

SBC – Jan. 4, 2026

Psalm 90:1-17 (NKJV)

“Eternal God – Mortal Men”

Psalm 90 is the only Psalm credited to Moses, making it the oldest of all the Psalms. Although this is the only Psalm of Moses, there are two other songs by Moses in the Book of Moses, as seen in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32, as well as the blessing of the tribes of Israel, as seen in Deuteronomy 33.

Most everyone agrees this Psalm was probably written against the backdrop of the wilderness journeys of Israel in which the prevailing theme was DEATH! Some suggest Numbers 13 and 14 are the main backdrop, as this is where Israel, because of their unbelief, were told they would all die in the wilderness (cf. Num. 14:29-35). Others suggest Numbers 20, where we find the death of Moses’s sister Miriam, the sin of Moses in striking the rock, and the death of Moses’s brother Aaron.

The Psalm contrasts the eternity of God with the mortality of man. It denotes the frailty and brevity of man and asks God for mercy to the end that men might have a meaningful life despite living a short life in a sin-cursed world.

Slide # 1

Psalm 90

Eternal God – Mortal Men

- vv. 1-2 The Eternality of God
- vv. 3-6 – The Brevity of Mankind
- vv. 7-8 – God’s Judgment on Sin
- vv. 9-11 – The Frailty of Mankind
- vv. 12 – A Prayer for Wisdom
- vv. 13-17 A Plea for God’s Mercy and Blessing

Psalm 90 (NKJV)

A Prayer Of Moses the Man of God.

The title is simply: “***A Prayer of Moses the Man of God.***” The designation “Man of God” in the OT always refers to one who spoke for God. In the NT it is used in reference to Timothy (cf. 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:17). Moses was considered the greatest of all the OT prophets because the LORD knew him “face to face” which is to say intimately (Deut. 34:10-12).

1 LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.

“Lord” here is Adonai, which is the idea of Master in the sense of the supreme Master who is Lord over all.

Some translate “dwelling place” as “place of refuge.” Throughout the generations God has been the impregnable source of refuge and protection for His people. We find our refuge and shelter in God.

Slide # 2

Proverbs 18:10 (NKJV)

10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.

Deuteronomy 33:27 (NKJV)

27 The eternal God is your refuge, And underneath are the everlasting arms; ...

God is our SAFE PLACE!

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

What a great statement on the eternity of God! From everlasting to everlasting He is God!

“This is the highest description of the *eternity* of God to which human language can reach.” - **Adam Clarke**

It is amazing that God is eternal - a concept that we cannot comprehend. But it clearly what the Bible teaches. God is from everlasting as far back as you can go and then to everlasting as far forward as you can go. It never ends in both directions. It is mind blowing.

This is the very concept of God saying His eternal name is I AM (Ex. 3:13-15). And then when Jesus came on the scene He told the Jews...

Slide # 3

John 8:24 (NKJV)

24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am ~~He~~, you will die in your sins.”

John 8:58–59 (NKJV)

58 Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

59 Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

This is non-negotiable! This is essential truth that must be believed. Jesus must be believed on for Who He is as eternal God. He is I AM from everlasting to everlasting. This defines God and no one else. Only God is eternal in both directions. Now we share in His eternal life going forward, but not backward. Only God is from everlasting to everlasting!

3 You turn man to destruction, And say, “Return, O children of men.”

Most translations translated this as “You return man to dust.” (ESV) “Return, O children of men” is more literally, “Return, descendants of Adam.”

This is basically saying, that all the descendants of Adam are decreed to return to dust because of sin (cf. Gen. 3:19). This is our lot in life. “Dust to dust” (cf. Gen. 18:27; Eccl. 3:20; 12:7). Unless Jesus comes in our life time we are destined to die.

It seems that God is constantly issuing the order, “Return to dust,” and a never-ending line trudges down to the grave.

– **William MacDonald**

There is a millionaire by the name of Bryan Johnson who is trying to live forever through an anti-aging process called “Project Blueprint.” He is 48 years OLD. He regularly undergoes a series of transfusions and transplants, trying to defy aging. One aging expert says it won’t work because he can’t change his genes.

I know it won’t work because the Bible plainly says..

Hebrews 9:27 (NKJV)

27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

4 For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it is past, And like a watch in the night.

Life is very brief and the older you get the more you realize this truth or at least you should.

The oldest recorded life span was that of Methuselah who lived to be 969 years old (Gen. 5:27). That sounds really old to our ears. But before God a thousand years is like yesterday. Peter says that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Pet. 3:8).

Before God a thousand years is like a watch in the night. A watch in the night was considered a four-hour span. What seems long to us is practically nothing to God. Keep that in mind when you consider “calendar issues” related to prophetic matters. God is on His time schedule – not ours.

5 You carry them away like a flood; They are like a sleep. In the morning they are like grass which grows up:

Our lives here are brief, and suddenly they are carried away like a flood would carry something away. They are like sleep. When you sleep, you don't think about time. You go to sleep, and then hours later, you awake not even cognizant of the passage of time.

You sleep, you dream, you awake, and yet you are scarcely conscious of the passing of time. – **William MacDonald**

Our lives are like grass...

6 In the morning it flourishes and grows up; In the evening it is cut down and withers.

Someone has well said, “**Sown, grown, blown, mown, gone.**” That pretty much defines our brief lives. Our life passes quickly like a watch in the night, like a flood, like a sleep, like the withering grass.

Human life is frail and brief, in comparison with the everlasting God.
– **The Bible Knowledge Commentary**

7 For we have been consumed by Your anger, And by Your wrath we are terrified.

It is thought the allusion here is to the anger of God against the Israelites which caused them to all die in the wilderness with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. Even Moses did not make it to the Promised Land in his mortal body.

The Wilderness Journey was a death journey. The stats in Numbers had the Jewish men numbering over 600,000, which does not count women and children. This means that well over a million people may have died in the wilderness. Someone has done the math and they claim this on average comes out to about 72 deaths per day! It was all about going to funerals. No wonder Moses wrote this as he did.

As they were dropping like flies in the wilderness, Moses was very cognizant that this was a matter of being “consumed” by God’s anger. His wrath terrified them – and rightfully so.

8 You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.

Iniquities refer to moral perverseness. God knows all. Nothing is hidden from Him!

Slide # 4

Hebrews 4:13 (NKJV)

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Slide # 5



Moses is specifically thinking in reference to that sinful generation that perished in the wilderness. They didn't get away with it. Moses understood that God was not unreasonable, but rather that they deserved what was happening to them. Moses here is simply acknowledging that God's judgment of them as a people is righteous!

9 For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; We finish our years like a sigh.

Death for all of us is a result of the consequences of sin. The penalty of sin for us as believers has forever been dealt with. There is no condemnation for those in Christ (Rom. 8:1). But in general, we still have to deal with physical consequences that are traced back to Adam.

We are all breaking down. We are all headed towards death. We are ever reminded of the terrible wrath of God in relation to sin. And we finish our years with a sigh, which is the idea of a moan. What a way to go out – but in general, how true that is.

10 The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Moses here is speaking prophetically of what is the norm! Normally, we have about 70 years, and if we are strong, 80, if you are really strong, maybe even a little longer. But in general, this is very close. Google tells me the average lifespan in the United States is 78 for men and 81 for women. That rings true with what Moses says. Of course, there are always exceptions, but in general this is true.

Yet, even if we live a relatively long life, Moses says, “their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.” The futility of life on the natural plain is that in the end, no matter how long we live, it is all just labor and sorrow. Work and pain define life on the natural plain. Sounds like Moses has been reading Ecclesiastes before it was written.

11 Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath.

Moses is here emphasizing the seriousness of sin! People generally don't take sin very seriously! But we need to realize the power of God's anger. We need to realize the serious consequences of sin!

The NIV translates the last part of this verse as: “Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due.”

Instead of explaining away life’s curses, a wise person will recognize God’s wrath towards sin as the ultimate cause of afflictions and consequently learn to fear God. – **John MacArthur**

The idea is that the one who seriously considers the just wrath of God toward sin will therefore give Him the reverence that is due Him. A proper view of the seriousness of sin results in the proper fear of God.

12 So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

This is what our response should be! Our time is short! God is holy! We should live accordingly. Learning to number our days is wise. In this way we gain a heart of wisdom! Live with an eternal perspective – that is wisdom.

This is more than just having a sense of mortality; it means valuing the time we do have by using it for eternal purposes.

– **The Nelson Study Bible**

How many days do you have left? Well, you don’t know for sure, but let’s assume you’ll live to be 77—the average lifespan in America right now.

- If you’re 17 years old, you have 21,900 days left—that’s 720 months—if you do, in fact, live to 77.
- If you’re 21 years old, you have 672 months left.
- If you’re 35, you have 504 months left.
- If you’re 45, you have 384 months to go.
- If you’re 55, you have 264 months remaining.
- If you’re 65, you have 144 months left.
- If you’re 75, you have 24 months left before you reach the average life span in our country today.
- If you’re 85, you can sit there and just smile! You beat the average!

But more than likely, you definitely realize that time is short.

Many years ago, when I was around 40 years of age, I decided to put the prayer of Moses into something tangible that I could see. So, I put little glass marbles in a vase, and I keep it in my office.

Each marble represents a month that I have left if I live to the average age of 77. Every month I take one out to mark the passing of yet one more month of my life.

I brought this vase with me into the pulpit and told you about it 11 years ago. That surprised me; I would have thought it was only a few years ago, but it was 11 years ago when I showed this to you.

When I was 40, it seemed like a long way to 77. I started out with over 400 marbles in here.

I'm 64 next month, so I counted them yesterday to make sure it was adding up. If I live to the age of 77, I should have 156 marbles in here. The troubling thing is that I came up with 144; I was 12 marbles short. So, I counted them again and got the same result. I'm missing a year. Either I can't count, or somebody's stealing my marbles. You're not supposed to steal somebody's marbles. I'm going to put a camera in my study!

Maybe God knows I'll live to be 76 instead of 77. I've been thinking of changing the formula and making it 88 years, my mother's age when she passed away, or 92 years and counting to match my father's age. Actually, I've decided to keep it at 77 and if I empty this vase and live on, I'll start putting marbles back in each month to represent extra time the Lord gave me to live.

This isn't a morbid exercise contemplating the brevity of life; according to God's Word, it creates a perspective on life that leads to a heart of wisdom. I recommend you get your own vase and consider it carefully.

-Stephen Davey

Stephen Davey is now 67 years old, which means he only has 120 marbles left in his vase. But if he lives to be only 70, he only has 36. And then I got to thinking, I am now 68, which means that if I live to be 70, I only have 24 marbles left. I am about to lose all my marbles.

No matter how you dice it time is short! This prayer is always appropriate: "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart for wisdom."

Slide # 6

Ephesians 5:15–16 (NKJV)

15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,

16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Wisdom is to make the most of the time we have, to redeem the time, to live in light of eternity. To live with an eternal perspective.

Slide # 7

ALL THAT IS NOT
ETERNAL IS
ETERNALLY OUT
OF DATE

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13 Return, O LORD! How long? And have compassion on Your servants.

14 Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy, That we may rejoice and be glad all our days!

We see the humanness of Moses here. We hurt in these bodies that are breaking down. Our human experience cries out, “How long?” and desires for the Lord to turn it around.

In verse three he says God turns man to dust, but now here in verse 13 he requests that God turn and have compassion His servants.

He asks that God satisfy them earlier rather than later with His mercy. Mercy is the Hebrew word “hesed” meaning God’s faithful love. His desire is that the blessing of God be upon them so that they might live lives filled with joy. Yes life is short, but the blessing of having it filled with JOY!

Sin has gotten in the way and the result has been this miserable wilderness experience. It is no fun out in the wilderness of sin. But his desire and request is for restoration in keeping with God’s compassion, faithfulness, and blessing.

Moses understood that true satisfaction was not rooted in money, fame, romance, pleasure, or success. It was satisfied with God’s **mercy**, His faithful, covenant goodness to His people.

– David Guzik

15 Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, The years in which we have seen evil.

Moses is pleading for God to turn things around. How we as God’s children long for ultimate restoration. Sin has wrecked us, but ultimately God will restore us in every fashion. This is what the day of redemption is all about which Paul referenced in Ephesians 4:30.

16 Let Your work appear to Your servants, And Your glory to their children.

17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands.

As God's people, we want to see Him work mightily, and we want our children to see His awesomeness. What a great prayer this is by Moses.

And then he asks that God's beauty (favor) be upon them and that He establish the work of their hands. Everyone want their life to count! Moses is praying that their life's work would matter.

And what matters is what matters to God! That's what counts for all eternity. This is gaining a heart of wisdom. Doing what matters to God for all eternity.

The world talks about leaving their mark. But their mark is like when my grandchildren take chalk and write on my driveway. That lasts only a few days until the next rainstorm! It is a very brief mark. It doesn't last!

Live for God! Live in light of eternity!

Slide # 8

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NKJV)

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, **knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**

Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Wanderers in the wilderness have no lasting monuments there. But those who live for God find the reality of Ps. 90:1 to be eternally satisfying. Indeed, the Lord is our eternal dwelling place – He is our abiding refuge. In Him we find all that we need for time and eternity.

Corrie ten Boom shared that at the very moment of the beginning of each new year, her father would open the Bible and read to the family Psalm 91. That is a great selection, but we might just as well read Psalm 90 to bring in the New Year!

*God is our eternal dwelling place! God is eternal – we are mortal.
Lord, teach us to number our days. Establish the work of our hands!*
This is a great prayer to ring in the new year with.

God help us to live accordingly!