

A Five-psalm Preparatory Study  
for the  
Book of Hebrews

*Psalm 102*

*Psalm 40*

*Psalm 8*

*Psalm 110*

*Psalm 95*

## PSALM 102

### INTRO

Turn please to Hebrews, chapter one. The writer of Hebrews begins his message on the superiority of Jesus Christ over *all* things by declaring in v2 that He “made the world.”

Read Hebrews 1:1-2.

Further down in this chapter, in vs10-12, the writer backs this up by quoting Psalm 102. Let’s begin reading at v7.

Read Hebrews 1:7-12.

This passage is used to establish not just Christ’s role in the creation of the universe, but to establish His *eternal existence*—as John MacArthur puts it:

Christ is better than angels because He exists eternally. If Jesus was in the beginning to create, He must have existed before the beginning and therefore be without beginning.

But our study here is not of Hebrews but Psalm 102, so let’s turn to that Psalm.

### OVERVIEW

Because of our focus, which is the relationship of Psalm 102 to Hebrews 1, we will not dissect every verse of this Psalm. But before we narrow it down, we need to understand its purpose in the whole.

In his inimitable fashion, Charles Haddon Spurgeon summarizes the Psalm thusly:

*Spurgeon:* In the first part of the Psalm, [vs] 1-11, the moaning monopolizes every verse, the lamentation is unceasing, sorrow rules the hour. The second portion, from 12-28, has a vision of better things, a view of the gracious Lord, and his eternal existence and care for his people, and therefore it is interspersed with sunlight as well as shaded by the cloud, and it ends up right gloriously with calm confidence for the future, and sweet restfulness in the Lord. **The whole composition may be compared to a day which, opening with wind and rain, clears up at noon and is warm with the sun, continues fine, with intervening showers, and finally closes with a brilliant sunset.**

K&D refer to this psalm as the

Prayer of a Patient Sufferer for Himself and for the Jerusalem That Lies in Ruins

#### vs1-2

the psalmist—probably written by someone exiled from Israel in Babylon—cries out for the attention of Jehovah

Read vs1-2

#### vs3-11

It may be difficult for the contemporary Christian—who, God’s word says, carries around in himself the very temple of God—to grasp the anguish of the devout Jew forcibly removed from Jerusalem. The exile would have felt as if God Himself were now beyond his reach. So the psalmist—in poetic, metaphorical imagery, describes how he feels in vs3-11.

Read vs3-11

#### vs12-17

But then the psalmist slaps himself out of his self-focused lament with an emphatic, “But You!”

Read vs12-17

## vs18-22

the Lord has been a witness to the future that is the result of His present work, and here we discover...us.

Read vs18-22

**may** = will

**those who were doomed to death** = the sons of death

### vs23-24a

even so, the Lord has afflicted the psalmist

### Read vs23-24a

**...in the way** = in the course of my life (NIV)

**shortened** = a primitive root; **to dock off**, i.e. **curtail** (transitive or intransitive, literal or figurative); **especially to harvest (grass or grain)** :- × at all, **cut down**, much discouraged, grieve, harvestman, lothe, mourn, reap (-er), (be, wax) short (-en, -er), straiten, trouble, vex.

**midst** = half, the middle; i.e., "don't cut my life in half!"

### v24b

And now we get to the meat of this psalm for our purpose, this psalm's relationship with Hebrews: the Lord, the Creator of all, is eternal and changeless.

There are many things going on in this psalm, and the dutiful student of Scripture can make application from a number of historical and doctrinal themes included in its verses. And I confess to you that I could find no other commentator who emphasized the theme that seemed to leap out at me. But you can tell there is something on the psalmist's mind; there has been a recurring theme throughout this song:

v2: in the day..., in the day...

v3: For my days...

v8: ...all day long

v11: My days are...

Then he contrasts *his* days with the Lord's:

v12: But You, O Lord, abide forever...

v13: the appointed time...

When in v23 he returns to his lament, the psalmist also returns to this same imagery:

v23: ...in the way (another way of saying "the days of my life"), ...shortened my days

v24a: ...in the midst (or middle) of my days.

Clearly time, and the transient, fragile nature of life is on his mind. But just like he did in v12, where he wrote, "But You, O Lord...", in the second half of v24 he again contrasts his life with the Lord's—and you can almost hear the "but"

[But] *Your years are throughout all generations.*

*Your days, O Lord, are not limited, they are not cut short in any way—they cannot even be counted.* And from here to the end of the psalm he celebrates the reliable, unchanging eternity of Jehovah.

### v25

The psalmist declares the past-eternity (un-beginning) of Jehovah, and His establishing role in creation.

### Read v25.

of **old** = plural (but always as singular) of an unused noun *paneh*, *paw-neh'*; from <H6437> (*panah*); **the face (as the part that turns)**; used in a great variety of applications (literal and figurative); also (with prepositional prefix) as a preposition (before, etc.)

*Albert Barnes:* The phrase used here means literally "to the face;" then, "before" in the order of time. It means here, long ago; of olden time; at the beginning. The meaning is, that the years of God had stretched through all the generations of people, and all the changes which had occurred upon the earth; that at the very beginning he existed, and that he would continue to exist to the very close, unchangeably the same.

**founded**<sup>NASB</sup>, **laid the foundation**<sup>KJV,NIV</sup> = a primitive root; **to set** (literal or figurative); intensive to found; reflexive to sit down together, i.e. settle, consult :- appoint, take counsel, **establish**, (lay the, lay for a) found (-ation), instruct, lay, ordain, set, × sure.

**heavens** = dual of an unused singular *shameh*, *shaw-meh'*; from an unused root meaning to be lofty; **the sky (as aloft; the dual perhaps alluding to the visible arch in which the clouds move, as well as to the higher ether where the celestial bodies revolve)** :- air, × astrologer, heaven (-s); i.e., **the visible sky over the earth, as well as the unseen universe.**

**work** = from <H6213> (‘asah); **an action** (good or bad); generally **a transaction**; abstract activity; **by implication a product** (specifically a poem) or (generic) **property**; :- act, art, + bakemeat, business, deed, do (-ing), labour, thing made, ware of making, occupation, thing offered, operation, **possession**, x well, ([handy-, needle-, net-]) work, (-ing, -manship), wrought; i.e., **Jehovah is responsible for the act of creation, thus that which was created, and it all belongs to Him.**

**hand** = a primitive word; a hand (**the open one [indicating power, means, direction, etc.]**)

**v26**

Read v26.

**they** = the earth and the heavens

**endure**<sup>KJV, NASB</sup>, **remain**<sup>NIV, ESV</sup> = a primitive root; **to stand**, in various relations (literal and figurative, intransitive and transitive) :- **abide** (behind), appoint, arise, cease, confirm, continue, dwell, be employed, endure, establish, leave, make, ordain, be [over], place, (be) present (self), raise up, **remain**, repair, + serve, set (forth, over, -tle, up), (make to, make to be at a, with-) stand (by, fast, firm, still, up), (be at a) stay (up), tarry; **to take one’s stand.**

Sometimes “endure” can mean someone gritting their teeth, just barely surviving an ordeal. For this reason I prefer “remain” (NIV, ESV) but really wish they had just translated it “stand.” *That’s* the picture of our God: firm, solid—standing.

**wear out** = a primitive root; **to fail**; **by implication to wear out, decay** (causative consume, spend) :- consume, enjoy long, become (make, wax) old, spend, waste.

**change/changed** = a primitive root; properly **to slide by**, i.e. (by implication) **to hasten away**, pass on, spring up, pierce or change :- abolish, alter, change, cut off, go on forward, grow up, be over, pass (away, on, through), renew, sprout, strike through; **to pass on or away**; **pass through.**

[This has given me a new appreciation for our euphemism for death: to “pass away.” In Scripture this is translated “change”—and how true that is for the Christian. We do not die, we “pass away”—we are *changed*.]

*Spurgeon:* Time impairs all things, the fashion becomes obsolete and passes away. The visible creation, which is like the garment of the invisible God, is waxing old and wearing out, and our great King is not so poor that he must always wear the same robes; he will ere long fold up the worlds and put them aside as worn out vestures, and he will array himself in new attire, making a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. How readily will all this be done. “*Thou* shalt change them and they shall be changed;” as in the creation so in the restoration, omnipotence shall work its way without hindrance.

Let’s go to the passage in the Revelation to John where this occurs.

Read Revelation 20:11, 21:1-4.

**v27**

Back to Psalm 102.

Read v27.

**the same** = He, it  
**not come to an end**<sup>NASB</sup>, **have no end**<sup>KJV</sup>, never **end**<sup>NIV</sup> = a primitive root; **to complete**, in a good or a bad sense, literal or figurative, transitive or intransitive (as follows) :- **accomplish**, cease, be clean [pass-] ed, consume, have done, (come to an, have an, make an) end, fail, **come to the full**, be all gone, x be all here, be (make) perfect, be spent, sum, be (shew self) upright, be wasted, whole; **finished.**

**v28**

The passage quoted in Hebrews 1 concludes with v27, but we would be remiss if we ignored the encouraging promise with which this psalm ends.

Read v28.

*The children of Your servants...*

Not only can we read this literally, that the psalmist considers himself and others to be servants of God, but this was also a common way for people of that time to address others—sometimes literally, but sometimes as just a form of polite respect, showing deference to others.

**Read Genesis 44:18.**

So this is just a respectful, deferential way to say, “*Our children...*”

will **continue** = a primitive root [apparently akin (by transmission) to <H7901> (shakab) **through the idea of lodging**; compare <H5531> (cikluwth), <H7925> (shakam)]; **to reside or permanently stay** (literal or figurative) :- **abide**, continue, (cause to, make to) dwell (-er), have habitation, inhabit, lay, place, (cause to) **remain**, rest, set (up).

**descendants** = seed

**established** = a primitive root; properly **to be erect (i.e. stand perpendicular)**; hence (causative) **to set up**, in a great variety of applications, whether literal (establish, fix, prepare, apply), or figurative (appoint, render sure, proper or prosperous) :- certain (-ty), **confirm**, direct, faithfulness, fashion, fasten, firm, be fitted, be fixed, frame, be meet, **ordain**, order, perfect, (make) preparation, prepare (self), provide, make provision, (be, make) ready, right, set (aright, fast, forth), be stable, (e-) stablish, stand, tarry, × very deed.

Let’s close by reading the prophet Isaiah’s version of this.

**Read Isaiah 66:22.**

Unlike the first earth and first heavens, the new earth and new heavens will *not* pass away, nor will those who put their faith and trust in the living, eternal, unchanging Jehovah God.

## PSALM 40

### INTRO

While it is true that all of God's written word is truth and, as Paul writes to Timothy, "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness," we approach and apply different portions of it in different ways. Sometimes Scripture is direct and specific, with little wiggle-room for interpretation. For example, in the fourth chapter of Ephesians, Paul writes:

**Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)**

It's not really necessary to read between the lines on that one. The message seems pretty clear. But there are other portions of Scripture where there is more than one message, more than one approach, and often more than one application. **And we have such a passage in Psalm 40.** Let me illustrate this by reading the first three verses.

**Read Psalm 40:1-3.**

We do not have a miserly God. In His word we have a wealth of riches—a sweet and refreshing spring of truth that will never run dry. You can study it until your dying breath at the age of 120 and never *hope* to glean everything there. And this psalm alone is an excellent example: We could approach it from several different directions, gleaning rich truth and application from it each time.

The psalm opens with David speaking in the first person—

**I waited patiently for the Lord; And He inclined to me and heard my cry. (etc.)**

—so instinctively our first interpretation is that David is personally testifying about how Jehovah heard his cry and saved him. Thus the first message is one of personal salvation.

But we note in the superscription (which is holy writ as well) that this psalm is "For the choir director"—i.e., for public worship. So it can be interpreted and applied as *public* testimony about God's salvation to man.

A third possible interpretation is the one used by Spurgeon. Because this psalm contains a passage that is Messianic prophecy, and used in the book of Hebrews as if Jesus Himself were speaking the words, Spurgeon approaches the entire psalm in that way. For example, regarding the first line, "I waited patiently for the Lord," he writes,

Patient waiting upon God was a special characteristic of our Lord Jesus.

So from the outset we need to decide how we are going to approach, interpret, and apply this psalm. I favor the interpretation of other commentators, including K&D, who wrote,

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, [portions] of this Psalm are...taken as the language of the Christ at His coming into the world. There can be no doubt in this particular instance that, as we look to the second part of the Psalm, this rendering is brought about typically. The words of David, the anointed one, but only now on the way to the throne, are so moulded by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of prophecy, that they sound at the same time like the words of the second David [i.e., Christ], passing through suffering to glory, whose offering up of Himself is the close of the animal sacrifices, and whose person and work are the very kernel and star of the roll of the Law. We are not thereby compelled to understand the whole Psalm as typically predictive. It again descends from the typically prophetic height to which it has risen even from Psa 40:10 onwards; and from Psa 40:13 onwards, the typically prophetic strain...has entirely ceased.

In other words, we read this psalm as the personal words of David as he wrote and sang them about himself. But the Holy Spirit, working through him, used David's personal words as a *type* for what Christ Jesus, Son of God, might say hundreds of years later. This is reflected in the NASB and NKJV in the different capitalization used in the pronouns.

**Look at v7.** All translations use the lowercase "me" in "In the scroll of the book it is written of me"—i.e., David. Keep your finger here—we'll be right back—and **turn to Hebrews 10. Look at v7.** Here in the NASB and NKJV the "Me" is capitalized, signifying it is Christ Jesus saying it—not a direct quote (otherwise it would have been in red in my Bible), but something He *could have said* as the incarnated Son of God. **Now back to Psalm 40.**

Once again, for our purpose we will not be examining every verse of this psalm. Our focus is on the first eight verses and understanding, in particular, vs6-8 in relation to their use in Hebrews 10. So let's just take the first few verses as they are—as David expressing praise to God for His salvation and testifying about how his trust is in the Lord.

## v1

Read v1.

**patiently** = *qavah* = a primitive root; **to bind together (perhaps by twisting), i.e. collect;** (figurative) **to expect** :- gather (together), look, patiently, tarry, **wait (for, on, upon)**.  
**inclined, turned**<sup>mv</sup> = a primitive root; **to stretch or spread out;** by implication to bend away (including moral deflection); used in a great variety of application (as follows) :- + afternoon, apply, bow (down, -ing), carry aside, decline, deliver, **extend**, go down, be gone, incline, intend, lay, let down, offer, **outstretched**, overthrown, pervert, pitch, prolong, put away, shew, spread (out), **stretch (forth, out)**, take (aside), turn (aside, away), wrest, cause to yield.

David prayed earnestly to Jehovah, and He *stretched out* from His heavenly throne and answered his cry.

## v2

And what was David's plea? He was in trouble.

Read v2.

*He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay,*

**pit** = from <H952> (buwr) (in the sense of <H877> (bo'r)); **a pit hole (especially one used as a cistern or prison)** :- cistern, dungeon, fountain, pit, **well**.  
**destruction** = *shā'ôn* = from <H7582> (sha'ah); **uproar (as of rushing [waters]);** by implication destruction :- × **horrible, noise**, pomp, rushing, **tumult** (× -uous).  
**miry** = from the same as <H3196> (yayin); properly **dreags** (as effervescing); hence **mud** :- mire, miry. **Literally, "mud of the mire."**  
**clay** = from an unused root meaning apparently **to be sticky** [rather perhaps a denominative from <H2894> (tuw'), through the idea of dirt to be swept away]; **mud or clay; figurative calamity** :- **clay, dirt, mire**.

Remember that this is poetry, so David is not saying that he was literally standing in the muck at the bottom of a well, but probably expressing *how he felt* in his situation—whatever it was. And how expressive it is! Some say this imagery means David was seriously ill, perhaps dying, or it expresses a "threat to Israel's national existence by an enemy attack" (VanGemeren).

I respectfully differ. What a perfect description this is of how it feels, for example, to be mired in the depths of sin or rebellion, or otherwise alienated from God. At such times it feels as if our feet are stuck in quicksand, in the filth of this earth's sucking mud. And we yearn to know again the Lord's strong foundation. Which is precisely how God answered David's prayer.

*And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm.*

**rock** = from an unused root meaning **to be lofty; a craggy rock**, literal or figurative (a **fortress**) :- (ragged) rock, stone (-ny), **stronghold**.  
**making** my footsteps **firm**<sup>msv</sup>, **making** my steps **secure**<sup>svs</sup>, **established** my steps (goings)<sup>svs</sup>, a **firm place** to stand<sup>sv</sup> = a primitive root; properly **to be erect (i.e. stand perpendicular)**; hence (causative) **to set up**, in a great variety of applications, whether literal (establish, fix, prepare, apply), or figurative (appoint, **render sure**, proper or prosperous) :- certain (-ty), confirm, direct, faithfulness, fashion, fasten, firm, be fitted, be fixed, frame, be meet, ordain, order, perfect, (make) preparation, prepare (self), provide, make provision, (be, make) ready, right, set (aright, fast, forth), **be stable**, (e-) stablish, stand, tarry, × very deed.

When you are stuck in the mire, it's hard to find your footing, but standing on the Lord's rock, it is easy to stand upright and steady.

But there is in this verse a picture not just of restoration but, from the Christian's standpoint, of initial salvation. For the words translated "pit" and "mud" or "clay" refer to Sheol—the place of death. Even the word translated "destruction" or "horrible" in the *svs* can be associated metaphorically with the roaring waters of Sheol. So the imagery here can easily represent the fate of those who reject Christ.

v3

And as so often happens, when the Lord comes to our rescue, He doesn't just *save* us—He *restores* us.

*He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God;*

And through His work in our lives, He changes the lives of others.

*Many will see and fear And will trust in the LORD.*

v4

I want to, reluctantly, skip vs4-5—except for the first line:

*How blessed is the man who has made the Lord his trust,*

**trust** = from <H982> (batach); properly **a refuge**, i.e. (objective) **security**, or (subjective) **assurance** :- **confidence, hope, sure, trust.**

Why did God call David a man after His own heart? Not because he was a perfect saint, but because

- he understood what it meant to truly, *completely* trust in God;
- he understood that God didn't want ceremony and ritual for its own sake, but that these rituals were meant to remind His people of their dependency on Him;
- he understood what so many around him missed: God didn't want ceremony—He wanted the heart.

And in vs6-8, a passage quoted in Hebrews 10, David expresses this understanding.

Read vs6-8.

v6

Risking great bodily harm, I would suggest a reordering of the text in v6. I would like to place the middle line—part B—first.

*My ears You have opened;*

**opened, pierced**<sup>NTV</sup> = a primitive root; properly **to dig**; figurative to plot; generally **to bore or open** :- dig, × make (a banquet), open.

The NIV "pierced" is not the best translation, for it has led some to associate this with the ancient practice of using an awl to pierce a hole in the earlobe of a slave who chose to remain in the service of his master. As we will see in a moment, this *might* apply in only a tangential way. The Hebrew term is better translated "you have *dug*," meaning, digging out the ears to render them more receptive to hearing. And always in the mind of the ancient Hebrew, "hearing" meant obeying.

So specifically this is David saying, "I get it! I understand. Unlike some who remain deaf to the true meaning of Your teaching, I understand what You want—and You are the one who has made this possible by digging the crud out of my ears." And what he understands, now that his ears are cleaned out, is stated in parts A and C of this verse.

At its most basic, this passage speaks of obedience, and there is the small tie-in to piercing the ear of a slave. For essentially the slave, in receiving this mark, was saying to his master, "Instead of accepting my freedom, I choose to remain obedient in your service." But the alternate interpretation is better.

*Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired;*

**sacrifice** = from <H2076> (zabach); properly **a slaughter, i.e. the flesh of an animal**; by implication a sacrifice (the victim or the act) :- offer (-ing), sacrifice.

**meal offering**<sup>NASB</sup>, **offering** = from an unused root meaning **to apportion, i.e. bestow; a donation**; euphemism tribute; specifically **a sacrificial offering (usually bloodless and voluntary)** :- gift, oblation, (meat) offering, present, sacrifice.

[think of it as "tithes and offerings"]

**desired** = a primitive root; properly **to incline to**; by implication (literal but rarely) to bend; **figurative to be pleased with**, desire :- × any at all, (have, take) delight, desire, favour, like, move, be (well) pleased, have pleasure, will, would.

*Matthew Henry:* The life of a sheep, which is so much inferior in value to that of a man, could not pretend to be an equivalent, much less an expedient to preserve the honour of God's government and laws and repair the injury done to that honour by the sin of man. They could not take away the terror of sin by pacifying the conscience, nor the power of sin by sanctifying the nature; it was impossible.



I am reminded of our efforts this summer watering the garden and young trees. Hundreds and hundreds of gallons of water by hose are not sufficient for true health and growth. At best they just keep things alive, but can never replace a good soaking rain from the heavens.

*Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required.*

**burnt offering** = an offering completely consumed by fire

**sin offering** = it is true that all offerings were based on the presence of sin, but this was often for a specific act of sin

It is implicit here, but explicit elsewhere in Scripture, that what the Lord God desires—is pleased with—more than the formal ritual of temple sacrifice and offerings is obedience from the heart—our desire to faithfully obey Him. King Saul learned this the hard way, and no doubt his successor David was paying attention. **Turn to 1 Samuel 15.** King Saul had been ordered by God through the prophet Samuel, to “go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.” But when Samuel approached Saul after the battle, the king greeted him with

**“Blessed are you of the Lord! I have carried out the command of the Lord.” But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” (1 Samuel 15:13b-14)**

We get to the nut of the story in v19.

**Read 1 Samuel 15:19-23.**

**vs7-8**

**Back to Psalm 40.**

**Read Psalm 40:7-8.**

It is easy, of course, to read these verses as Messianic prophecy. Jesus Himself, in the synagogue at the beginning of His earthly ministry, said much the same thing (Luke 4:16-21). It is more difficult to reconcile it being said by David.

When we study Hebrews we will address this verse as the Messianic prophecy it is; but right here and now we are still left wondering: What did David mean when he wrote it?

The first thing I notice is that the quotation marks enclose both 7 and 8. One way they go together is shown by *Young’s Literal Translation*:

**Then said I, ‘Lo, I have come,’ In the roll of the book it is written of me, To do Thy pleasure, my God, I have delighted, And Thy law is within my heart. (Psalms 40:7-8)**

**written** = a primitive root; **to grave**; by implication to write (**describe, inscribe, prescribe, subscribe**) :- describe, **record**, prescribe, subscribe, write (-ing, -ten).

- When part of Messianic prophecy, this word is interpreted as “record”—i.e., Jesus says, *Your word, O God, describes me, and now I am here to fulfill it.*
- When part of what David writes about himself, it could be interpreted as “prescribed for”—i.e., David says, *Your word O God, tells me what I should do, and I affirm my commitment to do it.*

So one way to interpret this is that David—who has been speaking already of obedience to his Lord—is saying, *I am here to obey You. In the Torah I read how I am supposed to live, and I delight to do it.*

This is perhaps the best way to interpret this passage if one is not going to subscribe to Spurgeon’s angle that the entire psalm is just messianic prophecy, and has no application to David personally.

[Riff on how I just don’t see what all these commentator’s see: David speaking for the nation, or the entire psalm as just Messianic prophecy. In everything he wrote and said, David was so personal, so intimate.]

The bottom line is obedience—obedience to Father God and obedience to His written word.

## PSALM 8

### INTRO

Turn to Hebrews 2.

The writer to the Hebrews quotes a portion of Psalm 8 in his discourse on the proper ranking of beings: God, Christ Jesus, angels—and then man.

Read Hebrews 2:5-8a.

I don't want to spend too much time with this, but we find a clue to the fact that the writer is primarily focusing on man's *future* rule in the second part of v8:

**For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.**

That "now" refers to the present fallen age. Before Adam gave in to temptation in the Garden, all things—all other created beings—were subject to him *in affection*. Now, in this post-Adamic age, all things are *not* subject to man, and in many cases those that are, are ruled by man on the basis of *fear*—not affection. But there will come a point in man's future when the original order of the Garden will be restored.

Now turn to Psalm 8.

While the words are the same, the setting is a little different in the psalm. Here the context is one of praise and wonder, rather than a discussion of the hierarchy of the Godhead over created beings.

This brief but glorious psalm is roughly organized into four two-verse segments, followed by a celebratory reprise in the last verse.

vs1-2	The glory and majesty of God the Creator
vs3-4	Compared to that, what is man?
vs5-6	The wonder of what God has given to man
vs7-8	A description/definition of man's "subjects"
v9	The glory of God reprised

As I read the psalm, I want you to note especially vs3-6. Note how everything is of God; He is the one responsible for everything.

Read Psalm 8.

### v1

**LORD** = *yhwh* = from <H1961> (hayah); (the) self-Existent or Eternal; Jehovah, Jewish national name of God :- Jehovah, the Lord. Compare <H3050> (Yahh), <H3069> (Yehovih).

**Lord** = *adonai* = an emphatic form of <H1113> ('adown); the Lord (used as a proper name of God only) :- (my) Lord.

With these two words David is addressing the Creator as the eternal Redeemer-God, *Yahweh*, and governor or king over His people. The first is who He is, the second is what He is.

How **majestic** = from <H142> ('adar); wide or (general) **large**; figurative **powerful** :- **excellent**, famous, gallant, glorious, goodly, lordly, mighty (-ier, one), noble, principal, **worthy**.

...*Your name*...

We recognize God in creation because as His believers, His followers, He has revealed to us His name. In fact, we know Him so well that we even know His *middle* name. [see [Reflections #524](#)]

*all the earth*

Not just the globe, but also all the nations on the globe.

**displayed**<sup>NASB</sup>, **set**<sup>ALL THE REST</sup> = a primitive root; **to give**, used with great latitude of application (put, make, etc.) :- add, apply, appoint, ascribe, assign, × avenge, × be ([healed]), bestow, bring (forth, hither), etc'.

**splendor**<sup>NASB</sup>, **glory**<sup>ALL THE REST</sup> = from an unused root; **grandeur (i.e. an imposing form and appearance)** :- **beauty, comeliness**, excellency, glorious, glory, goodly, honour, majesty.

**heavens** = dual of an unused singular *shameh, shaw-meh'*; from an unused root meaning to be lofty; the sky (as aloft; the dual perhaps alluding to the visible arch in which the clouds move, as well as to the higher ether where the celestial bodies revolve) :- air, x astrologer, heaven (-s); i.e., **the visible sky over the earth, as well as the unseen universe.**

YLT: **Who settest thine honour on the heavens.**

v2

Read v2.

Beginning with the next verse we will be reading how God, remarkably, honors and glorifies lowly man. But here we have the introductory statement of this—not just adult mankind in general, but little children! And Jesus reinforced this even in His time, when it literally occurred after He cleansed the temple.

Read Matthew 21:14-16. (quoting Psalm 8:2)

NASB & ESV: ...You have established strength  
KJVS: ...You have ordained strength  
NIV: ...you have ordained praise

**established** = a primitive root; **to set** (literal or figurative); intensive to found; reflexive to sit down together, i.e. settle, consult :- **appoint**, take counsel, establish, (**lay the, lay for a) found (-ation)**, instruct, lay, **ordain**, set, x sure.

**strength** = or (fully) *owz, oze*; from <H5810> ( ` azaz); **strength in various applications (force, security, majesty, praise)** :- **boldness**, loud, might, **power**, strength, strong; **bulwark**.

*VanGemeren*: The discordant note sounded by the enemies in His creation is silenced by the praise of children. Regardless of how the wicked assert themselves, they cannot outdo the evidence of God's glory on earth and in heaven. It is all around us. His glory is established, and no enemy can overcome His kingdom. The sound of the children is concrete evidence of God's fortress on earth. The continuity of the human race is God's way of assuring the ultimate glorification of an earth populated with new humanity.

vs3-4

Now the hymn moves into the realm of the sublime.

Read vs3-4.

*Robert Leighton*: The carnal mind sees God in nothing, not even in spiritual things, his word and ordinances. The spiritual mind sees him in everything, even in natural things, in looking on the heavens and the earth and all the creatures.

**consider** = a primitive root; **to see**, literal or figurative (in numerous applications, direct and implied, transitive, intransitive and causative) :- advise self, appear, approve, **behold**, x certainly, **consider**, discern, (make to) enjoy, have experience, **gaze**, take heed, *etc.*

All we need is *to see*. It doesn't really require any deep, meditation or effort for the spiritual person to see God in the natural processes.

the **heavens** = same as in earlier studies—i.e., everything overhead  
the **work** = also same as in earlier studies—i.e., the activity as well as the product

**fingers** = from the same as <H6648> (*tseba`*) (**in the sense of grasping**); **some thing to seize with**, i.e. a finger; by anal. a toe :- finger, toe.

Let's listen to the description of another time the Lord got dirt under His fingernails:

Read Genesis 2:7.

**formed** man = probably identical with <H3334> (*yatsar*) (through the **squeezing into shape**); ([compare <H3331> (*yatsa`*)]); **to mould into a form; especially as a potter**; figurative to determine (i.e. form a resolution) :- x earthen, fashion, form, frame, make (-r), potter, purpose.

We have seen the word, translated "ordained" here, in almost every Psalm we have studied.

**ordained** = a primitive root; properly **to be erect (i.e. stand perpendicular)**; hence (causative) **to set up**, in a great variety of applications, whether literal (establish, fix, prepare,

apply), or figurative (appoint, **render sure**, proper or prosperous) :- certain (-ty), confirm, direct, faithfulness, fashion, fasten, firm, **be fitted**, be fixed, frame, be meet, **ordain, order**, perfect, (make) preparation, prepare (self), **provide**, make provision, (be, make) ready, right, set (aright, fast, forth), be stable, (e-) stablish, stand, tarry, x very deed.

*What is man that You take thought of him,*

**man** = *enosh* = from <H605> ('anash); properly a **mortal (and thus differing from the more dignified <H120> ('adam'))**; hence a man in general (singly or collectively) :- another, x [blood-] thirsty, certain, chap [-man], divers, fellow, x in the flower of their age, husband, (certain, mortal) man, people, person, servant, some (x of them), + stranger, those, + their trade. It is often unexpressed in the English Version, especially when used in apposition with another word. Compare <H376> ('iysh).

**take thought**<sup>NASB</sup>, **mindful**<sup>ALL THE REST</sup> = *zakar* = a primitive root; **properly to mark (so as to be recognized)**, i.e. **to remember**; by implication to mention; also (as denominative from <H2145> (*zakar*)) to be male :- x burn [incense], x earnestly, be male, (make) mention (of), be mindful, recount, record (-er), remember, make to be remembered, bring (call, come, keep, put) to (in) remembrance, x still, think on, x well.

The contrast between God and His creation is emphasized by the choice of Hebrew word used here. If David had wanted to emphasize the dignity and strength of mankind, he would have used the word *adam* (aw-dawm). Instead he chose the poetic word *enosh* (eh-noshe), which expresses the frailty of man. For the next line, however, he uses *adam*.

*And the son of man that You care for him?*

son of **man** = lit., son of *adam* = from <H119> ('adam); **ruddy, i.e. a human being** (an individual or the species, mankind, etc.) :- x another, + hypocrite, + common sort, x low, man (mean, of low degree), person.

**care for**<sup>NASB, niv, ESV</sup>, **visit (ist)**<sup>KJVS</sup> = a primitive root; **to visit (with friendly or hostile intent); by analogy to oversee, muster, charge, care for, miss, deposit, etc.** :- appoint, x at all, avenge, bestow, (appoint to have the, give a) charge, commit, count, deliver to keep, be empty, enjoin, go see, hurt, do judgment, lack, lay up, look, make, x by any means, miss, number, officer, (make) overseer, have (the) oversight, punish, reckon, (call to) remember (-brance), set (over), sum, x surely, visit, want.

[Here again is the classic situation where the **KJVS** are not incorrect, but translate the text with a word that can be easily misinterpreted today.]

Read Genesis 39:4. (*made...overseer* = same word)

*Compared to Your incredible power and majesty, David is saying, what is it about these trivial weaklings that could merit such kindness? And the seed of Your first man—that one who introduced sin into the world—that You have brought us under Your charge. [answer: nothing!]*

## vs5-6

David has just painted in miniature a picture of man's frailty and insignificance. Now, with his mouth still hanging open in amazement, he describes how Jehovah has given man a place of honor in His creation.

Read v5.

As I am sure many of you already know, we have some interesting things going on in this verse. Let's take them in order.

**made him...lower** = *haser* (khaw-sair') = a primitive root; **to lack**; by implication to fail, **want, lessen** :- be abated, bereave, **decrease**, (cause to) fail, (have) lack, make lower, want.

Jehovah God made us "less than"; He made us "lacking." But lacking what? Ah, here it depends on who you ask.

Read Genesis 1:1.

Throughout the whole creation epic this word refers to the Creator God, and, as it is plural, we typically take it to refer to the triune Godhead.

Read Genesis 28:12. ["angels of God"]

**God<sup>NASB</sup>, angels<sup>KJV</sup>, heavenly beings<sup>NIV, ESV</sup> = *elohim* = plural of <H433> ('elowahh); **gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God**; occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates; and sometimes as a superlative :- **angels**, × exceeding, God (gods) (-dess, -ly), × (very) great, judges, × mighty.**

This word—*elohim*—is found 2,606 times in the OT. Only two of those times is it translated "angels"—and even then "angels of God" (the more common word for "angel" being *mal-ak'*, messenger).

The margin notes in the NASB say "or angels," while the margin notes in the NIV say "or God." I find a clue to how to interpret this in YLT.

**And causet him to lack a little of Godhead,**

We could spend a lot of time on how this one word is used here, but let me round it off this way: We are higher than the beasts of the field, but we are less than ["lacking"] Godhead. God created man to be special—"in His image"—and as such He "crown[s] him with glory and majesty." Man is not remotely divine, but as v6 tells us, God placed him in charge of creation, placing all things under his feet.

Back to Psalm 8

**vs7-9**

The next two verses flesh out (as it were) this governorship assigned to man.

Read vs7-8.

And v9 completes the cycle by returning us to the establishing statement of v1.

Read v9.

I would just note that the previous verses describe how God placed man as governor of this earth. v9 reminds us that God Himself is *our* governor.

How can any believer read this psalm and not lift up praise to God for His gracious condescension—His consideration, His governance, His generosity, His trust in us by leaving man in charge of His temporal creation. But perhaps most of all we praise Him for entrusting to us a portion of His own glory and majesty.

How majestic indeed!

## PSALM 110

### INTRO

Every Psalm in this study has had some relationship to the letter to the Hebrews. With our final two studies in the Psalms we intensify that relationship. Psalm 95 (in the next session) and Psalm 110 play *pivotal* roles in understanding Hebrews.

Psalm 110 is quoted in the first, fifth and seventh chapters of Hebrews, but beyond those quotations it is a critical reference for the argument laid out by the writer in the entirety of chapter 7.

Read Psalm 110.

### v1

Perhaps in no other psalm is the superscription as important as in this one. I have mentioned before, and Pastor Jeremy also pointed out last week, that these superscriptions are as inspired as the text that follows. In fact, while in most of our Bibles they are set apart in a different font, implying they are somehow added in later, in the earliest manuscripts they were flowed right into the text.

This psalm begins (as do many others) "A Psalm of David," but in *this* psalm that application is of critical importance. For right at the beginning of v1 it is important that we know *who is speaking*.

It begins with the same two references as Psalm 8 did in the last session:

*The LORD says to my Lord:*

Well, the first one is easy enough—

**LORD = *yhwh*** = from <H1961> (hayah); (the) self-Existent or Eternal; Jehovah, Jewish national name of God :- Jehovah, the Lord. Compare <H3050> (Yahh), <H3069> (Yehovih).

—and the second is also the familiar—

**Lord = *adonai*** = an emphatic form of <H113> ('adown); the Lord (used as a proper name of God only) :- (my) Lord.

—but what is different here (and why the superscription is so important) is the obvious question, *Who is speaking?* In Psalm 8 both "Lords" referred to the same person: God. But here we have one Lord speaking to another Lord. If King David is doing the speaking, who is this second Lord. Certainly the king would not have an earthly lord over him. Yahweh, certainly, but no one else.

In Matthew 22 Jesus Himself identifies this second Lord.

Read Matthew 22:41-46.

So what we have in v1 is King David prophesying, Jehovah God says to His Son, who is my Lord (who would not be on earth for almost another 1,000 years), "You, my Son, take Your place on My right until I subdue all Your enemies."

And here we have the first reference in Hebrews.

Read Hebrews 1:13.

As I've mentioned before, in the economy of the Bible the left is the weak hand, the right is the hand of power. So here we have King David speaking of his Lord, who will not be born on earth for another 1,000 years, and describing Him in a situation that even as we speak has yet to occur.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:23-28.

### vs2-3

Vs2-3 are a commentary on the oracle of v1.

Read v2-3.

In v3, **Your people will volunteer freely** = “freewill offerings in the day of Your army (a force of men or other resources)”

v4

In v4 we have David’s second oracle, again writing what Yahweh will say and do.

Read v4.

**sworn** = a primitive root; properly **to be complete**, but used only as a denominative from <H7651> (sheba`); **to seven oneself, i.e. swear (as if by repeating a declaration seven times)** :- adjure, charge (by an oath, with an oath), feed to the full [by mistake for <H7646> (saba`)], **take an oath**, × straitly, (cause to, make to) swear.

**change** His mind<sup>HAB, NIV, ESV</sup>, **relent**<sup>NKJV</sup>, **repent**<sup>KJV</sup> = a primitive root; prop. **to sigh, i.e. breathe strongly; by implication to be sorry**, i.e. (in a favorable sense) to pity, console or (reflex.) rue; or (unfavorably) to avenge (oneself) :- comfort (self), ease [one’s self], repent (-er, -ing, self).

And here is the declaration cited, by my count, 5 times in Hebrews.

“You are a priest forever  
According to the order of Melchizedek.”

Just who is this Melchizedek? And if King David is still prophesying about what Father God will say to this future Messiah—which we know to be Christ Jesus, the very Son of God—how in the world can He, Jesus, be compared to *any* human being—especially one so mysterious as this Melchizedek? He is a character who comes out of nowhere in **Genesis 14**. **Let’s turn there**.

It is not necessary for us to go into much detail about the setting; suffice it to say that it occurs just after the war of the kings. Abram has just rescued his nephew Lot, who had been captured in the war. We pick it up in v17.

Read Genesis 14:17-20.

We will discuss this fascinating character Melchizedek more in our study of Hebrews, but now I want to make two points about him.

#### NOT CHRIST

First, some have taken the position that this king of Salem may have been a pre-incarnate visitation of Christ—as in the three “men” who came to visit Abram at the Oaks of Mamre (Gen. 18:1-2). We can dispel this easily. **Keep your finger here and go to Hebrews 7**.

Read Hebrews 7:3.

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that Melchizedek was “made **like** the Son of God”—which is not what he would have said at all if he were the pre-incarnate Son, or an “angel of God.” And the rest of our study of Psalm 110 and, when we get there, Hebrews 7, will examine just *how* Melchizedek and Christ Jesus are alike. **Let’s go now to Deuteronomy 17**.

#### KING & PRIEST

Just for a moment, think about David. As Carson points out, it is not hard to imagine that King David had his daily devotions, in which he read Scripture. In fact, the kings of Israel were *commanded* to do this.

Read Deuteronomy 17:18-20.

The king was to write it out in his own hand, and read it every day as a reminder of how he was to live. And, being a “man after God’s own heart,” David surely did this. So one day he is reading Genesis 14, about Abram and Melchizedek, the Spirit takes hold of him and suddenly he is struck by something. He reads what we have as v18, that this mysterious Melchizedek was *king* of Salem:

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine;

So good so far. But then David reads on in the scroll:

now he was a priest of God Most High.

And this is where the Spirit slaps him upside the head. *Wait a minute!* David says to himself. *The last time I read through the law I read that this could not be.* What he remembered, first, was that earlier the oracle through the prophet Nathan declared the Davidic dynasty—that,

“...the Lord will make a house for you. When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.”  
(2 Samuel 7:11b-16, emphasis added)

And King David remembers well *why* God’s lovingkindness departed Saul, that Saul tried to be king *and* priest. And God’s law forbid that. The Mosaic law—which came between Abram and David—declared that the king would come from the tribe of Judah, but the priesthood could only come from the tribe of Levi. *Never* could one man be both.

But here in his devotions David is reading about Melchizedek—who was both!

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine;  
now he was a priest of God Most High. (Genesis 14:18)

Now back to Psalm 110.

So in v1 of his psalm, King David writes of Yahweh speaking to his (David’s) Lord—who will be, at once, of David’s seed *and* his Lord. This is a prophecy of something that has not yet occurred even in our own time. It speaks of the final judgment of the End Times.

Then in v 4 David writes again about a conversation between Yahweh and the Messiah, in which the Lord God declares that the Messiah, Christ Jesus, will be not just a king, but also

a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

How is Jesus the Christ a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek? Because only the old king of Salem—Jerusalem—whom Abram revered with a tithe, was both king and priest.

Let’s close by returning to Hebrews 7.

Read Hebrews 6:19-7:3.

Like Melchizedek, Jesus is due our homage.

Like Melchizedek, Jesus is the King of Righteousness. [(melek) and (tsedeq); *king of right*]

Like Melchizedek, Jesus is the King of Peace.

In a human sense, Jesus is in the Davidic line; in the *divine* sense (but from human perspective),

Like Melchizedek, Jesus comes out of nowhere, born of a virgin by the Holy Spirit.

Like Melchizedek, for whom we have no birth/death date, Jesus is eternal.

Like Melchizedek, Jesus is both king and priest, eternally.



## PSALM 95

### INTRO

Today we look at the last psalm in our ramp-up to Hebrews: Psalm 95.

### vs1-7A

At a different time, for a different purpose, I would choose to dwell almost entirely on the thanksgiving and praise of verses one through five, and the worship of verse 6, for they are dear to my heart. However, this is *not* our focus today.

Parenthetically, however, I must take a moment to point out that this passage is a perfect illustration and example of these three upward exercises. If you ever forget the difference between them—the difference between worship and thanksgiving and praise, just return to Psalm 95 for a refresher course.

V1 is a declaration of joy-filled praise. **It begins with a call to join in praise:**

Read v1.

In vs2-5 the psalmist mixes in thanksgiving—which is very often the case in Scripture. Because praise is a close relative of worship that focuses on *what the Lord has done*—that is, His work in our lives, His generosity, His grace—it is only natural to include gratitude, thanksgiving for these acts.

**V2 begins with a call—an invitation—to join in thanksgiving:**

Read vs2-5.

You notice also in vs1-5 the *unbounded joy* that permeates the text. I'm not sure it is humanly possible to express praise to God with a glum expression on one's face. Praise of God is a happy occupation.

But v6 and the beginning of v7 are different. You see and feel the difference in tone right away. We are no longer dancing around with a big grin on our face, but we are knelt, bowed down before the holy throne of God. **V6 begins with a solemn call to worship:**

Read vs6-7a.

*Spurgeon:* We are to worship in such style that the bowing down shall indicate that we count ourselves to be as nothing in the presence of the all-glorious Lord. "Let us kneel before the Lord our maker." As suppliants must we come; joyful, but not presumptuous; familiar as children before a father, yet reverential as creatures before their maker. Posture is not *everything*, yet is it *something*; prayer is heard when knees cannot bend, but it is seemly that an adoring heart should show its awe by prostrating the body, and bending the knee.

V7 has a level of shared intimacy that is not immediately apparent. Note:

- He is *our* God; we belong to each other.
- Though all the major versions translate it "we are the people of His pasture," literally it is "pasturing." In other words the emphasis is more on what God is doing, than on our just being in His location. Also, the word translated "people" means a "congregated unit"—a *tribe*—or as we might think of the local church—the *flock* at Martensdale.
- "the sheep of His hand": his right hand, the *open* hand—the hand not just of power and dominance, but of fellowship and care.

### vs7B

While the transition is abrupt, there *is* a relationship between the first half of Psalm 95 and the last. But why the compilers didn't start v8 with the word "Today" I'll never know.

Read vs7b-9.

The preceding verses have been filled with praise and worship of "the great King above all gods," our Maker, our Savior—our God. And we *belong* to Him: We are *His* tribe; we are *His* sheep. With that established, the end of v7 transitions to an exhortation, a warning.

*Today, if you would hear His voice,*

Perhaps the most important word in this is "Today." The writer to the Hebrews, after quoting the second half of Psalm 95, emphasizes this point:

Read Hebrews 3:12-16.

The writer to the Hebrews really emphasizes this, repeating again and again this idea of *today*. Here is Spurgeon again...

But what is this warning which follows? Alas, it was sorrowfully needed by the Lord's ancient people, and is not one whit the less required by ourselves. The favoured nation grew deaf to their Lord's command, and proved not to be truly his sheep, of whom it is written, "My sheep hear my voice": will this turn out to be our character also? God forbid. "To-day if ye will hear his voice." Dreadful "if." Many would not hear, they put off the claims of love, and provoked their God. "To-day," in the hour of grace, in the day of mercy, we are tried as to whether we have an ear for the voice of our Creator. Nothing is said of to-morrow, "he limiteth a certain day," he presses for immediate attention, for our own sakes he asks instantaneous obedience. Shall we yield it? The Holy Ghost saith "To-day," will we grieve him by delay?

The margin notes in the NASB suggest this could also be expressed more as entreaty: "O that you would obey..." And there is the reminder that to the ancient Jew *hearing* God implied *obeying* God.

vs8-9

We will get back to this theme of "today," but for right now I want to push on in the text. So here it is:

Today, if you would hear [and obey] His voice,  
Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah ,  
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,

*Meribah*—or, the "place of strife" or quarrel—and *Massah*—or temptation or testing—were the names Moses gave the place of the Israelite encampment at Rephidim [[ref-ee-deem'](#)], after the wilderness of Sin. And v9 explains the reference.

Read v9.

I am certainly no Hebrew scholar, but it is apparent there is a relationship between these two names —Meribah and Massah—and the words used in v9.

**tested**<sup>THE REST</sup>, **tempted**<sup>KNV</sup>, **tried**<sup>YLT</sup> = *naw-saw'* = a primitive root; **to test**; by implication to attempt :- adventure, assay, **prove**, tempt, try.

**tried**<sup>THE REST</sup>, **proved**<sup>KNV, YLT</sup> = *bah-khan'* = a primitive root; **to test (especially metals)**; general and figurative **to investigate** :- examine, prove, tempt, **try (trial)**.

So lets revisit the scene referenced during the sojourn of the Israelites.

Read Exodus 17:1-7.

In the restating of all God's commandments in Deuteronomy, 6:16 says,

"You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah."

Let's take a moment to apply what we've read so far. It seems to me that what we have here is a clash of world-views.

- Right now in the United States we are going through the election process, doing the work of selecting the next president. For that, it is right and proper to thoroughly examine—even test—the candidates for their level of integrity, veracity, experience.
- It used to be that when you wanted to get married, the state required a blood test to examine you for disease, etc. [[There are now only a handful of states that require this](#)]
- Before a stranger becomes a friend, before an acquaintance becomes a spouse, we scope them out, getting to know them—which includes testing them to see what sort of people they are.

All these are right and proper to a degree; it is how things are done in a human world. But that is *not* how we do things with holy God. As Habakkuk tells us, the righteous one—the person who is right with God—lives by *faith*, not testing. As the first part of this psalm relates, the Lord God reveals Himself in everything around us. He is its Creator and owner.

**In whose hand are the depths of the earth,  
The peaks of the mountains are His also.  
The sea is His, for it was He who made it,  
And His hands formed the dry land. (vs4-5)**

As much as it pains me to use this illustration, our relationship with God is to be more like that of dogs than cats. For the most part a dog just wants to please his master or mistress. He doesn't think about it too much; it is mostly instinctive, and he is perfectly happy to live a life of sacrifice on his master's behalf. But with rare exceptions, a cat does not live a life of sacrifice for his master or mistress. There is affection, even love, but a cat *thinks* more than a dog. If you ask something of him, he might just pause to consider the benefits that might accrue to him for obeying. If one has the love and devotion of a cat, one knows it has been *earned*, for it is not given without thorough consideration.

A life of faith does not require God to prove Himself. A life of faith does not expect God to *earn* our devotion.

As the record shows, the Israelites expected Jehovah God to earn their devotion. He had to produce. They would not countenance discomfort or delay. If their desires were not met by their timetable, their response was, as Exodus 17:7 relates, "Is the Lord among us, or not?" *Is He who He claims to be—or is He no better than a brutal pharaoh? If He can't give us the food we want and water whenever we are thirsty, what good is He? If He doesn't come through for us toot-sweet, we're outta here.*

And what was truly breathtaking about the attitude and behavior of the Israelites was that, as the psalmist quotes the Lord in v9, "They tried Me, though *they had seen My work.*" The Lord had proven Himself to the Jews—and still they expected more.

#### vs10-11

And vs10-11 record Jehovah's response to their testing of Him.

Read vs10-11.

**loathed**<sup>NASB,ESV</sup>, **was grieved**<sup>KJV</sup>, **was angry**<sup>NIV</sup> = a primitive root; properly **to cut off**, i.e. (figurative) **detest** :- be grieved, loathe self.  
"...signifies more than the occasional expression of anger [such as a parent with a child]. The verb is rare, and only here is the Lord its subject." (VanGemeren)

**err**<sup>NASB,KJV</sup>, **go astray**<sup>NKJV,NEV,ESV</sup> = a primitive root; **to vacillate, i.e. reel or stray** (literal or figurative); also causative of both :- (cause to) go astray, deceive, dissemble, (cause to, make to) err, pant, seduce, (make to) stagger, (**cause to**) **wander**, be out of the way.

Interesting, isn't it, that the word could also be translated "cause to wander"—and that is precisely what the Lord did to them because of their erring, wandering hearts. And in fact the word is so translated in Psalm 107:4.

**They wandered in the wilderness in a desert region;  
They did not find a way to an inhabited city.**

And once again we have evidence that it is the condition of the heart that is important to the Lord. They didn't just stray, but they strayed from the Lord *in their heart*.

**know** My ways = **love** My ways

Read v11.

The Lord "severed" Himself. We saw last week what this word translated "swore" means.

**swore** = a primitive root; properly **to be complete**, but used only as a denominative from <H7651> (sheba `); **to seven oneself, i.e. swear (as if by repeating a declaration seven times)** :- adjure, charge (by an oath, with an oath), feed to the full [by mistake for <H7646> (saba `)], **take an oath**, × straitly, (cause to, make to) swear.

What did He swear?

*"Truly they shall not enter into My rest."*

**rest** = or menuchah, men-oo-khaw'; feminine of <H4495> (Manowach); **repose** or (adverb) peacefully; figurative **consolation** (specifically matrimony); hence (concrete) **an abode** :- comfortable, ease, quiet, **rest (-ing place)**, still.

God had prepared a Promised Land for them, but now He would not permit this generation to enter that resting place.

The focus point of this psalm for our purpose in tying this to Hebrews is found at the end of v7.

**Today, if you would hear His voice,  
Do not harden your hearts**

And even more specific, the word **"today."**

This the writer to the Hebrews repeatedly emphasizes: Today, today! *This* day is the appointed day to obey Him. Don't let your hearts become hardened by this fallen world. How? "By the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13).

It is a hardened heart that puts God to the test, that makes Him perform for His due devotion. But God plays by different rules. Those whose hearts are *softened* by faith love Him for who He is, irrespective of what He can do for them.

And besides, in His grace, the Lord has *already* done far more for us than we can ever deserve.