true. We need to pray “in Christ's name.” That doesn't mean superstitiously adding “in Jesus name, Amen” to the end of our prayer. If we just pray, saying, “God, please give me this, and that, in Jesus name, Amen,” I can assure you, it's not going to work. James said:

James 4:3

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

你们求也得不到，是因为你们妄求，要浪费在你们的宴乐中。

It means the prayer has to be in the will of God. It has to be what Christ wills for us:

1 John 5:14,15

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”

我们若照他的旨意求什么，他就听我们。这是我们向他所存坦然无惧的心。既然知道他听我们一切所求的，就知道我们所求于他的无不得着。

But how do we know Christ's will? We need to get into the right frame of mind in prayer, before we ask our petitions. That's exactly what Moses has done here. Once we're in the right frame of mind, we can then begin to offer our petitions. And we'll find we no longer want to pray for stupid things to spend on our lusts. We'll be more in the right frame of mind to pray for useful things, things the Lord wants us to pray for.

And the first petition here is “*to number our days.*” We only have to look back on our lives to see how much time we've actually wasted. Certainly all the time we spent before we became a Christian was wasted. And even after becoming a Christian, we have to acknowledge that we've not spent all our time as we ought to have done. So we need to pray that every day we may spend our time usefully in the Lord's service.

And we should “*apply our hearts unto wisdom.*”

Proverbs 8:1, 11

“Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.”

智慧岂不呼叫，聪明岂不发声。.... 因为智慧比珍珠（或作红宝石）更美。一切可喜爱的，都不足与比较。

King Solomon asked for wisdom, and the Lord not only made him the wisest man that ever lived, apart from Christ, but also gave him long life and riches, he never asked for.

13 Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

耶和華阿，我們要等到幾時呢？求你轉回，為你的僕人後悔。

The next request is for the Lord to return. This implies that the people of God, His servants, have gone away from the Lord, and Moses is calling on the Lord to return and repent of the just punishment He put on them for their sins. Now, God doesn't repent.

Numbers 23:19

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent"

神非人，必不致說謊，也非人子，必不致後悔。

But God sometimes changes what He was going to do depending on the action of his subjects. But I don't think this is necessarily referring to a particular incident in the life of the Israelites. It's more of a request for the presence and closeness of the Lord to be felt again. Whatever has happened, Moses is having difficulty discerning the Lord's presence. Maybe He's sinned and the Lord's withdrawn His presence for a time. And he's crying for that closeness, that knowledge of the presence of the Lord, once more.

This happens to all of us at various times in the Christian life. And when it does happen, we first of all need to examine ourselves, to see if we've done something to warrant this. But we also need to ask the Lord to get our mind refocused on Him as Moses does here.

14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

求你使我们早早饱得你的慈爱，好叫我们一生一世欢呼喜乐。

And then Moses cries for the Lord's mercy – and that's all any of us can ever do. Whoever we are, we need the Lord's mercy. We can't do anything without it. Christians have already experienced His mercy, and we should be praying for a continued knowledge of His mercy in our lives, reflecting constantly on what He's done for us. Unbelievers haven't experienced His mercy at all yet. They're still under His wrath. They need to repent, and the way to do that is to cry to the Lord for His mercy. And God will be gracious to them. All of us, believer and unbeliever, need God's mercy.

"that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." Do you want a happy life? We can't have one unless we're in a right standing with God. We need to continually make sure we're in a right relationship with God. That'll guarantee a joyful, fulfilled and happy life.

15 Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.

求你照着你使我们受苦的日子，和我们遭难的年岁，叫我们喜乐。

We look to our past, and we recognise the Lord has afflicted us, and we've seen much evil. We see nothing but trouble, and it has to be said, mainly of our own making. We're not to dwell on our past. We need to look forward:

Philippians 3:13,14

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

弟兄们，我不是以为自己已经得着了。我只有一件事，就是忘记背后努力面前的，向着标竿直跑，要得神在基督耶稣里从上面召我来得的奖赏

16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

愿你的作为向你仆人显现。愿你的荣耀向他们子孙显明。

If we do look back on our lives at all, we need to forget our foolish behaviour, and see how the Lord has dealt with us. See His work in our lives, and how He's displayed His glory in us. And that's the legacy we have for our children.

17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

愿主我们神的荣美，归于我们身上。愿你坚立我们手所作的工。我们手所作的工，愿你坚立。

Only if we're working for the Lord can our works be established. Living for ourselves is a complete waste of time.

1 Corinthians 15:58

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

所以我亲爱的弟兄们，你们务要坚固不可摇动，常常竭力多作主工，因为知道你们的劳苦，在主里面不是徒然的。

These are the things that Moses prays for. Maybe he intended to pray for other things as well. But after realising God's greatness compared to our smallness, and God's holiness compared to our sinfulness, his mind became conformed to God's will, not his own will.

If we understand this prayer of Moses properly, we'll no longer have any desire to pray for stupid things any more, but our desire will also be conformed to the Lord's.