



CWR/PTM

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

# BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

PSALMS 90-119

Week 2

## The Original Lion King

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Psalm 97

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

If you could transform yourself into the King of the Jungle, what kind of lion would you be? (a) a cub—cute and cuddly, (b) head of the pride—all claws and jaws, (c) on the prowl—a fast-food feline, (d) lead role in *The Lion King*, (e) lead role in *Born Free*.

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** What is the King in this psalm like? (a) the storm god—angry and destructive, (b) Lion King—with all the animal kingdom at his feet, (c) Supreme Ruler—above all, (d) warrior king—mighty in battle, (e) like no other.

**2.** Over what domain does this King rule (vs. 1, 4-9)?

**3.** What values or benefits shape this kingdom? (a) justice, (b) fear, (c) love, (d) hate, (e) protection, (f) joy, (g) praise.

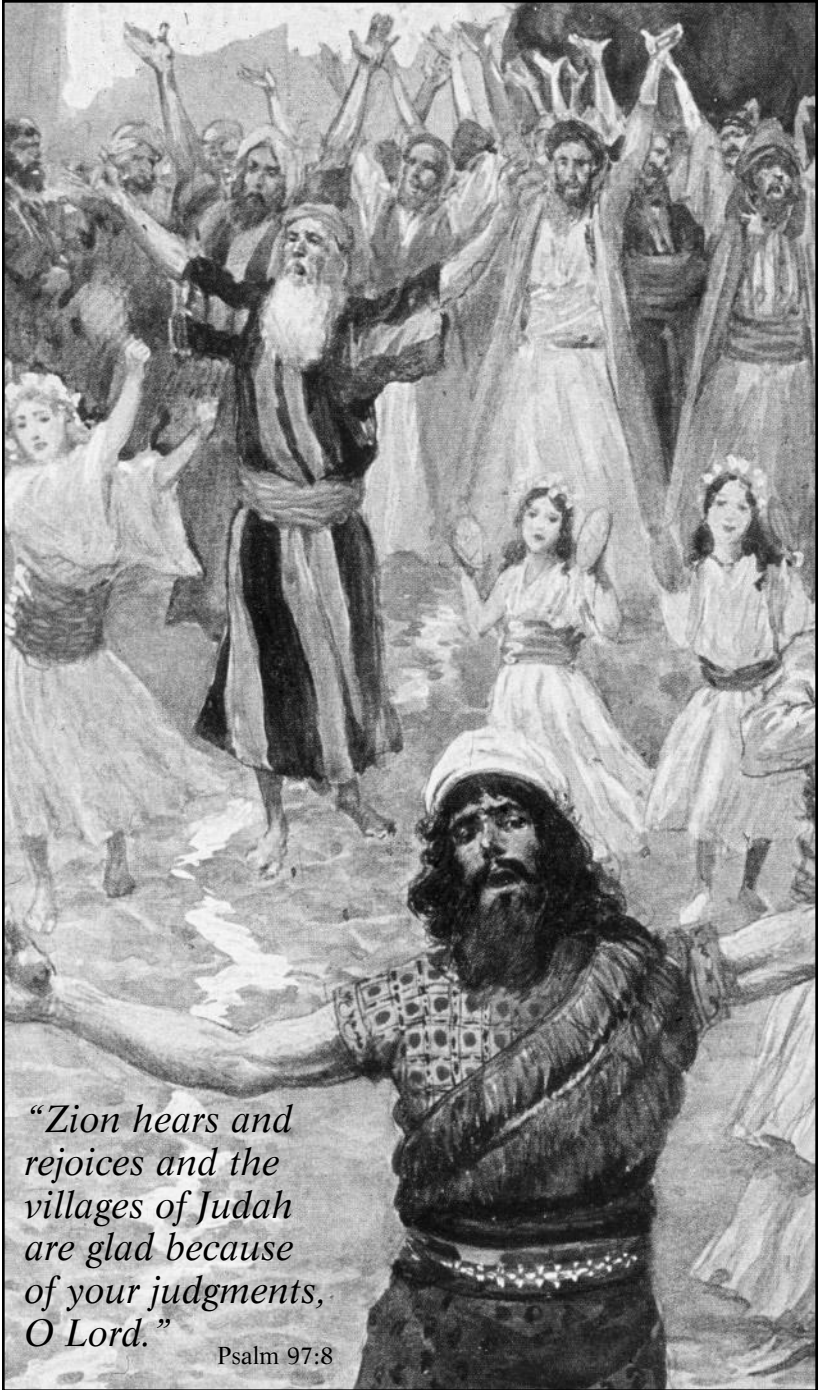
**LIVING**  
out the Word

**1.** As a child of the King, how do you stand to benefit?

**2.** Are you prepared to do the King's bidding, as called for here? Why or why not?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*Psalm 97 is typical of the **enthronement psalms** (see also Psalms 29, 47, 93-99), where the domain of God's reign is not limited to Zion.*



*“Zion hears and rejoices and the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments, O Lord.”*

Psalm 97:8



# JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world! The Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
And heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,  
Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness,  
And wonders of his love.

—Isaac Watts, based on Psalm 98,  
from *Psalms of David Imitated* [1719]

# Joyful Hymn Festival

DAY 9

## Psalm 98

What, for you, would be a compelling reason to attend a brick-and-mortar church? (a) hell-fire and brimstone preaching (b) the Lord's return will be enacted, (c) natural wonders and special effects are promised, (d) music you hear and you make, by your own joyful noise.

**1.** What musical instruments (vs. 4-9) are called upon to worship God? Which ones are you unfamiliar with? Which ones are literal and which are figurative?

**2.** Where does this hymn festival take place? (a) indoors—at home, (b) outdoors—in natural amphitheaters, (c) at work—in the marketplace, (d) everywhere at once.

**3.** All of creation is invited to praise God (vs. 1-3, 7-9). Is this poetic metaphor, or can this actually happen? When? How? (See “Window to the Word” and companion texts at Ps 96:11-13; Isa 55:12-13; Ro 8:19-25.)

Suppose you and some of your friends decided to stage a huge community-wide hymn festival that celebrates God.

- To ensure maximum participation, when and where would you hold the event?
- What instruments would you use?
- From what neighboring cultures would you import musicians?
- What part would you play in that ensemble?

*The **salvation** proclaimed in song here (vs. 1-3) anticipates the day of fulfillment when Christ comes in victory to “**judge the world in righteousness**” (v. 9).*

### OPENING

up to the Word

### DIGGING

into the Word

### LIVING

out the Word

### WINDOW

on the Word

*“Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel was among those who called on his name; they called on the Lord and he answered them.”*

Psalm 99:6



# Holy, Holy, Holy!

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Psalm 99

When did God first become more than just a name to you?

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1. How does the psalmist describe God here? What aspect is most emphasized by the constant refrain and special effects?
  2. The response to this awesome and holy God is quite varied. In what way?
  3. God, in his holiness, forgives and disciplines his people (vs. 4-9). What does this mean for those who come before God?
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1. What is your typical response to God's kingly power? (a) make a pilgrimage to Zion (Jerusalem), (b) tremble before his throne, (c) trust God fully, (d) be more angelic, (e) be festive and carefree.
  2. What response to God does this psalm, together with the companion texts that also envision cherubim, inspire in you?
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***Cherubim*** (v. 1) are high-ranking angels, used here and elsewhere (for example Ex 25:17-22; Eze 10) to magnify the holiness and power of God.

DAY 10

## **OPENING**

up to the Word

## **DIGGING**

into the Word

## **LIVING**

out the Word

## **WINDOW**

on the Word

## Good God!

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Psalm 100

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

When you want to know that God is truly with you, how do you center your thoughts—how do you focus?

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**DIGGING**  
into the Word

1. The Psalmist praises God as the Lord, as the Creator and as the Shepherd. In your opinion, which of the three images is more vivid for this psalmist? Which is most vivid for you?
  2. According to this psalmist, how does one truly know God (v. 3)?
  3. How and why should one approach God (v. 4)?
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**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. How well do you know God as the Lord? As the Creator? As the Shepherd? Since Psalms is so Christ-centered, do these three ways in which God makes himself known apply to Jesus, the Son of God?
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**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*“The Lord is God” (v. 3) and “the Lord is good” (v. 5) are the twin themes of this psalm. This psalm is often used in liturgical worship.*



## Exclusive Club of One

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DAY 12

### Psalm 101

Pundits have likened church to an exclusive club with high standards for members. Sadly, some “outsiders” believe they are not good enough to join. Even more sadly, some “insiders” seem to do their best to make “outsiders” feel excluded. In this respect, we remember Groucho Marx: “I would not join a club that would have me for a member!”

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**1.** What high standards of behavior does King David set for himself (vs. 1-4)? For his household (vs. 5-7)? For his people (v. 8)?

**2.** How can David practice what he preaches? (a) by taking an oath, (b) by prayer, (c) by watching who he hangs out with, (d) by fleeing temptation, (e) by separating himself from evil-doers, (f) he can't, (g) only Jesus could fulfill this perfect rule.

**3.** Describe the value of setting high standards? How can it be abused?

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**1.** Which of David's resolutions—as they might apply to you—do you need help implementing in your personal, family or business situation?

**2.** David resolves to surround himself with good people (vs. 6-7). In what ways would you say your close friends are “good”?

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**Only Jesus**, as the true Davidic King, could live the blameless life (v. 2) expected of this king. Who else could spiritually purge the city of the Lord as described here (vs. 7-8; see 2Th 1:8-10; Rev 21:22-27)?

### OPENING

up to the Word

### DIGGING

into the Word

### LIVING

out the Word

### WINDOW

on the Word

*“My days are like the  
evening shadow; I wither  
away like grass.”*

Psalm 102:11



# “My Days... Your Years”

DAY 13

## Psalms 102

We tend to return to those who comfort us whenever we are hurt or sick. Who is that comforter in your life? What would she or he do for you, even now?

**1.** Life is not always a bowl of cherries—but much of the time, life as described in Psalms is the pits. What is this psalmist suffering from (vs. 1-11)? (a) transience of life, (b) ill health, (c) loneliness, (d) sleeplessness, (e) taunts, (f) apparent rejection by God, (g) identity crisis.

**2.** For what need does this psalmist pray long and hard? For himself? For others who suffer? With hope in God’s dealings with Zion? With a long-term view of the future?

**3.** Do you think God is somehow responsible for the condition of this needy person and the nation of Israel (vs. 2, 10, 17, 23-24, 26)? Why or why not?

**4.** The psalmist finally looks away from himself and concentrates on God’s dealings with Zion and with the entire earth (vs. 12, 27). Does this help him directly or indirectly? How? How will Zion finally be delivered?

**1.** When bad things happen to you do you think you deserve it, or do you blame others—even God?

**2.** In the end, the psalmist adopts a long-term, other-centered perspective. Why not adopt this perspective for a problem that is still plaguing you?

*This psalm intertwines the contrasting themes of **human frailty**, which is subject to change (vs. 1-11) and **God’s enduring character**, which is changeless (vs. 12-22). One highlights the other. The three-part meditation on Zion (vs. 12-14, 15-17, 18-22) transfers individual suffering into something that is experienced by the whole earth. The psalm contrasts “my days” and “your years” (vs. 23-28; see Heb 1:1-12), which anticipates the coming Messiah.*

### OPENING

up to the Word

### DIGGING

into the Word

### LIVING

out the Word

### WINDOW

on the Word

## Amazing Grace

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Psalm 103

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Which would you rather hear first—good news, or bad news? Why?

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

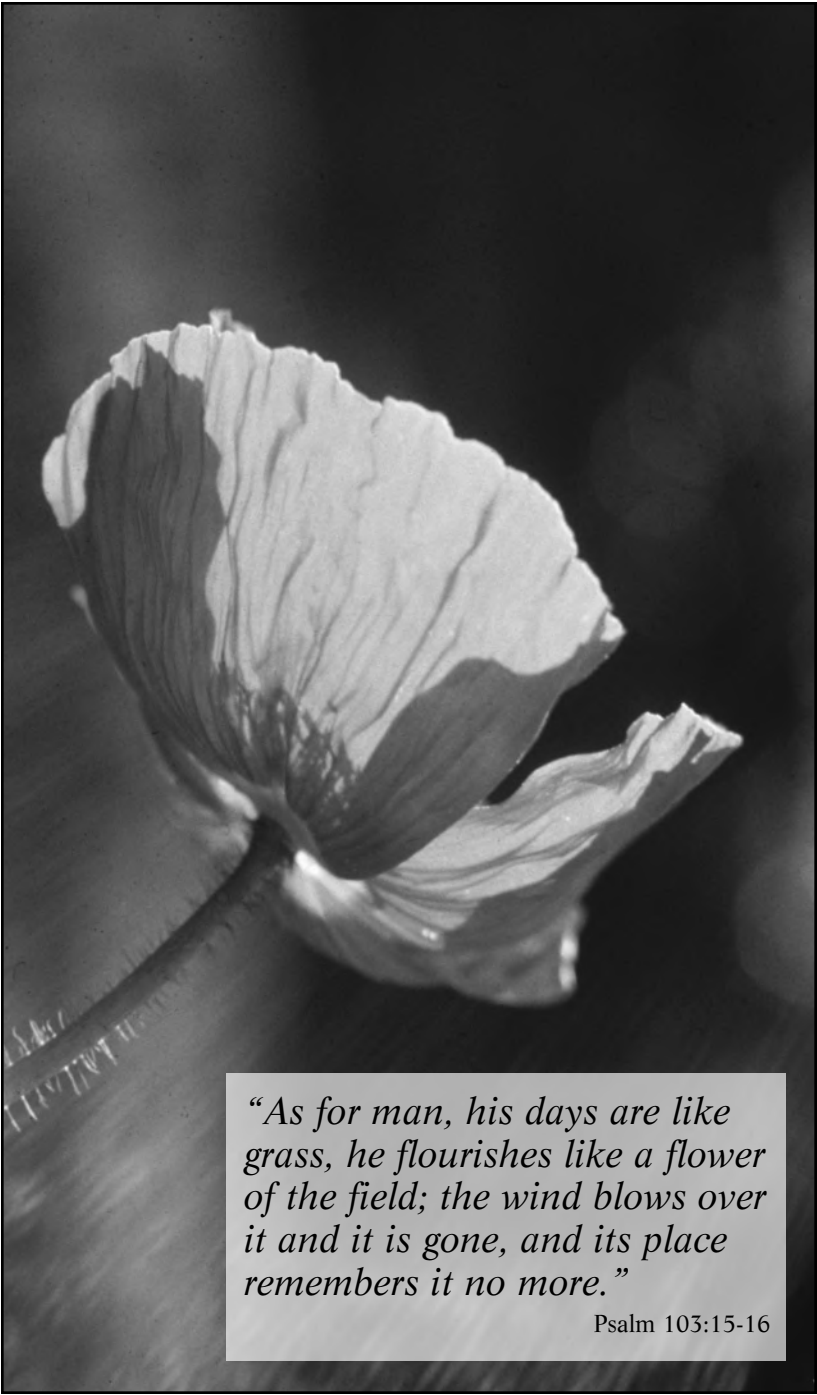
- 1.** Who is David addressing in this psalm? (a) himself, (b) ancient Israelites, (c) future generations, (d) oppressed peoples, (e) angels, (f) all the above.
- 2.** On what basis, or for what benefits, does David want to praise the Lord?
- 3.** Does God always forgive, heal, rescue, crown, satisfy and renew everyone (vs. 1-5), as he did this psalmist?
- 4.** God cares not only for individuals, but also for whole groups of people, especially the oppressed (vs. 6-10). How and why does God show his amazing grace (11-14)?
- 5.** To whom does this mercy extend, and why (vs. 15-18, 19-22)? (a) family, (b) fellow citizens, (c) all nations, (d) only the oppressed, (e) only those who fear God.
- 6.** What is it about God's expansive mercy that stands out, or stretches the imagination, in this psalm?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

- 1.** For what good works or blessings on behalf of the whole world does this psalm make you want to praise God?
- 2.** When, if ever, have you experienced this kind of mercy on a human level, as from a father or mother (vs. 13-14)?
- 3.** What practical, fatherly things has God done for you recently? How have you thanked him?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

***This psalm moves** from personal healing (vs. 1-5) to the corporate and historic basis for Israel's praise (vs. 6-18), to the outermost and endless cosmos (vs. 19-22) over which the Lord reigns supreme.*



*“As for man, his days are like  
grass, he flourishes like a flower  
of the field; the wind blows over  
it and it is gone, and its place  
remembers it no more.”*

Psalm 103:15-16