

## Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

### Bible Study Notes Book of Psalms

7-6-11

#### PSALM 89

##### The Story Behind the Psalm

Basically the story is the same as Psalm 88, with one exception. In Psalm 88 Heman was praying in the dark. In Psalm 89 Ethan is singing in the dark. Psalm 89 is not as mournful as Psalm 88. Actually, both men were looking at the same tragedy. Both were heartbroken. Heman lamented; Ethan sang.

##### The Way It Was Used by God's People

This Psalm was also used when God's people were at the very bottom. However, it was used for them that they might see the bright side during a calamity such as a division of the kingdom.

It might be worth noting to remind ourselves that Rehoboam, though the son of Solomon, was also the son of an Ammonitess woman. The careful Bible student traces the Ammonites back to Ammon, who was the son of Lot by one of his daughters. When Lot and his family had fled Sodom, his wife looked back and became a pillar of salt, and his daughters fled with him to a little city called Zoar. While there, Lot was made drunken by his daughters and he committed incest with each of them. From this unholy union came two boys—one named Moab and one named Ammon. From these boys came godless races of people. Solomon should not have taken one of them to be his wife, but he did, and no doubt Rehoboam's wickedness was caused at least in part because of Solomon's disobedience in marriage, because of the general wickedness of the Ammonite people.

**Theme:** God's promise to preserve David's descendants. God's promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who will reign for eternity. The love and kindness promised to David is ours in Christ.

**Author:** Ethan (a Levite leader and possibly one of the head musicians in the Temple, 1 Chronicles 15:17, 19), or one of his descendants

*A psalm of Ethan the Ezrahite*

##### PSALM 89:1

This psalm was written to describe the glorious reign of David. God had promised to make David the mightiest king on earth and to keep his descendants on the throne forever (2 Samuel 7:8-16). But Jerusalem was destroyed, and kings no longer reign there. So these verses can only look forward, prophetically, to the future reign of Jesus Christ, David's descendant. Verse 27 is a prophecy concerning David's never-ending dynasty, which will reach its fulfillment and highest expression in Christ's future reign over the world (see Revelation 22:5).

##### PSALM 89:5

In the courts of heaven, a host of angels praise the Lord. This scene is one of majesty and grandeur to show that God is beyond compare. His power and purity place him high above nature and angels.

##### PSALM 89:12

Mount Tabor, though low in elevation (1,900 feet), was the scene of Deborah's victory in Judges 4. Mount Hermon (9,000 feet) was tall and majestic.

##### PSALM 89:14, 15

Righteousness, justice, love, and truth are the foundation of God's throne; they are fundamental aspects of the way God rules. As God's ambassadors, we should deal with people similarly. Make sure your actions flow out of righteousness, justice, love, and faithfulness, because any unfair, unloving, or dishonest action cannot come from God.

## PSALM 89:17, 24

David is promised to have God's power to accomplish God's will. Without God's help, we are weak and powerless, inadequate for even the simplest spiritual tasks. But when we are filled with God's Spirit, his power flows through us and our accomplishments will exceed our expectations.

## PSALM 89:34-37

In light of Israel's continual disobedience throughout history, this is an amazing promise. God promised that David's descendants would always sit on the throne (89:29), but that if the people disobeyed, they would be punished (89:30-32). Yet, even through their disobedience and punishment, God would never break faith with them (89:33). Israel *did* disobey, evil ran rampant, the nation was divided, exile came—but through it all, a remnant of God's people remained faithful. Centuries later, the Messiah arrived, the eternal King from David's line, just as God had promised. All that God promises, he fulfills. He will not take back even one word of what he says. God can also be trusted to save us as he promised he would (Hebrews 6:13-18). God is completely reliable.

## PSALM 90

**The Story Behind the Psalms:** The Israelites were in the wilderness for 40 years. They had crossed the Red Sea. They had marched toward the land of promise. They had come to the very door and sent out twelve spies. These spies came back with glowing reports about the land, but negative reports concerning their power to conquer it. The people were frightened because of the spies reporting that there were giants in the land, and they chose not to enter into the land of promise. Because of this they were cast into the wilderness for 40 years. Sometime during that 40-year period, Moses wrote these two Psalms. Notice that they start basically the same way, dealing with God being their habitation. They had no permanent place to live; they lived in tents and were tossed to and fro and wandered from place to place. Hence, God was their home. His presence was their habitation. Not only did they live because of Him and by Him and through Him, they lived with Him. Then he is called the "Almighty." This means He does everything and can prepare the way for His people while in the wilderness.

**The Way They Were Used by God's People:** These Psalms were used when the Jews were in trouble, especially in times of war. They were also very popular Psalms while the Jews were in captivity in Babylon, for in some sense the Jews were in captivity in the wilderness. They were not held there by a heathen nation or a king such as Nebuchadnezzar, but they were held there by God Himself as chastening for their lack of faith in entering into the promised land.

## PSALM 90:4

Moses reminds us that a thousand years are like a day to the Lord. God is not limited by time. It's easy to get discouraged when years pass and the world doesn't get better. We sometimes wonder if God is able to see the future. But don't assume that God has our limitations. God is completely unrestricted by time. Because he is eternal, we can depend on him.

## PSALM 90:8

God knows all our sins as if they were spread out before him, even the secret ones. We don't need to cover up our sins before him because we can talk openly and honestly with him. But while he knows all that terrible information about us, God still loves us and wants to forgive us. This should encourage us to come to him rather than frighten us into covering up our sin.

## PSALM 90:12

Realizing that life is short helps us use the little time we have more wisely and for eternal good. Take time to number your days by asking, What do I want to see happen in my life before I die? What small step could I take toward that purpose today?

## PSALM 90:17

Because our days are numbered, we want our work to count, to be effective and productive. We desire to see God's eternal plan revealed now and for our work to reflect his permanence. If we feel dissatisfied with this life and all its imperfections, we must remember our desire to see our work established is placed there by God. But our desire can only be satisfied in eternity. Until then we must apply ourselves to loving and serving God.