



CWR/PTM

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

# BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

PSALMS 61-89

Week 4



# Impeachment Trial

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DAY 22

Psalm 82

What “trial of the century” caught your attention?  
Was the accused guilty as far you could tell?

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1. Who were these would-be “gods” (vs. 1, 6)?
  2. What was God’s “beef” with them (vs. 2-5)?  
What mistaken assumption did they have (vs. 6-7)?
  3. Why is God so concerned about those with the least power?
  4. On what basis will God judge the nations of the earth (v. 8)?
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1. How do you treat the poor?
  2. Have you fallen prey to the myth of invincibility and done something stupid, or taken over a divine prerogative?
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*The term “gods” (v. 1) here refers to unjust judges (see Ps 58:1), who lack moral discernment and compassion for the poor and who are themselves sentenced to die.*

## **OPENING**

up to the Word

## **DIGGING**

into the Word

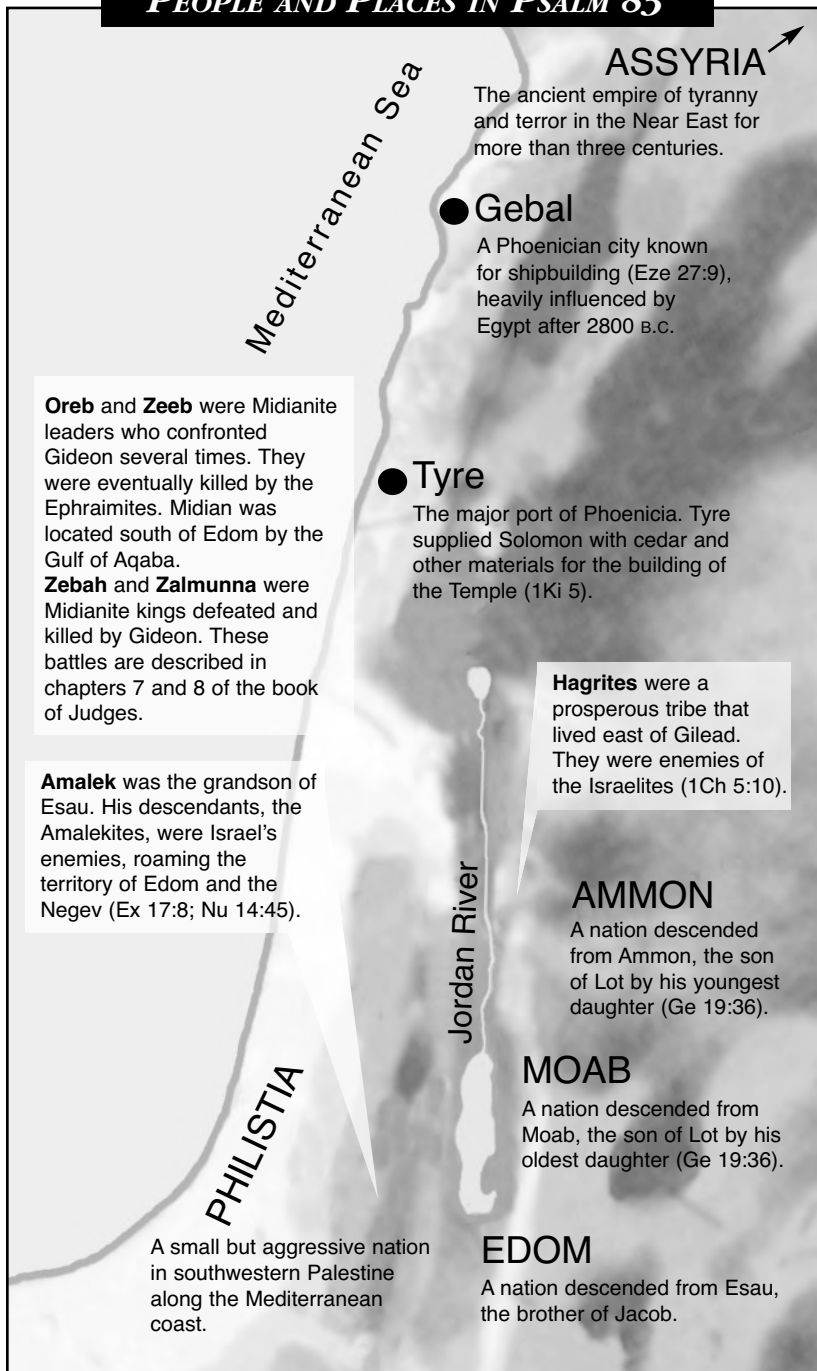
## **LIVING**

out the Word

## **WINDOW**

on the Word

## PEOPLE AND PLACES IN PSALM 83



# A Blast From the Past

DAY 23

## Psalm 83

What war, past or present, interests you? Do you have a connection to that war?

1. What was this psalmist's request (v. 1)? How did he try to get God's attention (vs. 2-3)?
2. Who was ganging up against Israel, and why (vs. 6-8)?
3. Why do you think Asaph would invoke such a "blast from the past"? (a) the dark days of the Judges were the glory (and gory) years, (b) this time God will blast away and wipe out their memory, (c) this is a just war.
4. How did Asaph want God to handle Israel's enemies (vs. 9-18)?
5. How did Jesus teach us to pray for our enemies (Lk 6:27-36)?

1. What do you make of Asaph's prayer of cursing? When, if ever, do you pray like Asaph? Like Jesus?
2. Even though Asaph was angry, does he trust God to deal with his enemies, or does he take things into his own hands? What can we learn from his example?
3. If people were ganging up on you, what would you do? What would you ask God to do?

*The **defeat of the Hagarites** (v. 6; see 1Ch 5:10) and those from Gebal, Philistia and Tyre (v. 7; see Jos 13:1-7) fueled the desire for revenge on Israel. The names of Midian,... Sisera and Jabin,... Endor,... Oreb and Zeeb,... Zebah and Zalmunna (vs. 9-11) invoke the period of the Judges (Jdg 4:1-23; 7:1-8:21), when God raised up deliverers to rescue Israel from one crisis after another.*

### OPENING

up to the Word

### DIGGING

into the Word

### LIVING

out the Word

### WINDOW

on the Word

## Best Seat in the House

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Psalm 84

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Of all the places you've lived, which one holds the happiest memories for you? Of all the places you've worshiped, which one brought you closer to God?

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

1. Why was the psalmist so excited about where God lives (v. 2)?
2. How and why does he feel so at home in God's presence (v. 4)? Why would he rather spend just one day there rather than a thousand days someplace else (v. 10)?
3. What blessings come to those who know and trust God (vs. 11-12)?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. When you worship, how do you feel? (a) safe, (b) fearful, (c) guilty, (d) vulnerable, (e) bored, (f) excited, (g) in God's presence.
2. Do you feel "at home" praying and listening to God alone, in a small group of friends and family, or in a huge building with architecture that suggests it is a "holy" place?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*Like Psalm 42, this one is also of or about the **sons of Korah** (see 1Ch 26:1-19), who were assigned as musicians and gatekeepers before and after the Temple was built. Korah, a first cousin of Moses and Aaron, led an ill-fated rebellion against Moses (see Nu 16). The **Valley of Baca** (v. 6; the word means "balsam trees") is where God gave David, the shield and anointed one (v. 9), victory over the Philistines (see 2Sa 5:22-25) and it became a favorite route of pilgrims to Zion.*

# Don't Go Away Mad

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DAY 25

## Psalm 85

What things (or people) stir up both your anger and your love? With family, which usually lasts longer—your anger or your love?

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**1.** What was going on here in the life of Israel? Is it fair to blame a people's fortunes or misfortunes on God (v. 1)? Why or why not?

**2.** Did God remain angry with Israel (vs. 2-3)?

**3.** What "revival," "salvation," "peace," "righteousness" and "glory" in the land was the psalmist talking about? Whose "steps" would bring this about (v. 13)?

**4.** What reminded the psalmist that God's anger does not last forever, but his love does (vs. 7-13)? How will the psalmist respond?

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**1.** Can you trust God to forgive you?

**2.** How is divine anger and love different from human anger and love?

**3.** How do you respond to God's mercy toward you?

### **OPENING**

up to the Word

### **DIGGING**

into the Word

### **LIVING**

out the Word

## Why God Should Answer Me

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Psalm 86

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

How do you know that your parents, your spouse or your kids love you?

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**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** In what sense was King David “poor and needy” (v. 1)?

**2.** What was David lacking? What was he asking God to give him? (a) safety and security, (b) forgiveness and mercy, (c) strength and skill, (d) instruction and guidance, (e) confirmation and favor.

**3.** What or who was David running from or toward (vs. 2, 7, 14, 16, 17)?

**4.** How did David’s prayer demonstrate that he was a man after God’s own heart (Ac 13:22)?

**5.** How did David try to convince God to answer his prayer (vs. 5-10)?

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**LIVING**  
out the Word

**1.** How do you know God loves *you*? How do you know *anything* about God?

**2.** Why should God answer *your* prayers?

**3.** What currently divides your heart? If you were to receive an “undivided heart,” what priorities would God have to rearrange?

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**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*Strikingly, each petition in this psalm is followed by reasons **why that prayer should be answered**. The use of “for” makes the rationale explicit in several instances.*



## ***GOD OF THE PSALMS***

### **According to Psalms . . .**

**God is . . .**

Creator of the world	The heavens, the moon and the stars are “the work of your fingers” (8:3). “He set the earth on its foundations” (104:5).
All powerful	“The voice of the Lord shakes the desert” (29:8). His power causes even his enemies to submit to him (66:3).
All-wise	He is the starting point for wisdom (111:10). He knows everything we say and do (139:2-4).
Eternal	“You are from all eternity” (93:2). “But you remain the same, and your years will never end.” (102:27).
Holy	“God is seated on his holy throne.” (47:8). “Holy and awesome is his name” (111:9).
Good	“Good and upright is the Lord” (25:8). “The Lord is righteous in all his ways” (145:17).
Merciful and forgiving	“All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful” (25:10). He “forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases” (103:3).
Faithful	“He who watches over you will not slumber” (121:3).
Personally and intimately involved with his creatures	He fashions the hearts of people individually (33:15). “For you created my inmost being” (139:13).
True and straightforward	“The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous.” (19:9). He is the “Lord, the God of truth” (31:5).
Just	“God is a righteous judge” (7:11). “The Lord loves righteousness and justice” (33:5).

## Royal Birthright

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Psalm 87

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Given the exact time and place of your birth, as well as your birth order, what rights or privileges automatically came your way?

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**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** What kind of “city” is the object of this prophecy (v. 1)? What glorious things are said of Zion (v. 3)?

**2.** What makes all these alien people “born in Zion”(v. 5)?

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**LIVING**  
out the Word

**1.** Are you surprised by the inclusiveness of this world wide kingdom? Why?

**2.** Do you include yourself as one “born in Zion”? Why?

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**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*This prophetic vision of Zion, or **city of God**, is not to be interpreted literally or geographically, but spiritually or symbolically. The psalm looks forward to a peaceable kingdom, comprised of Israel's former enemies (v. 4) and other “peoples” (v. 6; gentiles or non-Jewish nations). The citizens of God's kingdom are said to be born in Zion (vs. 4-6), which means that they were included as part of God's chosen people.*

# Dying Without Dignity

DAY 28

## Psalm 88

How and from what do you envision yourself dying? (a) slowly—from a chronic illness, (b) quickly—from a tragic accident, (c) gracefully—from old age.

**1.** Why was the psalmist so down in the dumps (v. 3)? (a) God was angry, (b) God was silent, (c) friends were distant, (d) the psalmist was deathly sick.

**2.** What was he praying for? How intensely (vs. 1, 9, 13)?

**3.** The psalmist seems to be bargaining with God for more time. What arguments seem most convincing to you?

**1.** Try to identify with Heman in his depression and alienation. What has been your closest scrape with death? What is your experience with depression? Where have you found comfort?

**2.** What experience has caused you to despair from time to time? (a) not being right with God, (b) not having friends, (c) chronic sickness, (d) facing death, (e) broken relationships, (f) suffering injustice, (g) other.

**3.** Which of your arguments with God sound like this psalmist? What do you tend to complain about? For how long? What do you sense God saying in response?

*This lament is unique in its unrelenting despair and personal misery, with hardly a glimmer of hope, even in the conclusion (vs. 15-18), unlike Job and other laments (see Ps 22; 31). The author, **Heman the Ezrahite**, socially ostracized from youth, may have had leprosy (vs. 5-9, 15).*

### OPENING

up to the Word

### DIGGING

into the Word

### LIVING

out the Word

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on the Word

## “You Promised to Be With Us Forever...”

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Psalm 89:1-37

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

How have you reacted when the statements of a politician (“I’ll cut taxes,” “I’ll fight for you”), spouse (“for better or worse... I do”), or parent (“I’m doing this for your own good”) seem to be denied by experience?

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** For openers (vs. 1-2), how did the psalmist Ethan express himself? At what point did he turn depressed, insecure, angry and impatient? Why the mood swing? Who is he speaking for?

**2.** The psalmist expanded on God’s majestic wonders and covenant faithfulness (vs. 5-18 and 19-37). In what way?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

When have you been in Ethan’s shoes—feeling betrayed by a friend or family? Have you ever felt betrayed by God? How?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*This psalm concludes Book III of the Psalter with a mystery: What happens when the promises of God, especially those made to David and his dynasty (vs. 1-4, 19-37), are apparently denied by the facts (vs. 38-51)?*

## “...but Where Are You Now?”

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Psalms 89:38-52

Have you ever felt let down by someone in authority? Did your perception prove to be accurate?

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**1.** After extolling God’s majestic wonders and covenant faithfulness (vs. 1-37), the psalmist stopped (“but you,” v. 38) and changed his tune. What evidence to the contrary did he present here (vs. 38-51)?

**2.** What promise(s) did Ethan feel God should be keeping with Israel?

**3.** Ethan quotes God’s own promises back to him (vs. 30-37; compare 2Sa 7:8-16), strengthening his case about breach of covenant. If you were to assist Ethan in prosecuting this case against God, what other arguments would you use?

**4.** If you were to defend God in deflecting Ethan’s allegations, what arguments would you use?  
(a) God’s promises could only be fulfilled when the Messiah reigns (see Ps 72), (b) God’s promises were conditional on certain moral requirements (vs. 30-32; see 2Sa 7:14), (c) the faithlessness of man doesn’t undo the faithfulness of God (c) God will act when the time is right.

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If you have ever felt betrayed or abandoned by God, what reminder of God’s mercy or grace brought you back into the fold?

DAY 30

### **OPENING**

up to the Word

### **DIGGING**

into the Word

### **LIVING**

out the Word