

Basic Training Bible Ministries

presents

The Gospel According to David



**Rocky Mountain Bible Conference
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Introduction

1. It has been suggested that the Psalms are the pre-recorded prayers of the Lord Jesus during His time on earth. Whether true or not, our Lord—no doubt—memorized and prayed many of them.
2. In the Psalms, in fact in all the wisdom literature (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon), some of the recurring themes are the sinfulness of man, the brokenness of the world order, and the relentless working of God to bring the Savior into the world.
3. Paul sums up all this and more in his powerful statement of 1Co 1:30–31:

*“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom—
and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”*

We tend to look at the order as backwards from our experience, but Paul is looking at it from the perspective of the experience of Jesus Christ in His life, death, and resurrection on our behalf.

Point: Jesus is the only truly wise One (Luk 2:46–47), who alone lived a righteous life (Mat 3:15), daily sanctified Himself to God (Joh 17:19), and by His death, burial, and resurrection, has purchased for us redemption (Rom 3:24). All that He is, we possess “in Him” by faith.

4. We have seen in the previous conference how the prophet Isaiah anticipates the Gospel message. Let us now look to David and his prophetic Gospel statements in the Psalms.

I. What is the Gospel Message, and Is It Found in the Old Testament?

One of the questions my father liked to ask when visiting with people was, “*Who is Jesus Christ to you?*” It is really just a simple restatement of Jesus’ query to His disciples, “*Who do you say that I am?*” (Mat 16:15, emphasis added). This is the ultimate question in life and was even asked by Solomon, the wisest of men (Pro 30:4b). The Apostle Paul lays out a clear declaration of the content of the Gospel (good news) message:

*“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you,
which also you received and in which you stand ... that Christ died for
our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He
rose again the third day according to the Scriptures ...”* 1Co 15:1–4

“Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.’” Rom 4:6–8 (Psa 32:1–2)

A. What is the Content of the Gospel Message?

In these quotes, we have Paul’s definition of the content of the Gospel message, and his use of David’s writings in the Psalms to support his Doctrine of Salvation by faith apart from works.

From the above references, the following requirements must be met in order to find the Gospel message being presented by David, or any other Old Testament person:

1. The Identity of the Savior

The term “*Christ*” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “Messiah” (meaning “*Anointed*” [One], Psa 2:2), who is clearly revealed to be God in the Old Testament (Psa 110:1; Isa 9:6; Jer 23:6). In the last reference, He is called “*THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*” (Jehovah).

2. His Saving Work

That He “*died for our sins*” speaks of His substitutional death on the cross. He was imputed by the Father with our sins (1Co 15:3; 2Co 5:21).

3. His Victory over Death

In His burial, He is shown to be fully dead; and by His resurrection, He conquered sin, Satan, and death.

4. The Salvation and Security of Those who Believe

By believing this Gospel, Paul declares that we are “saved” and “*have access by faith into this grace in which we stand.*” This is a statement of security (see Rom 5:1–2).

5. All these Truths are Contained in the Old Testament Scripture

Paul argued for the Gospel of grace before the greatest minds of his time, and he used the Old Testament Scriptures to confirm what he taught.

Since Paul affirms his Gospel message by referring to the Old Testament, we would expect to find references to these five truths in the Prophets, which includes the Psalms of David. In fact, we will find much more than these truths recorded by David.

Note that in 2Ti 3:15–17, Paul speaks to Timothy about “*the Holy Scriptures,*” which had been used by Timothy’s mother and grandmother (2Ti 1:5) to make him “*wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*” Since the New Testament was not yet written, the “*Scriptures*” used to lead Timothy to faith were Old Testament

writings. Paul affirms here what Jesus said to the disciples, after His resurrection, that all Scripture pointed to Him (Luk 24:27, Luk 24:44–45).

In our recent study, “The Gospel According to Isaiah,” we found that indeed the prophet Isaiah met all of the above requirements. In this study, we will see what the prophet David had to say regarding the Gospel of Jesus Christ (see Act 2:29–30).

The Five Laws of Interpretation

1. **The Law of Christ**, Mat 5:17; Luk 24:27, Luk 24:44–45.
All Scripture points to Him, His work.
2. **The Law of Grace**, Gal 6:2, Gal 6:16; Tit 2:11–13.
Any teaching or conduct contrary to the character or conduct of Christ is false.
3. **The Law of Faith**, Rom 3:27–31.
This is essentially an interpretative tool. The deepest truths of Scripture are spoken of in clear and simple language that even a child can understand. All complex passages are to be interpreted and subordinate to the clear and simple passages.
4. **The Law of the Spirit**, Rom 8:2; Gal 5:1, Gal 5:13, Gal 5:22–23.
This defines the freedom to live and apply God’s truth, without legalism. The new creature in Christ is a liberated, new species.
5. **The Law of Context**.
Interpretation is always consistent with context. The meaning of words is determined by their use in context. Two words that are often misinterpreted are: “saved” (see Jam 2:14) and “dead/death” (see 1Ti 5:6).

B. The Prophets Spoke by the Spirit of Christ

It is not without significance that the New Testament writers quote from the Psalms and Isaiah more than all other Old Testament books combined. Isaiah is quoted **at least** 55 times, and the Psalms, 70. In indirect references, Isaiah has 419, the Psalms 414. These numbers are approximate, depending on which source/translation you read.

The eight Psalms used most are Psalm 2 (this literally talks about today’s history), 22, 34, 69, 78, 89, 110, and 118. See also Psalm 16, with Acts 2:23–28.

Finally, remember that Peter tells us the prophets of old spoke, as they were inspired by “*the Spirit of Christ who was in them*” (1Pe 1:11). When the prophets wrote of the coming of Christ, it was actually Christ Himself who was revealing that information to them. He was speaking of Himself!

II. David Speaks of the Identity of the Son of God, Psa 2:6–12; Psa 110:1

*“... The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed ...
I will declare the decree; the LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You’ ... **Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with***

trembling. **Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.**”

Psa 2:2, Psa 2:7, Psa 2:11–12 (emphasis added)

- “Serve,” *abad*, qal imperative: “to work, labor, serve, do service”
- “rejoice,” *giyl*, qal imperative: “to be glad, celebrate, rejoice”
- “Kiss,” *nashak*, piel imperative: metaphor for faith, love, devotion
- “Blessed ... who ... trust,” *chasah*, qal ptc.: “to wait, weave ropes of strands”

See also Isa 66:5, “Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at His word ...” “Tremble” is the Hebrew word *charad*, meaning “reverential fearfulness, fear of offending Him.” “Chared is an adjective meaning ‘trembling, reverential.’ God honors and looks upon those who are contrite in spirit and tremble at His Word (Isa 66:2). Those who tremble at God’s words are also accounted as obedient (Ezr 9:4),” *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible (NASB)*.

A. “Kiss the Son”

In this Psalm, “the Son” is identified in three ways. First, He is the “Anointed” of the Lord (Psa 2:2). In Hebrew, the word *meshiach* refers to Messiah, which is translated “Christ” in the New Testament (see Joh 1:41).

Second, He is identified as the “King” who will rule the earth from Zion (see Mic 4:6–8). It is against His right to rule the earth that the kings and rulers of this earth revolt (see Luk 19:14).

Third, He is called “LORD” in Psa 2:11. This is the unique name of God, “Jehovah.” Thus “the Son” is shown to be none other than Almighty God.

The injunction, “kiss the Son,” is a metaphor for faith in the Messiah. We will deal with this Psalm again, specifically looking at the “today” in Psa 2:7 as it relates to the resurrection.

B. David’s Son, David’s Lord

“The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies Your footstool.’ The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies.” Psa 110:1–2 (emphasis added)

- “sit,” *yashab*, qal imperative: “to sit, dwell, remain, reside”
- “shall send,” *shalach*, qal imperfect: “to send forth”
- “Rule,” *radah*, qal imperative: “to tread down, subjugate, have dominion, reign, prevail against”

As in the previous Psalm, we have a conversation between the Father and the Son regarding His rule from Zion (similar passage to Isa 49:5–13). Jesus used this passage to confound His enemies in Luk 20:41–44. His question to them was, how could Messiah (Christ) be both David’s Son and Lord at the same time? They could not—or would not—answer. The only way this would be possible is if Messiah is both God and man.

Doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ

1. Jesus Christ is the eternal almighty God in human flesh. This is the Doctrine of the Hypostatic Union: undiminished deity and perfect humanity united together forever in one Person.
2. Jesus is the “*Word [that was] with God and the Word [that] was God,*” who is the Creator of all things (Joh 1:1–4). That “*Word became flesh and dwelt among us*” (Joh 1:14).
3. The very title “*Christ,*” from the Hebrew *Meshiach*, could refer only to the one and only Redeemer who was both “*a Child born*” as the seed of David, and the “*Son [Who] is given,*” the “*Mighty God*” (Isa 9:6).
4. When John says in his Gospel that he writes so that we “*might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*” (Joh 20:31), he means that we believe in His identity as the unique and only begotten God-man. The word *Christos* means “the (only) Anointed One.”
5. The prophets spoke of Him as “*the Branch*” (Hebrew, *Netzer*), from which we get “*Nazarene*” (see Isa 4:2; Isa 11:1; Jer 23:6; Jer 33:15–16; Zec 3:8; Zec 6:12; and compare Mat 2:23).
6. In both the Jeremiah passages cited above, He is called “*The Lord our righteousness.*” The Hebrew word is *YHWH, Jehovah*—used only as God’s holy name (Exo 3:14).
7. The special prophetic name for the Messiah was “*Immanuel,*” reserved for the only virgin-conceived and born Savior, which means “*God with us*” (Isa 7:14; Mat 1:23). In the Jewish tradition, a person’s name is equal to their identity.
8. When Jesus said, “*I and the Father are one*” (Joh 10:30), this could only be understood by Jews, who were raised up on the great *Shema* (the word means “Hear!” and begins the prayer of Deu 6:4 that was recited daily) as a claim of essential unity with God. Only in this way could His claim to the same reverence given the Father not be blasphemy (Joh 5:23).
9. The Jews’ first move to have Him killed was based on their understanding that He was claiming equality with almighty God (Joh 5:16–18). The people of His day understood His claim to be “*the Son of God*” (Joh 19:7) to be a claim of equality.

10. When Thomas, upon seeing Jesus after the resurrection, called Him “*my Lord and my God*” (Joh 20:29), Jesus—rather than rebuke—commended his faith and that of those “*who have not seen and yet have believed.*”
11. Paul speaks of Jesus as “*God our Savior*” four times in Titus (Tit 1:3; Tit 2:9, Tit 2:13; Tit 3:4).
12. The “*mystery of godliness*” according to Paul in 1Ti 3:16, is that “*God was manifested in the flesh.*” Godliness is letting Christ live through you (Gal 2:20), to live in the freedom of the Spirit.
13. All of the claims of Jesus Christ are summarized by Paul as “*the truth which accords with godliness*” (Tit 1:1). The implication is that any teaching that denies His deity is false.
14. In 1Ti 6:1–12, Paul exhorts Timothy to so teach and live that His words and deeds reflect that godliness.
15. Paul’s vindication of his message and ministry was the observable truth that “*Christ lives in me*” (Gal 2:20).
16. The teaching of grace and truth imparts to us, in conjunction with the indwelling Spirit, the power to live according to godliness (Tit 2:11–14). To the degree that we, as witnesses of Christ, do not reflect “*Christ in the flesh,*” we dishonor Him and put Him to open shame.
17. All too often, the missing key to living a powerful Christian life is consistent teaching regarding the Doctrine of the Present Session—the high priestly ministry—of Jesus Christ. We will deal with this later in this study.

III. David Speaks of the Coming of Jesus as God’s Uniquely Born Son, Psa 40:6–8; Heb 10:5–10; Psa 8:4–8; Heb 2:6–9

Implied in the message of the Gospel is the coming of Christ into the world. It is not surprising, therefore, that the prophets anticipated the birth of the Son of God into the world. In the case of David, we have an astounding prophecy concerning the birth of the Savior.

*“Sacrifice and offering You did not **desire**; My ears
You have **opened**. Burnt offering and sin offering
You did not require. Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; in the scroll
of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will,
O my God, and Your law is within My heart.’”*
Psa 40:6–8 (emphasis added)

- “*desire,*” *chaphatz*, qal perfect: as a permanent, divine stance, “to be satisfied permanently, to take delight in, propitiation”
- “*opened,*” *charah*, qal perfect: “to dig, to pierce (Deu 15:17; Exo 21:6), voluntary substitution”

A. The Pierced-Ear Slave

It was a mark of honor to give up one’s freedom to remain with the master. There are three great doctrinal truths contained in the above verses. Though they are stated very simply, yet they are of profound spiritual significance:

1. The Doctrine of Propitiation

The justice of God could never be satisfied by sacrifice and offering. Here, we are dealing with the precious Doctrine of Propitiation. Only the substitutionary death of the Savior could fully satisfy the wrath of God for the penalty of sin. Jesus Christ came into the world to fully satisfy the righteous demand of God on our behalf (Rom 3:25; 1Jo 2:2; 1Jo 4:10).

2. The Doctrine of Substitution

Jesus came as the willing slave of the Father to fulfill all His will. In the Hebrew, the phrase “*My ears You have opened*” could better read “My ears you have pierced.” He is referring to the custom of the “pierced-ear slave” from Exo 21:6 and Deu 15:17. In this custom, a slave who had served his time and was about to be freed could voluntarily dedicate himself to his master—out of love for him—to serve him the rest of his life. As a token of this servitude, the ear of the slave was pierced.

In the continuation of this thought, He then says, “*I have come ... to do Your will, O my God*” (Heb 10:5–7). Here, the humanity of Jesus addresses the Father, and dedicates Himself to do only His will. This is reinforced by the words of Jesus in Joh 8:29 when He said, “*I always do those things that please Him.*”

Also, the fact that He says, “*Your law is [written] within My heart,*” is confirmed by Jesus when He said, “*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill*” (Mat 5:17). It is because He totally fulfilled the Law for us that Paul can write, “*For Christ is the end [fulfillment] of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes*” (Rom 10:4).

He “became” sin for us on the cross, so that by faith in Him we could “*become the righteousness of God*” in our union with Him (2Co 5:21).

3. The Doctrine of Revelation

When He says, “*in the scroll of the book it is written of me*” (Psa 40:7), Jesus is declaring that He is the central message and theme of the entire Old Testament. This truth is confirmed by Jesus in Luk 24:27, in speaking to His disciples after

the resurrection, “beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is the living embodiment of the entire Word of God. In His earthly life, the Word of God came alive in the context of human experience, perfectly fulfilled for the first time in human history.

This passage goes on in Psa 40:9–10 to say that Messiah would proclaim the good news “in the great assembly” (the company of the saints)—that He would make known God’s “righteousness ... faithfulness ... salvation ... lovingkindness and ... truth.” What an amazing statement of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ!

B. A Body Prepared for the Cross

Now, notice how the author of Hebrews, giving us new and additional insights, uses Psalm 40:

“Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: ‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me’ ... Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.’” Heb 10:5–7

The obvious change, due to the author quoting the Septuagint (Greek) version of Psalm 40, is the change from “My ears You have pierced” to “a body You have prepared for Me” (*soma de katertiso moi*, aor. mid. ind of *katartizo*): “to provide, equip.”

Here, we have the Doctrine of the Hypostatic Union. This refers to the fact that we have the almighty and eternal God, united together with perfect, sinless humanity, in the Person of Jesus Christ. As the second member of the Godhead, the Son has always existed. However, in order to go to the cross in our place, He must have a human body. God cannot die; but by being born in a human body, Jesus Christ could go to the cross in our place and die on our behalf.

The astounding thing is that He spoke these words, “when He came into the world.” Sometime during the virgin birth in the manger, the Son spoke these words of dedication to the heavenly Father. Were these words audible to Joseph and Mary? We simply do not know.

C. Born to Die, Died to be Exalted

Much more important is that we see these words as expressing His willingness to come into the world to take our place on the cross. The Apostle Paul puts the two passages quoted above into full perspective in Phi 2:5–10. He also challenges us on how to think and live for Him:

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery [a thing to cling to] to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

D. Made Lower than Angels

*“What is man that You are **mindful** of him, and the son of man that You **visit** him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have **crowned** him with glory and honor.”*

Psa 8:4–6 (emphasis added)

- “*mindful*,” *zachar*, qal imperfect: “to remember, think on”
- “*visit*,” *phaqad*, qual imperfect: “to attend to, to provide for”
- “*crowned*,” *atar*, piel imperfect: “to exalt, coronate”

The words of this Psalm are taken by the author of the book of Hebrews (Heb 2:6–9) and applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. In addition, he gives an explanation for the reason of His condescension:

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.” Heb 2:9

The Lord of glory stepped down into our world, becoming fully man—yet without sin—in order to suffer the penalty of sin, and “*taste death*” in our place. Some have suggested that His “*taste*” was only a sampling of death. However, to quote the *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, “*The verb is used in this common idiomatic sense and means, ‘to experience something to the full.’*” The word has exactly the same meaning in Heb 6:5 and 1Pe 2:3 of those who have “*tasted*” eternal salvation.

We see, then, that David—as a prophet—foresaw both the great humiliation of Christ, as well as His ultimate exaltation.

*“You have made him to **have dominion** over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet ...”*

Psa 8:6; Heb 2:7–8 (emphasis added)

- “*have dominion,*” *mashal*, hiph. imperfect: “cause to rule”

This is the summit of the doctrinal, theological, and practical peak we are climbing.

He came into this world to die in our place. He rose from the grave to reign forever. We who are “in Christ” will share in that eternal reign, but the degree of our sharing will depend on our endurance, in faith, here and now (2Ti 2:11–13). Don’t waste your time here and now. It is “*through faith and patience*” that we inherit the promises (Heb 6:12).

IV. **David Speaks about the Life and Ministry of Christ and His Rejection by Israel**

In the Psalms, David anticipated four major phases of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. **The Cleansing of the Temple, Psa 69:9; Joh 2:17**

“... *zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on Me.*” (emphasis added)

- “*eaten,*” *achal*, qal perfect: “to consume, devour, ingest”

When Jesus cast the moneychangers out of the temple, the disciples remembered the words of this Psalm. This occurred on the first Passover feast of Jesus’ ministry (Joh 2:13). Again, before the last Passover of His ministry, Jesus cleansed the temple as recorded in Mat 21:12–13; Mar 11:15–17; Luk 19:45–46.

These events show His passion for purity, both in the physical temple, and in our lives, as the “*temple of the Holy Spirit*” (1Co 3:16; 1Co 6:19–20).

The last phrase of the Psalm above is used by Paul in Rom 15:2–3 in challenging us to set ourselves aside and seek the spiritual edification of those around us.

B. **Jesus’ Offer of the True Manna, Psa 78:24; Joh 6:32–33**

“[He] *rained down manna on them to eat, and [gave] them of the bread of heaven.*” Psa 78:24 (emphasis added)

- “*eat,*” *achal*, qal indicative: “to consume, devour, ingest”

His opponents quoted this verse to Jesus after the feeding of the five thousand. In essence, they were saying that Moses (who they understood to be the subject who gave the manna) had done much greater works than He had done.

Jesus corrects their error, saying that it was His Father—not Moses—who gave the manna. Much more than this, the heavenly Father was now offering them “*the true bread from heaven*” (see Joh 6:32–33). He goes on to repeatedly identify Himself as “*the bread of life*” (Joh 6:35). “*I Am*” equals *YHWH*.

In this amazing passage, Jesus declares that those who believe in Him would never be “*cast out*” (Joh 6:37), would be “*raise[d] up at the last day*” (Joh 6:39–40, 44), would have “*everlasting life*” (Joh 6:47) and “*live forever*” (Joh 6:51). No man comes to Him by his own merit or motivation. The Father draws men to Him by His grace (Joh 6:44, 65), and that drawing power is the message of the cross (Joh 12:32). Tragically, there are those who will not be drawn to Him (Mat 23:37–39).

C. His Ominous Turn to Parables, Psa 78:2; Mat 13:34–35

*“I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings of old ...”
Psa 78:2 (emphasis added)*

- “*I will utter,*” *gabah*, hiphil, cohortative: “to pour out, to gush forth”

This verse is quoted in Mat 13:34–35, as Jesus shifted His teaching ministry to the parabolic method. The reason for this approach was explained in Mat 13:9–15, when the disciples asked Him why He had changed His teaching style. The use of parables was a response to the increasing hardness and hostility of His listeners. It was designed to conceal the truth from those whose souls were in the process of hardening against the truth, but those who had “*ears to hear,*” due to submission to the Spirit, would understand the truths being conveyed.

D. His Identification of Himself as the Chief Cornerstone

*“The stone which the builders rejected has become the
chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous
in our eyes.” Psa 118:22–23 (emphasis added)*

- “*rejected,*” *ma-as*, qal perfect: “to reject, refuse, cast off, to thrust from you with disgust”

Toward the very end of His ministry, as the hatred of the Jewish priests and leaders reached its peak, Jesus used this quote to confront them with their hardness and unbelief. Using the parable of the wicked vinedressers (Mat 21:33–45; Mar 12:1–12; Luk 20:9–19), Jesus exposed the murderous hypocrisy of the religious leaders.

His conclusion left no doubt that they were guilty of rejecting Him—the “*chief cornerstone.*” That His point struck home is clear from the fact that in every passage where this is recorded, we find the conclusion, “*they knew He had spoken this parable against them.*” Their response to His clear rebuke was only to become more

determined to kill Him. We will find another great truth from Psalm 118 in the next section.

V. **David Speaks about the Crucifixion of Christ, Psa 22:1; Psa 118:24–27**

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Psa 22:1 (emphasis added)

- *“forsaken,” azabh*, qal perfect: “to leave forlorn, break ties with, to cast off, reject and abandon” (an active action of the Father withdrawing from the Son)
- In Mat 27:46, *“forsaken,” egkataleipo*, aor. indicative: “to desert, to forsake in time of greatest need” is the same word as in Heb 10:25!

A. **The Anguish of the Crucifixion**

These words of agony, uttered by Jesus on the cross, are filled with pathos and pain. Yet, in this brief cry is contained great instruction for us about what was happening on the cross.

First of all, we should consider that reciting the first verse of a passage was the way in ancient times to direct people’s attention to the entire context. It’s as if Jesus’ anguished cry is saying, “Read the 22nd Psalm.”

This Psalm is part of a trilogy made up of Psalms 22, 23, and 24—each of which speaks of Jesus as Shepherd. In Psalm 22, He is revealed as the *“good shepherd”* (Joh 10:10–11), laying down His life for the sheep. In Psalm 23, He is the *“great Shepherd”* (Heb 13:20–21), watching over His sheep and providing for their needs. And finally, in Psalm 24, we see Him as the *“Chief Shepherd”* (1Pe 5:4), who is coming to reward His sheep for faithful service. David, being a prophet, foresaw the benefits of Christ’s finished work. He lived in light of that truth—an Old Testament saint who lived as a New Testament believer is to live!

As we look a bit deeper into the Psalm 22, we find many interesting and edifying truths related to the crucifixion.

1. The answer to *“Why have You forsaken Me”* is found in Psa 22:3. *“But You are Holy.”* At this time, Jesus “was made sin for us” (2Co 5:21). God the Father imputed our sins to Christ, in order that they might not be imputed to us (2Co 5:19). The penalty of sin is death—separation from God (Gen 2:17; Rom 6:23). Jesus Christ on the cross bore that penalty on our behalf.
2. The purpose of the crucifixion is also revealed in Psa 22:6, in the phrase *“But I am a worm, and no man ...”* Here the word for *“worm”* is *tola*, which in itself means a “grub.” However, this word is often used as a substitute synonym for the word *shani*, which spoke of the “purple grub,” from which the robes of royalty were dyed. Christ died in our place to provide for believers the robes of royalty.

According to *Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies* (p. 489), the word could convey either the idea of a worm associated with something putrid, or with the crimson or scarlet dye. Thus, on the cross, Christ became “putrid” in taking on our sins, that we might be imputed with His righteousness, and be clothed with the crimson of His blood.

3. David also anticipated the very words the mocking priests and leaders would use (Psa 22:7–8; Mat 27:43) as they stood at the foot of the cross.
4. The piercing of the hands and feet (Psa 22:16) and the soldiers gambling for His garments (Psa 22:18; Mat 27:35) are also recorded in this Psalm—a thousand years before the fact.
5. Finally, the victory of the cross begins with the words “*You have answered Me*” in Psa 22:21. This would be the moment when Jesus cried out, “*It is finished!*” (Joh 19:30). In the verses that follow (Psa 22:22–31), we see the formation of a great assembly of believers who would turn to the Lord from all the ends of the earth (Psa 22:27) in worship, praise, and service.

B. The Victory of the Cross

“This is the day the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it ... Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar ... Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.” Psa 118:24–29

Although Psa 118:24 is often quoted, its context is usually ignored. The day the Lord made, that we are to rejoice in, was the day of the crucifixion. We bless and praise the name of the Lord Jesus who came to be our sacrifice, and was bound on the cross—the altar of our sacrifice. It is due to His judgment in our place that we can rejoice in that day. By His victory on the cross, we can proclaim the goodness, grace, and mercy of the Lord to the whole world. How amazing that God revealed all these things to David, who recorded them for our benefit and blessing!

VI. David Speaks about the Resurrection of Christ, Psa 2:7–12; Psa 16:8–11; Act 2:34–35; with Psa 110:1–4

A. Victory over Death and the Grave

“For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.” Psa 16:10 (also Act 2:34–35)

In this text, it appears that David is looking to his own resurrection. This impression is especially strong when we read Psa 16:7–11. I doubt if most readers would see more in the text than that, until they read the words of Peter on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

The full passage in which Peter interprets this Psalm follows the statement from Joe 2:32, “*Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*” In order to enforce this offer of eternal life, Peter turns to Psalm 16. Read Act 2:22–36 to get the full picture. Five points stand out:

1. God testified to the identity of Jesus Christ as Savior through many great signs and wonders (Act 2:22).
2. His crucifixion—though a crime on their part—was, in fact, the predetermined will of God. (By the way, here we see the sovereignty of God and human freedom and accountability.)
3. He was raised from the dead, since it was impossible for death to contain him, as was prophesied by David in Psa 16:24–28.
4. As a prophet, David understood that the Messiah—his descendant—was referred to in the words revealed to him (Act 2:20–32).
5. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to which they were witnesses, was proof that Christ had ascended and was seated in power and authority at the right hand of God the Father (Act 2:33–36, which includes a quote from Psa 110:4, which we’ll see soon).

B. The Firstborn from the Dead

“I will declare the decree: the LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’” Psa 2:7 (also Act 13:33)

Here, the Father speaks to the Son, declaring that on a specific day, a decree had been given with all the authority of Heaven, that the Son was begotten. What was that day, and to what was He begotten? We would be at a loss to interpret this without the authoritative voice of Paul in his message in Antioch in Acts 13.

The full context is from Act 13:13–41 (see v. 22), but we will focus on Act 13:30–35. Again, as with Peter, Paul is making a case for the resurrection beginning with the words in Act 13:30, “*But God raised Him from the dead.*” He will drive this point in like a “*well driven nail*” as Solomon said (Ecc 12:11), hammering home the truth in Act 3:30, Act 3:33–34, and Act 3:37.

The interesting thing is, he uses Psa 2:7, “*You are My Son, today I have begotten you,*” to prove his point. The Spirit of God—or “*the Spirit of Christ*” as Peter said (1Pe 1:11)—working through the Apostle Paul, interprets His own revelation from one thousand years earlier. And this proves to us two great truths:

1. First, the “*today*” refers to resurrection morning.
2. Second, the “*begotten*” refers not to His coming into the world by virgin birth. Rather, this is the second “*birth*,” as the humanity of Christ is resurrected and

glorified forever (see Joe 2:32). This is why Paul also refers to Him as the “*firstborn from the dead*” (Col 1:18, see also Rom 8:29). This not only speaks of Him as the first to be resurrected, but includes His rank and status as “*the heir of all things*” (Heb 1:2).

It is interesting that both Peter, in Acts 2, and Paul, here in Acts 13, quote from the Psalms of David to confirm that Jesus was raised from the dead. It was only by resurrection that He could become the recipient of “*the sure mercies of David*” (Isa 55:3; Act 13:34). This refers, among other things, to the eternal “*kingdom ... house ... [and] throne*” which David’s “seed” would reign over (2Sa 7:12–13, 2Sa 7:16). Not only would He be a King forever, He would be High Priest of an eternal priesthood.

C. A Priest Forever of the Order of Melchizedek

“The LORD has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’” Psa 110:4 (also Heb 5:6)

Although Peter quoted the first verse from Psalm 110 in his message on the day of Pentecost (Act 2:34–35), it fell to the author of the book of Hebrews to expound Psa 110:4 for us.

In Heb 5:5–6, the author links Psa 2:7, which speaks of Jesus’ resurrection, with Psa 110:4, where—at that same moment—the Father proclaimed the resurrected Son “*a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*” At the resurrection, Jesus was not only coronated King forever, but also Priest forever.

There is far too little teaching today on what is known as the Doctrine of the Present Session of Christ. This speaks of His ministry from the right hand of God on behalf of all His people. We rightly emphasize the work of Christ for us on the cross. However, spiritual maturity demands that we grow beyond the basics, and lay hold of the advanced doctrines of His role in sustaining and sanctifying His saints:

1. First, His priesthood involves interceding on behalf of each and every child of God (Rom 8:34), declared in a passage that identifies each of us as “*more than conquerors through Him who loved us*” (Rom 8:37).
2. Next, in addition to His prayers on our behalf, He stands before the throne of God as the defense advocate for us when we sin (1Jo 2:1).
3. Finally, He is High Priest over a “*royal priesthood*” (1Pe 2:5, 9), unique in all of human history.

D. Jesus’ Priesthood and Spiritual Maturity

The role of Jesus Christ as Priest is central to the entire book of Hebrews. The author’s goal is to get believers to grow up in their faith (see Heb 5:12–6:3). Salvation is the result of understanding and believing in the work of Christ on the cross. However, spiritual maturity requires “*leaving the ... elementary principles of Christ*”

(Heb 6:1), and moving on to the “*solid food*” or “strong meat” (Heb 5:14) of the present session of Christ.

This truth is brought home beginning in Heb 5:6, the author’s first quote of Psa 110:4, all the way through Heb 10:39. His mind throughout is riveted on our High Priest, “*of whom we have much to say*” (Heb 5:11). Six times he refers to this same verse in Psalm 110 (Heb 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:17, 21; 9:19–21). Consider how many things Christ is engaged in on our behalf as our High Priest:

1. He is both the Priest who makes the perfect offering, and the offering for our sins (Heb 5:7–10).
2. As “*High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek,*” He is both the “*strong consolation*” and the “*anchor of the soul*” by which we continue to “*lay hold of the hope set before us*” (Heb 6:17–20). In other words, the grounds of practical sanctification are found in understanding the Doctrine of Eternal Security and the assurance that eternal reward is available to those who press on to maturity.
3. As High Priest, Jesus inaugurates the New Covenant, by which the ministry of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit makes practical sanctification possible (Heb 7:25; 9:14–15; 10:11–18).
4. It is by ongoing faith in the high priestly ministry of Christ that Church Age believers are enabled to grow to maturity and effective service in the Body of Christ (Heb 10:19–25).
5. It is on the grounds of Christ’s high priesthood that we have the potential and perspective of gaining eternal reward and standing by our persistent faith and service through trials and hardships (Heb 10:32–39).

The Present Session of Christ is a vast, but sadly ignored, area of Bible doctrine. Too often, believers are told by their pastors to live sanctified lives, but they are never given the spiritual tools to build such a life. Those tools are found in the precious Doctrine of the Present Session of Christ—His daily ministry to us from the right hand of God.

The Doctrine of the Present Session of Christ

1. The purpose of the Present Session of Jesus Christ is stated in 1Co 15:25, “*For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.*” From His ascension to His second coming, Jesus Christ reigns at the Father’s right hand, as King-Priest of the order of Melchizedek. This is the ministry of Christ as the Great Shepherd (Heb 13:20–21).

2. This was foretold by David in Psa 110:1–2, “*The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies Your footstool ... rule [reign] in the midst of Your enemies.*”
3. This rule of conquest over His enemies is co-terminous with His high priestly ministry to His Body—the Church. Whereas the cross was the strategic victory in the great spiritual conflict of the ages, the “mopping up” operation is through the Church and, ultimately, the Tribulation saints.
4. Both the reign and the priestly service of the risen Christ are to be reflected in the lives of His people. In Rom 5:17, Paul says that we are to “*reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.*” Later, Paul adds, “*that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Rom 5:21). Note that he says “*might reign,*” which is a subjunctive, indicating the potential and purpose of God, that grace reigning in our lives would exemplify “*eternal life.*”
5. Jesus made the point that the key to His earthly life and ministry was that the Son only did what He observed the Father doing (Joh 5:19–23). In the context, this showed how Jesus’ view of the Father differed radically from the Jews’. They thought God was still resting (Gen 2:2) and, therefore, exalted the Sabbath above all else. Jesus saw that His Father was now working on a new creation; therefore, He “broke” the Sabbath by healing on it (see Joh 5:9, Joh 5:16–17). Jesus did what the Father was doing.
6. What do you see Jesus doing now? Can you articulate it? Do you imitate it? This is the key that determines the quality of our lives as believers in Jesus Christ.
7. The following are seven Present-Session works of the Lord Jesus Christ in his reign as Priest-King:
 - a. He is interceding for God’s people (Rom 8:34).
 - b. He acts as Advocate, defending those who fall (1Jo 2:1–2). This is an extension of His work of propitiation (Rom 3:25; 2Co 5:21) and is the purpose of the Mercy Seat, to which we are called (Heb 4:16; Heb 9:5). The words “*propitiation*” and “*mercy seat*” come from the same root word.
 - c. He is working, through His Word and Spirit, sanctifying and purifying each and every believer (Heb 2:11; Heb 10:10, Heb 10:14; see Joh 17:17–19 and Joh 5:17).
 - d. He works from His Throne in Heaven to reproduce in us His resurrection life (Rom 8:10–11, Rom 8:14; Heb 5:5–11)—empowering, illuminating, guiding (Eph 1:17–20; Eph 3:16–21; Joh 16:13–14).
 - e. This resurrection life revolves around three spiritual virtues: faith, hope, and love (1Co 13:13; Rom 5:1–5; Col 1:3–6; 1Th 1:3–5; Heb 6:10–12). The goal is conforming us to the image of the Son, to move us from faith to love, but the bridge is hope—that is, the assurance of the promises of inheritance (see Abraham’s explanatory example in Heb 6:13–20).
 - i. Faith: What Christ has done. “*It is finished,*” Joh 19:30.
 - ii. Hope: What Christ will do. “*Faithful is He who promises ...*” Heb 10:23.

- iii. Love: What Christ is doing. “My Father works,” Joh 5:17, “*for He must reign,*” 1Co 15:25.
- f. We grow from faith to hope by learning of the Present Session of Christ (see Heb 5:9–14) and of the inheritance promises (Heb 6:12). The leading (hope) of Jesus Christ in victory, compels us to serve in the three areas of service which reflect the present ministry of Jesus Christ (1Co 15:57–58, see Heb 10:19–25), where priesthood, ambassadorship, and ministry are portrayed in the three exhortations. Compare how these tie in with 1Th 1:3–10 in the Thessalonian believers’ lives.
- g. He reigns (Psa 2:6, Psa 2:9; Psa 110:1–4; Rom 5:17; 1Co 15:25; Heb 2:5–18). Christ is now seated at God’s right hand, reigning in the midst of His enemies.

Point: To the degree He reigns in us now, we are reigning with Him—and to that degree, we shall reign (*cf.*, 2Ti 2:3, 2Ti 2:12).

Do we submit to—or reject—His reign in us?

VII. David Speaks about Salvation by Grace through Faith, Psa 32:1–2, Psa 32:5–6, Psa 32:8–11

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity ...” Psa 32:1–2; Rom 4:5–8

A. Paul Quotes David to Teach Justification by Faith

It is most interesting that Paul, in Rom 4:1–8, joins Abraham and David as two witnesses to the truth of the message he was proclaiming. Many of the Scribes and Pharisees opposed Paul’s preaching. Yet, he was able—by using the Old Testament Scriptures—to prove the point that no one is saved by works, but only by faith alone.

By using these two “heroes of the faith,” Paul is following the biblical principle that every fact is to be established “*by the mouth of two or three witnesses*” (2Co 13:1). In the course of his ministry, Paul marshaled a host of witnesses from the prophets to confirm the Gospel message that he preached.

B. Paul’s Two-Sided Argument

As referred to in Romans 4, Paul’s use of Abraham and David as spiritual heroes illustrates two important sides of our “*so great ... salvation*” (Heb 2:3): the imputation of righteousness and the non-imputation of sinfulness. Because Abraham believed God, the righteousness of God was “imputed” to him. The word *logizomai* is a bookkeeping term that means “to place to one’s account.” Abraham’s spiritual account with God was credited with God’s own righteousness. This is what happens when we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

In the case of David, we have the other side of the coin, so to speak. Here, David rejoices in the non-imputation of his sins. Because they have been forgiven, they are not placed to his account. As Paul affirms in 2Co 5:19:

*“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself,
not imputing their trespasses to them ...”*

C. As We are Justified by Faith, so We are to Live

Psalm 32 is one of the great penitential Psalms of David. The chief ones among these repentance Psalms are Psalms 6, 32, 38, and 51. As we read these rich songs of repentance, we find David confessing his sinfulness and crying out to God for forgiveness and mercy in light of his failures.

In Heb 10:19–25, we have another example of faith, hope, and love occurring together in the same passage (emphasis added):

- *“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of **faith**,”* representing the priesthood of the believer.
- *“Let us hold fast the confession of our **hope**,”* representing the ambassadorship of the believer.
- *“Let us consider one another in order to stir up **love** and good works,”* representing the ministry of the believer.

However, we also find that his assurance comes from the security he knows is his, due to salvation *“by grace ... through faith”* (Eph 2:8). In the aftermath of great sin (possibly the Bathsheba incident), David—under severe discipline—is brought to confession of his sin (Psa 32:3–5).

His assurance that *“You forgave the iniquity of my sin”* (Psa 32:5b) is grounded in the truth of his salvation (Psa 32:1–2). Here, David declares three great truths about salvation to which he clings:

1. The totality of his sin is forgiven.
2. All his sin has been *“covered.”* The Hebrew word *kaphar* speaks of atonement, the covering of sin by the blood sacrifice.
3. Because of atonement, he knows the Lord will not impute sin to him. Here, the Hebrew word *chashab* means “to lay to one’s account, to charge to one’s debt.”

The progression of the Psalm is rich in instruction and encouragement regarding the practical matter of sin in the life of a believer. It reveals the often-ragged path and “trial and error” struggles we experience on the way to personal sanctification:

1. The security and assurance of our salvation (Psa 32:1–2)
2. Divine discipline aimed at confession and correction (Psa 32:4–5)
3. The “godliness” of genuine repentance (Psa 32:6–7, see 2Co 7:9–10)

4. The guidance, contentment, and growth that results (Psa 32:8–11)

D. David Lived “by Grace ... through Faith”

David understood that the way of salvation was also the way of life for the believer. How tragic that so many believers today do not understand this fundamental truth. In Col 2:6, Paul lays down the simple yet powerful principle that undergirds the Christian life (emphasis added):

*“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus
the Lord, so walk in Him.”*

The use of “As ... so” is like an equal sign, indicating that both our initial salvation and our on-going sanctification are “by grace ... through faith” (Eph 2:8). This is never grounds for a life of license to sin because “faith work[s] through love” (Gal 5:6b), and love is the inevitable fruit of the Spirit of God in the life of the trusting believer (Rom 5:5; Gal 5:22). It is only as we live by faith—as we were saved by faith—that we are enabled to “walk worthy” of our calling in Christ (Eph 4:1), the word *axios*, here, means “to balance out.”

The Apostle Paul used David to argue for justification by faith alone. David can also be utilized to establish that faith is the only means for living the Christian life. He proves the point that “the just shall live by faith” (Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38).

VIII. David Speaks about the Life of Faith for the Believer, Psa 34:7, 9–22; 37:1–11; 103:1–5

*“Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the
LORD delivers him out of them all.” Psa 34:19*

David had a realistic perspective regarding the life of faith. He did not expect a “prosperity-gospel” type of existence. He knew that the world is broken through sin, and that many evils—both spiritual and physical—must be confronted and overcome in life. In fact, his life illustrates a point the “name-it-and-claim-it” crowd do not understand: without great opposition, there can be no great overcoming. The truth is declared in Rom 8:37 that:

*“Yet in all these things we are more than
conquerors through Him who loved us.”*

And while this is true positionally of every one who is “in Christ,” the practical enjoyment and experience of it is realized only by those who “love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom 8:28b). Notice how David anticipates three great spiritual realities.

A. Security of Faith Produces Stability in Life, Psa 103:1–5

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” Psa 103:2

As a believer, David often reflected on the benefits of his salvation. By reviewing what God had done for him eternally, David gained rich blessing in the present moment, whatever his circumstances may have been. Six great benefits of salvation are listed in the first five verses of Psalm 103:

Note: Faith → Security; Hope → Contentment (*“full assurance,”* Col 2:2); Love → Virtue
No Security = No Stability; No Stability = No Spiritual Growth

1. The forgiveness of all of his sins: past, present, and future
This truth is amplified in Psa 104:12–13. The heavenly Father has removed all our sins from us, judging them in Christ. It is the assurance of this truth positionally that makes cleansing for fellowship and usefulness possible (1Jo 1:7, 1Jo 1:9; 2Ti 2:20–21).
2. The healing of all his diseases
Believers still suffer disease. The prophet Elijah died of a disease (2Ki 13:14). The point is that, by faith, we are purified and sanctified through these trials, to ultimately enjoy greater “healing” and blessing in eternity. This is the point of the same claim in Isa 53:5. How great will be the riches of those believers in Heaven who faced their diseases by faith and used them to grow in grace and truth! See 2Co 12:7–10.
3. The redemption of his life from ruin
If not for the grace of God, David’s sins would have ruined him. So it is with us all. Yet, God has a plan by which He works for us from the grounds of our salvation, using even sin and evil to refine and purify His saints for eternity (1Co 6:9–11).
4. The crown of God’s infinite lovingkindness and mercy
David was not only a king but, according to God, *“the highest of the kings of the earth”* (see Psa 89:20–28). His richest crown was not physical, but spiritual, and belongs to every believer. This is even more true of those who are “in Christ,” in this age. We are *“a royal priesthood”* (1Pe 2:9), with the potential for many eternal crowns—if only we will live by faith (1Co 9:25; 2Ti 4:7–8; Jam 1:12).
5. The continual supply of satisfaction and fulfillment
There are both present and future delights to be enjoyed in the kingdom of God. When we choose to live in the light of His present lavish provisions (Rom 14:17), we will be assured of even greater privileges in Heaven (Psa 16:11).
6. The renewal of his inner life—like that of the eagle
As Paul learned by experience, *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day”* (2Co

4:16). All the ill effects of the sin of Adam—age, illness, trials, and general wear and tear—all serve to strengthen, refine, and purify the believer who chooses to live by faith.

B. Contentment Produces Courage, Psalm 16

What is true contentment? A soul having settled assurance regarding the future!

“I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.” Psa 16:8

- “moved,” *mavat*, niph. imperfect: “waiver, shaken, upheaval”

When we build our lives on the world around us, we have no contentment and no security. The reason for this is that, deep in our souls we know, *“the world is passing away”* (1Jo 2:17). But when we live our lives in the light of eternity, keeping our eyes on Jesus Christ, we find an inner contentment. This produces great courage in life. The reason for this is that God and His kingdom cannot be shaken. When we live daily *“seek[ing] those things which are above”* (Col 3:1), we find an inner contentment, even in the midst of difficult relationships and circumstances.

In Psalm 16, David gives us three places to begin:

1. Love:
Learn to **love** and value other believers (Psa 16:3).

“As for the saints who are on the earth, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.”

David learned to see his fellow believers through the eyes of the Lord. The ability to accept others just as they are, giving them the same grace God give to us, is a huge first step toward true contentment. We need to learn to *“love without hypocrisy”* (Rom 12:9).

2. Hope:
Learn to be content with your lot in life (Psa 16:6).

*“The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;
yes, I have a good inheritance ...”*

God, our heavenly Father, allots to each of us our temporal inheritance. Scripture is filled with examples of those who, by failing to be content, lost their inheritance. Esau sold his birthright (Gen 25:31–33) and Reuben, due to his infidelity, lost the double-portion to Ephraim (Gen 49:3–4; 1Ch 5:1).

However, we also see those who, by faithfulness with the little they had, gained much more. Levi, originally under a curse (Gen 49:5–7), but by an act of faithfulness (Exo 32:26–28), later became the priestly tribe (Num 1:47–50). Judah, who was guilty of great sin (Genesis 38), yet by faithfulness became the tribe of the Messiah (Gen 49:8–12; 1Ch 5:2). If we learn to be content with our lot in life and live faithfully within it, God is able to give us “much more.”

3. Faith:

Learn that fellowship with God is true fulfillment (Psa 16:11).

“You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

God will always lead those who are willing to follow. And those who seek fellowship with Him daily will know the deep and lasting joys that He alone can give. As a fellow-soldier once said, “You never lose, when you let God choose.” How right he was!

C. Virtue is the Path to Victory

“The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.” Psa 34:7

David learned, often through failure, that virtue leads to victory. When he speaks of “*the fear of the LORD*” (Psa 34:11), he is referring to a reverential trust that leads to obedience. Knowing “*the fear of the LORD*” affects how we live (2Co 5:10–11).

My father was a very strict man, and his discipline was severe. Though I feared him, I greatly respected and loved him. This is a relationship that we should maintain even more with God.

In Psalm 34, we can find some very simple, yet practical and powerful, lessons which lead to virtue, and then to victory:

1. Praise Him before the world (Psa 34:1–3).
2. Let your trials drive you to Him in prayer (Psa 34:4–6).
3. Live in the conviction of His watch-care (Psa 34:7–10).
4. Learn the power of a virtuous life (Psa 34:11–18).
5. Press on to the victory of the faith-rest life (Psa 34:19–22).

As we have seen in other studies, there are five words in the Hebrew for faith. These five words can be used to illustrate five stages of spiritual growth (these are illustrations, so don’t become too rigid about them). These five words, and five stages, are illustrated in the five points from Psalm 34. These principles are worthy of much study and application. However, by way of conclusion, I will touch on them only briefly.

Conclusion, Phi 3:12–14

1. The first step of growth for every believer is the ability to trust God with the simplicity of a child. The word **amen** contains the idea of leaning on a support—a staff. The first outward effect of such faith is a witness to the world that we are under the care of our heavenly Father, and He will never fail us. This is the faith of the spiritual child (1Jo 2:12–13), which honors Him (Psa 34:1–3).
2. The next stage of growth is into young adulthood, what we might call spiritual adolescence. The Hebrew word **batach**, usually translated “trust,” is often used as a wrestling term, to “cast down” your opponent. The New Testament concept is found in 1Pe 5:7, “*casting all your care upon Him.*” In other words, we let our fears drive us to faith (Psa 34:4–6).
3. The third phase of growth is when we arrive at the settled conviction that He is our guardian-shepherd (Psa 34:7–10). The word **chasah**, means “to flee for refuge, to hope,” and is the word translated “trust” in Psa 11:1, which is connected to the phrase “*flee as a bird to your mountain.*” Where David’s enemies urged him to flee in fear, he chose to “flee to the Rock of his salvation.” We might consider this stage as arriving at a level of spiritual maturity. Here, the believer is ready for the “strong meat” of the Word (Heb 5:12).
4. However, maturity is a point along the way—not the ultimate goal. We mature that we might become “*good soldier[s] of Christ Jesus*” (2Ti 2:3). As we enter into the virtuous life (Psa 34:11–18), we will be strongly resisted by the enemy of our souls. Here, the word **yaqal** comes into play. In Job 13:15, this word is translated “trust” (or “hope” in NASB). It is a word that implies struggle, spiritual combat, and the need for binding up of wounds gained honorably in battle. We must go on from maturity to become a spiritual warrior, engaged in the honorable combat of a life of virtue.
5. Finally, we come to what we might call the status of “hero of the faith.” We often use this term for those recorded in Scripture who, through great endurance of faith, have a great impact on the world around them. The final Hebrew word for faith is **qawah**, a word that means “to wait, to be established, steadfast.” It pictures long-term faith over the long haul, and is translated “wait” on the Lord in Isa 40:31.

In Psa 34:19–22, we find the steadfast believer, pressing on through afflictions and trials, overcoming adverse conditions and hateful people and, in the end, finding “*no condemnation*” (Rom 8:1). This is the life-long goal we should all seek. It is best portrayed by the Apostle Paul, who said of himself, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

*“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected;
but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ
Jesus has also laid hold of Me.” Phi 3:12*

It is my prayer that this study may encourage and strengthen you to “*imitate those who by faith and patience inherit the promises*” (Heb 6:12).

The Prize

If what seemed afar so grand
Turns to nothing in your hand,
On again, for virtue lies
In the struggle, not the prize!

~ Author Unknown