



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

PSALMS 90-119

Week 1

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Before You Begin Your Journey...

Trust is hard to come by these days. Can you trust your mechanic to fix your car for a fair price? Can you trust the advice of that financial planner or attorney? Can you trust the ingredient label on that package of hot dogs? Can you trust your teenage son with the family car? Can you trust the surgeon to repair your body?

Yes, trust may be hard to come by, but we can't escape trusting. We have to trust and rely on other people because no one of us knows how to do everything. And even if we could, could we trust ourselves to do it right all the time?

One of the great themes of the Psalms is trust in God. In fact, trust in God is a major emphasis throughout the history of Israel, from the rebellions in the wilderness, to the last years of Israel and Judah, as both nations frantically sought security and protection in alliances with other nations.

Perhaps more than any other book of the Bible, the Psalms show people whose trust in God faltered. Some Psalms begin with an expression of hopelessness and despair. For example, Psalm 94:3-6 asks, "How long will the wicked, O Lord, how long will the wicked be jubilant?...They crush your people, O Lord, they oppress your inheritance. They slay the widow and the alien; they murder the fatherless."

Our spiritual journeys are filled with such instances, when we are faced with overwhelming adversities—when we don't know where to turn. It is during these times that we wonder if our faith has evaporated. Some actually believe if they trust in God "enough," they will never experience fear, doubt, uncertainty and insecurity.

But, just as fear often produces courage and bravery, in a similar way doubt and uncertainty often end in trust. Just

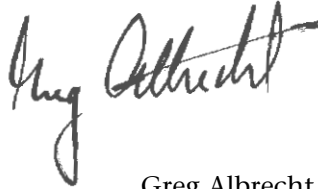
because someone goes through times of anxiety does not necessarily mean they lack faith.

Our initial confusion as we face our own weakness brings us to the point where we see clearly our need to trust in God.

For the psalmist, the answer comes toward the end of Psalm 94:22, "But the Lord has become my fortress, and my God the rock in whom I take refuge. He will repay them for their sins and destroy them for their wickedness; the Lord our God will destroy them."

What once was a question in the psalmist's mind has now become a sure and certain answer.

As you study this section of the Psalms, may your doubts and uncertainties be transformed into faith and trust in our Lord and Savior.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg Albrecht". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "G" and "A".

Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

How to Use the CWR Bible Survey...

1—Read and study at your own pace. This is a devotional. It is designed to help you consider and ponder the great truths of God’s written revelation. It is designed to help you worship and come to know God. We plan to cover the entire Bible in 43 volumes, and while that sounds like a long time, don’t be in a hurry. Take your time! Even though each volume is divided into bite-size daily lessons, you may want to take two days on each “daily” lesson.

2—We suggest you set aside a special time for the *CWR Bible Survey* every day. We recommend allowing 30-45 minutes, but even if you can only spare 15 minutes, try to make it part of your regular schedule. You will find that the *CWR Bible Survey* will be an invaluable resource for facing your daily challenges.

3—You will need a good Bible. This might be an excellent time for you to consider purchasing a study Bible. Plain Truth Ministries has reviewed many of the study Bibles that are available, and in cooperation with Thomas Nelson and Zondervan, we are pleased to be able to offer two superb study Bibles that will be an excellent resource and help to you. Please see the back pages of this book for more details.

4—Always read the assigned passage of the daily lesson in your Bible first. Each daily lesson builds upon the portion of the Bible being covered that day. You may want to begin by praying about what God has in store for you as you read, and then look at the questions and background information.

5—Consider the format of each daily lesson. Almost every daily lesson will include:

- **Opening Up to the Word** —a section designed to help you open your mind to the teaching God has inspired.
- **Digging Into the Word**—this section will encourage you to get your nose into the Bible and think deeply about what it says.
- **Living Out the Word**—here you will be challenged to consider the practical implications for your life. How does this passage help you live?

• **Window On the Word**—will offer key insights to help you more clearly understand the daily Bible passage.

6—After you finish the daily lesson, take some quiet time. You may simply think, look out the window, take a walk, or even get down on your knees. But use this time to let this daily lesson sink in. Ask God to show you what he wants you to understand from your reading and study.

7—Consider the *CWR Bible Survey* for small groups in which you may be involved. Tell your friends about it. If you are involved in a small group that meets for prayer and Bible study, introduce your group to it. Many are seeking an easy-to-read guide to help them understand the Bible and to help them know God. The *CWR Bible Survey* can do that!

• **Abbreviations Used in the *CWR Bible Survey***—

| | | | |
|---------------|------|-----------------|------|
| Genesis | Ge | Nahum | Na |
| Exodus | Ex | Habakkuk | Hab |
| Leviticus | Lev | Zephaniah | Zep |
| Numbers | Nu | Haggai | Hag |
| Deuteronomy | Dt | Zechariah | Zec |
| Joshua | Jos | Malachi | Mal |
| Judges | Jdg | Matthew | Mt |
| Ruth | Ru | Mark | Mk |
| 1 Samuel | 1Sa | Luke | Lk |
| 2 Samuel | 2Sa | John | Jn |
| 1 Kings | 1Ki | Acts | Ac |
| 2 Kings | 2Ki | Romans | Ro |
| 1 Chronicles | 1Ch | 1 Corinthians | 1Co |
| 2 Chronicles | 2Ch | 2 Corinthians | 2Co |
| Ezra | Ezr | Galatians | Gal |
| Nehemiah | Ne | Ephesians | Eph |
| Esther | Est | Philippians | Php |
| Job | Job | Colossians | Col |
| Psalms | Ps | 1 Thessalonians | 1Th |
| Proverbs | Pr | 2 Thessalonians | 2Th |
| Ecclesiastes | Ecc | 1 Timothy | 1Ti |
| Song of Songs | SS | 2 Timothy | 2Ti |
| Isaiah | Isa | Titus | Tit |
| Jeremiah | Jer | Philemon | Phm |
| Lamentations | La | Hebrews | Heb |
| Ezekiel | Eze | James | Jas |
| Daniel | Da | 1 Peter | 1Pe |
| Hosea | Hos | 2 Peter | 2Pe |
| Joel | Joel | 1 John | 1Jn |
| Amos | Am | 2 John | 2Jn |
| Obadiah | Ob | 3 John | 3Jn |
| Jonah | Jnh | Jude | Jude |
| Micah | Mic | Revelation | Rev |

PSALMS 90-119

The Hymnbook
of Israel
and the Church,
Part IV

Introduction to Psalms 90-119

The Psalter (the entire collection of psalms) is grouped into five books. The volume you have in hand covers all of Book IV (Ps 90-106) and the first 13 psalms of Book V (Ps 107-150). You can read more about these divisions in volume 4 of *CWR Bible Survey*, Psalms 1-30.

Many of these psalms tell of miraculous events in Israel's history: the creation story (Ps 104), God's covenant with Abraham (Ps 105), the exodus story (Ps 105-106, 114-118) and other victories (Ps 107, 116).

Some of these songs are called *royal* psalms, even *enthronement* psalms, because they are written about kings of the Davidic dynasty (especially Ps 95-100). But some (notably Ps 97, 101, 110) use such divine language that they could only anticipate Christ the King of kings.

Yet the Psalms in their primary purpose are neither historical nor prophetic pieces. Rather, they are primarily musical, rhythmic hymns, composed to aid in the worship of God. Psalms are filled with poetic images and occasionally refer to musical instruments in corporate worship (for example, Ps 98).

Many psalms are festive and joyous. Psalms 111—118 are called *hallelujah* psalms from *hallelu Yahweh*, meaning "praise the Lord." These praise psalms are uplifting from the first line to the last. The repeated refrains in Psalm 118, for example, are liturgical formulas, each one inviting the Israelites to praise God for one aspect or another of their salvation history. While most psalms assist with joyous corporate worship, at least one psalm in this collection is a love poem, sung by an individual, perhaps a representative of the whole congregation (see Ps 116).

David is credited by Jewish and Christian tradition with authoring the Psalms. Yet in this volume of Psalms 90-119, his name is attached to only five (Ps 101, 103, 108-110). Psalm 90 is credited to Moses, and all the others are anonymous.

Readers who keep coming back to the Psalms time and again do

so for the sheer lyrical beauty of the poetry. For many faithful students of the Psalms, it is the lure of the familiar and beautiful though somewhat archaic language of the King James Version of 1611.

The questions that follow the daily readings of Psalms are designed to help you warm up to the living God, dig into his beautiful truth, gain a fresh perspective and live out the Word from day to day. Read from a contemporary version of the Psalms. But return to the KJV or NIV as often as you want. As with any Scripture study, regardless of version, be doers of the word, not hearers only. To facilitate that, we close this section with a study of Psalm 119, a portion of which could profitably be read every day.

PSALMS 90-119 AT A GLANCE

| Psalm | Author | Summary |
|-------|-----------|--|
| 90 | Moses | Moses' prayer after 40 years in the wilderness. |
| 91 | Anonymous | God's protection in a day of trouble. |
| 92 | Anonymous | Worshippers living with God. |
| 93 | Anonymous | The reality of God's power. |
| 94 | Anonymous | God cares for the mistreated. |
| 95 | Anonymous | God's rest is always with us. |
| 96 | Anonymous | All creation is invited to praise the only true God. |
| 97 | Anonymous | God's power and destruction of idols. |
| 98 | Anonymous | The whole world worships God. |
| 99 | Anonymous | God who forgives. |
| 100 | Anonymous | Thanksgiving to God. |
| 101 | David | King David's values. |
| 102 | Anonymous | Prayer of an afflicted man. |
| 103 | David | Blessings from the Lord. |
| 104 | Anonymous | God's creation described. |
| 105 | Anonymous | God will never fail us. |
| 106 | Anonymous | God's mercy toward us. |
| 107 | Anonymous | A lesson in God's mercy. |
| 108 | David | Anticipating God's hand in victory. |
| 109 | David | Crying out for justice. |
| 110 | David | Jesus will be crowned King of kings. |
| 111 | Anonymous | God's great works. |
| 112 | Anonymous | The fear of the Lord. |
| 113 | Anonymous | God helps the poor and needy. |
| 114 | Anonymous | God's majesty. |
| 115 | Anonymous | God surpasses all false gods. |
| 116 | Anonymous | God answers our prayers. |
| 117 | Anonymous | God's faithfulness endures forever. |
| 118 | Anonymous | Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. |
| 119 | Anonymous | Celebration of God's law. |

Make Each Day Count

DAY 1

Psalm 90

When you read obituaries or attend a funeral, what helps you conclude that the deceased lived a full life? Conversely, what would cause you to think that someone had died prematurely?

1. How is human life described here? (a) mortal, (b) miserable, (c) troublesome, (d) awesome, (e) shameful, (f) fearful, (g) favorable.

2. What is this psalmist complaining about? What does he really want?

3. How is God described here? (a) all-powerful, (b) all-knowing, (c) eternal, (d) angry taskmaster, (e) merciful lover.

4. What does it mean to “number” or count our days (v. 12)? (a) use a day planner, (b) remember all birthdays, (c) cram the day full, (d) don’t take life for granted, (e) be accountable to God for our life choices.

1. What work did you do this week that counted for eternal good?

2. How might this psalm be used in a funeral sermon? What parts would be comforting to the survivors? What parts would you de-emphasize and why?

*This psalm (the only one attributed to Moses) is often quoted at **funerals** because of its perspective on time and eternity and on human frailty and divine power. Moses may have been reflecting on Israelites who died by divine judgment, or on the generation of those who died while wandering the wilderness for 40 years.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Guardian Angels

Psalm 91

OPENING
up to the Word

What is your idea or experience of a *guardian angel*? Do you or a loved one need the protection or intervention of a guardian angel?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What disasters or evils are covered here (vs. 3, 5, 6, 10, 13)? Any that you've experienced?
 2. Who implements or enforces God's protection plan (vs. 1, 4, 9, 11-16)? (a) God, (b) your own carefulness, (c) guardian angels, (d) your prayers.
 3. Do you believe God assigns one specific angel to each believer? Or does it seem to you that the psalmist describes something closer to collective group insurance coverage for believers?
 4. How do verses 1, 9, 14 and 15 describe God's protection for his children?
-

LIVING
out the Word

1. How do you regard God's "protection plan" here? (a) costly, (b) incredible, (c) peaceful, (d) secure, (e) sign me up!
 2. When have you felt your guardian angel worked overtime on your behalf? When bad things sometimes happen to good people, do you think the angels let down on the job?
 3. What risk have you wanted to take, but were afraid because of what might befall you? Where or how do you need God's protective wings to take that risk?
-

WINDOW
on the Word

Examples of guardian angels in the Bible include: one for Elijah (1Ki 19:5); for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan 6:22); for little children (Mt 18:10); for the beggar Lazarus (Lk 16:22) and for Peter (Ac 12:7).



Under God's Wings

A story about the aftermath of a forest fire several years ago provides a penetrating picture of God's wings. According to the story, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage. One ranger is reported to have found a bird petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he nudged the bird with a stick.

When he struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under what appeared to be their dead mother's wings. The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, seemed to have carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings. She could have flown to safety but refused to abandon her babies. When the blaze arrived and the heat scorched her small body, the mother had remained steadfast. Because she was willing to die, those under the cover of her wings would live.

God's love is like that. "He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge" (Psalm 91:4).

Ode to Joy

Psalm 92

OPENING
up to the Word

How, where and when does your family show its gratitude or give thanks to God for everyday blessings?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What makes the psalmist want to sing from morning to night (vs. 2-11)? (a) practice makes perfect, (b) God's love and faithfulness, (c) God's deeds and works, (d) God's destruction of evil.

2. In what ways is the believer like a "wild ox" (v. 10)? Like a "palm tree" or "cedar of Lebanon" (v. 12, see note)?

3. How and why are the "senseless," the "fools" and "the wicked" (vs. 6-7) different from the believer?

LIVING
out the Word

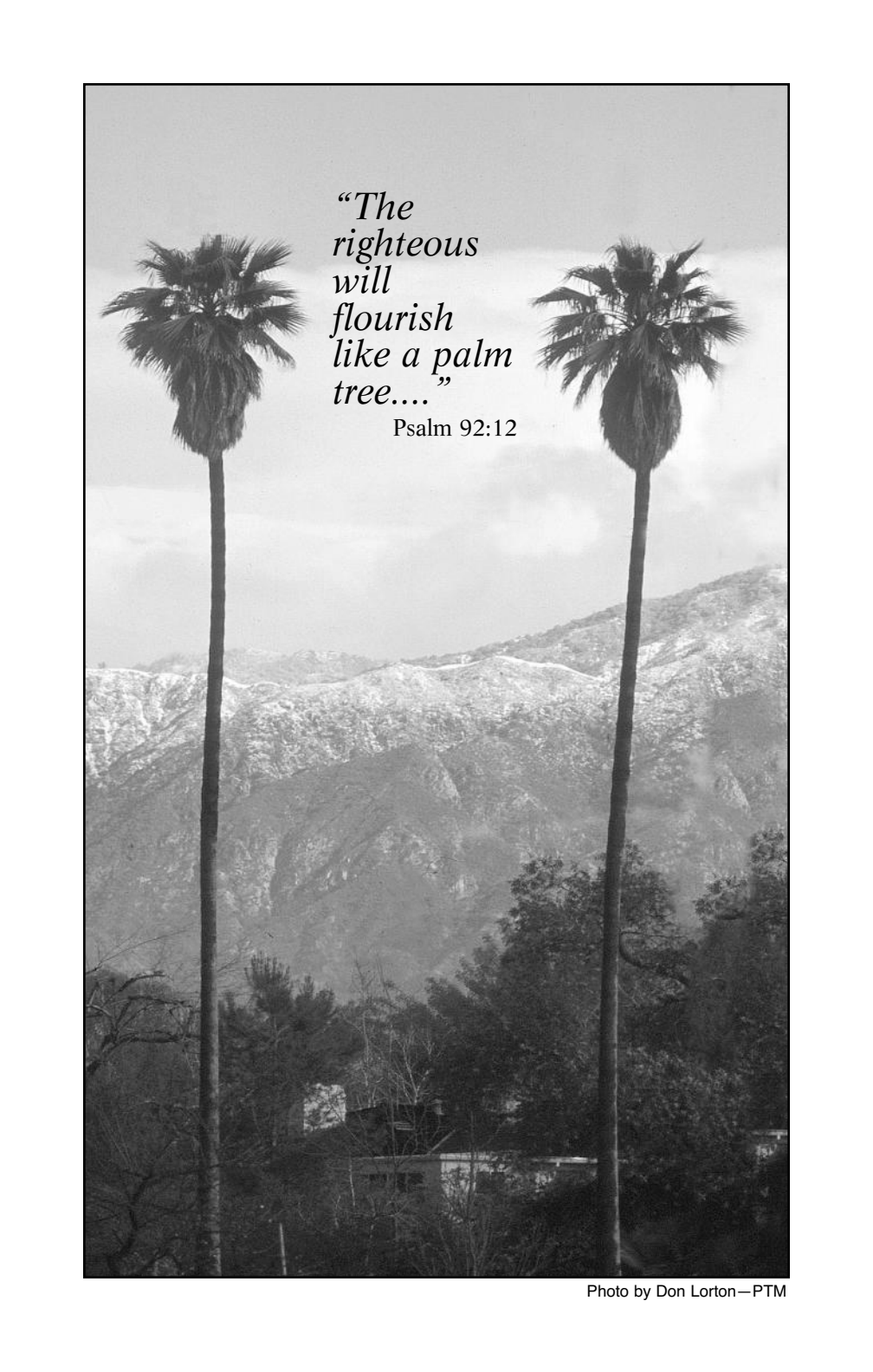
1. Which description or comparison fits you—and why? (a) fresh and green, (b) firmly planted, (c) uprooted, (d) growing—even in old age, (e) dead or defeated.

2. What kind of fruit would you like to bear? (a) good deeds, (b) a godly life, (c) wisdom, (d) telling others about God, (e) praise.

3. What has God done in your life that brings you joy that lasts from morning to night?

WINDOW
on the Word

The horn (v. 10) here symbolizes strength. The palm tree (v. 12) is known for its vitality and longevity, the cedar of Lebanon (v. 12) for its strength and durability. Thus the psalmist sees firmly planted believers as flourishing, strong, fruitful, upright and unmoved by the stormy winds or shifting sands of circumstances.

A black and white photograph of two tall palm trees standing prominently in the foreground. The trees are slender with large, fan-like fronds at the top. Behind them, a range of rugged mountains stretches across the horizon under a cloudy sky. In the lower portion of the image, there are silhouettes of other trees and a fence line. The overall scene is serene and evokes a sense of a tropical or subtropical environment.

*“The
righteous
will
flourish
like a palm
tree....”*

Psalm 92:12

DAY 4

Surf's Up!

Psalm 93

OPENING
up to the Word

What is your earliest or most vivid memory of high seas and pounding waves?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What picture of God do you see here? (a) unmovable Force of Nature, (b) Ruler of the High Seas, (c) God of gods, (d) Supreme Lawgiver, (e) Royalty decked out in fine robes.

2. What characteristics of God do these poetic images convey? (a) power, (b) his eternal nature, (c) divine justice, (d) perfect moral standards.

3. What is the psalmist's response to this holy and almighty God (v. 5)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What waves of change have rocked you or your family's boat lately? Have things changed for better or worse? In what way?

2. What aspect of God does this psalmist describe that will help you confidently ride out the pounding waves of hard times?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Note how certain words and phrases are repeated in this psalm: **Robed** (twice), **established** (twice), **lifted up** (three times), **mightier** (three times)—this kind of doubling and tripling of expressions underscores the sovereign proclamation of the first words of this psalm, "The Lord reigns" —even over repeated waves of tumult.*

Here Comes the Judge

DAY 5

Psalm 94

Who is your favorite TV judge? On the U.S. Supreme Court?

1. What modern courtroom drama does this Psalm bring to mind for you? (a) *People's Court*, (b) *The Practice*, (c) *Law and Order*, (d) *Judge Judy*, (e) *Judging Amy*, (f) other.

2. Who is the real Judge here? Who is he avenging? Who is on trial and why?

3. Who is pressing God to punish the wicked? (a) the plaintiffs, (b) the deceased, (c) the psalmist, (d) no one tells God what to do.

4. What false view of God is evident here (vs. 7-10)?

5. What perversions of human justice are evident in the short term (vs. 4-7, 20, 21)?

6. What blessing comes with God's discipline (v. 12)? (a) further trouble is avoided, (b) setting limits is reassuring, (c) right living will result. See also Hebrews 12:5-11.

1. What examples would you give of perpetrators getting away with injustice?

2. Where and when have you cried out for help like the Psalmist when he said, "My foot is slipping" (v. 18)?

3. How might you, or someone you care for, benefit from God's corrective discipline?

Justice is a major theme here and throughout the Psalms (see Ps 7; 9; 15; 37; 50; 72; 75; 82; 145). Doing justice means that honesty prevails and sin is punished. It also means liberating the oppressed, the powerless and the poor.

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

*“In his hand are the depths of
the earth, and the mountain
peaks belong to him.”*

Psalm 95:4

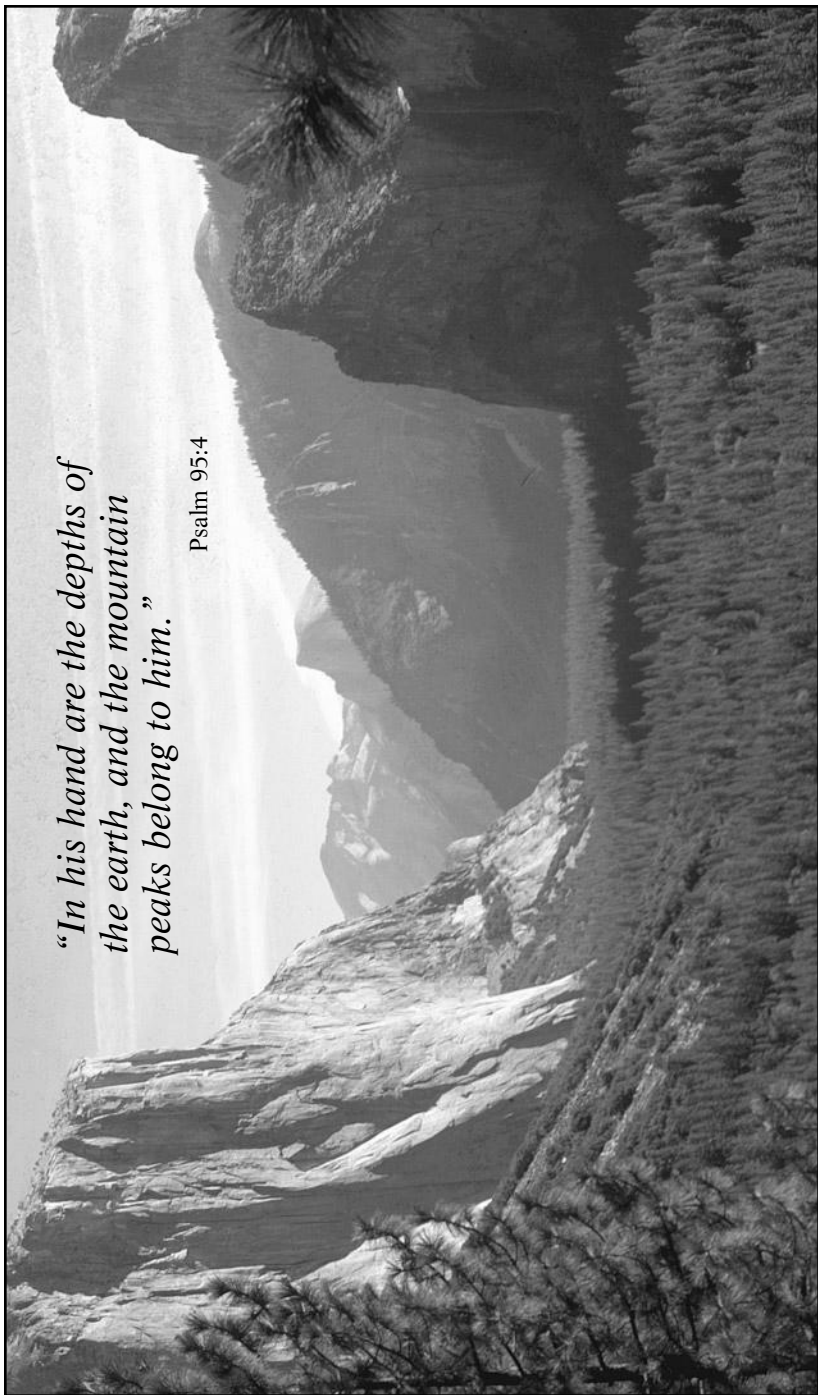


Photo by Don Lorton—PTM

Worship Service

DAY 6

Psalm 95

What generation are you part of? (a) WWI, (b) WWII, (c) Baby Boomers, (d) Generation X, (e) Generation Y, (f) Millennials. What significant event or experience defines your generation?

1. What is the worship service described in this psalm like? (a) free form, (b) noisy, (c) reverential.
 2. What acts of worship are involved here? (a) singing, (b) shouting, (c) thanking, (d) listening, (e) kneeling, (f) all of the above.
 3. What parties are involved in this worship?
 4. What parties miss out on God's rest—and why (vs. 2, 7, 9)?
-

1. Which acts of worship described in this psalm come naturally or spontaneously to you? Which are more difficult for you?
 2. Has a complaining attitude ever hindered your ability to worship?
 3. Have you entered, or will you enter, God's rest? On what do you base that belief?
-

While **Meribah** (v. 8) means “quarreling, strife, contention,” and **Massah** (v. 8) means “testing,” both have their historical context in the wilderness wanderings (Ex 17:1-7 and Nu 20:1-13), where the Israelites complained to Moses that they had no water. God's **rest** is his ultimate blessing, a foretaste of which can be experienced here and now. That rest is not to be passively taken for granted, but is to be experienced through a new life in Christ (see Heb 3:7-4:11).

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

*“Then all the trees of the forest will sing
for joy; they will sing before the Lord, for
he comes, he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his truth.”*

Psalm 96:12-13



A Brand New Song

DAY 7

Psalm 96

What new song, if any often rolls through your head? How long did it take you to learn the words or the melody?

1. What is the new song described in this psalm like? (a) joyful praise, (b) worldwide symphony, (c) cosmic celebration.
2. Who makes up this choir and orchestra (vs. 1, 7, 9, 11-12)? Can you come as you are, or does one need to dress up for this international worship service?
3. What venue would be most appropriate for staging this new worship?
4. What reasons (circumstances or theology) prompted the songwriter to create this new song? How is God described here?
5. What thematic elements make up its refrain? What church hymn or praise song comes to mind that incorporates some of these elements?

1. Do you regularly praise God? In what ways?
2. In what ways have you experienced God's salvation (v. 2)?

To worship "in the splendor of his holiness" (v. 9) may mean to worship the Lord in holy attire, or ceremonially washing the garments worn for worship. We may still wear our best, especially at Easter, but this emphasis on what we wear misses the point of cleansing our hearts and minds.

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word