



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

PSALMS 1-30

Week 2

DAY 8

Out of the Mouths of Babes

Psalm 8:1-9

OPENING
up to the Word

Do you remember a remarkable statement that you repeated as a kid? If you have kids, have they made any amusing or remarkable statements?

DIGGING
into the Word

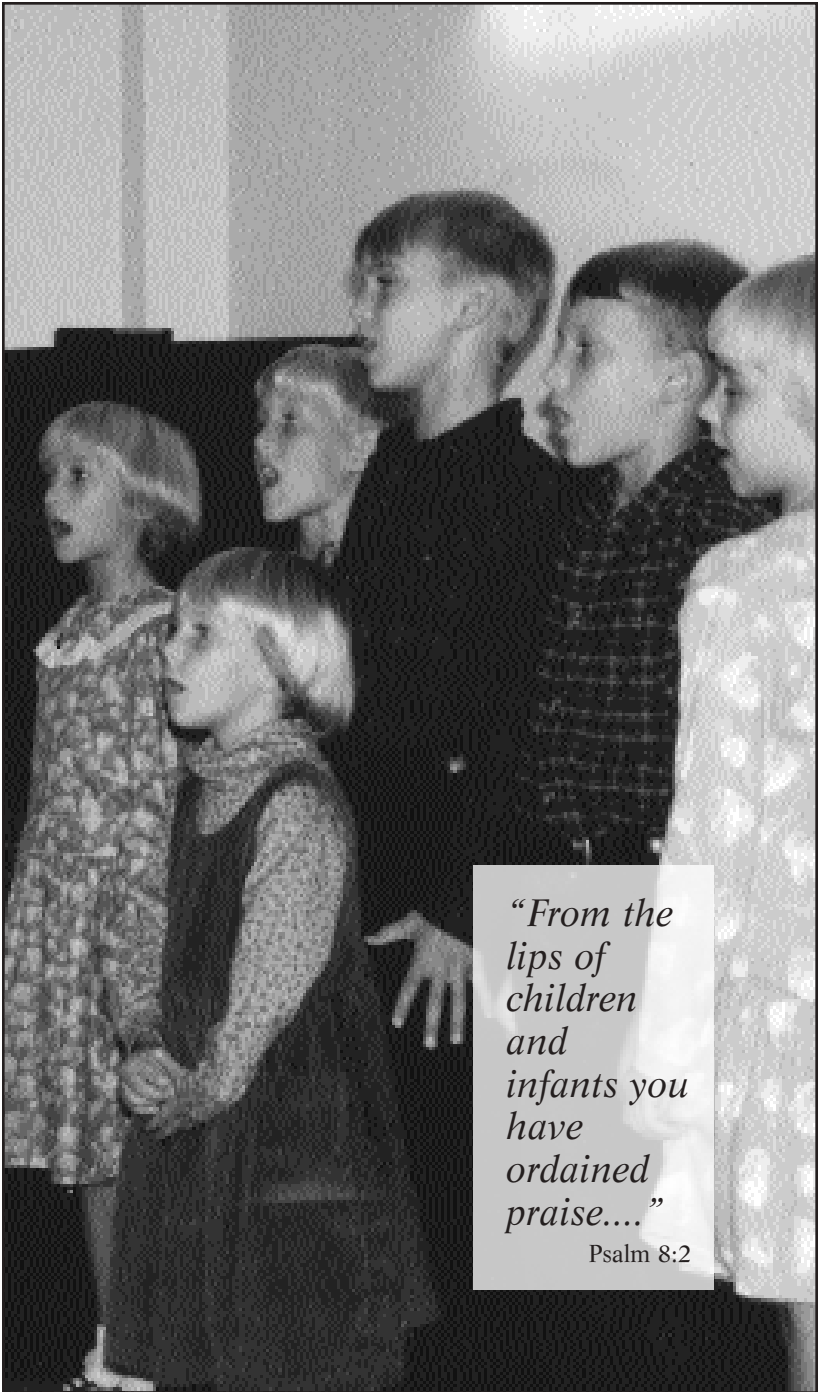
1. From the declaration of praise that brackets this psalm, what is the subject matter? What was there about creation that most impressed David?
2. In that created order, what role does humanity share with God? What role do the children have?
3. Check the cross-references to Psalm 8 in your study Bible. What verses from this psalm are quoted in the NT? What applications of this psalm do Matthew and Hebrews give you?
4. Why has the awesome God of the universe chosen to have such a special relationship with us puny humans?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How do you see yourself in relation to God?
(a) as co-creator with God, active in various ongoing projects; (b) as co-regent with God, ruling over creation, (c) as created for a special intimate relationship with God.
2. What is your motive for praising God?

WINDOW
on the Word

*This eloquent psalm typifies **praise hymns** with its invocation to praise, motive for praise (reflecting on Ge 1:26-28), followed by a refrain of praise. **Son of man** (v. 4). Not to be confused with Jesus' favorite self-designation, this term is a poetic synonym for humanity.*



*“From the
lips of
children
and
infants you
have
ordained
praise....”*

Psalm 8:2

DAY 9

Thanks, God, for Doing Unto Others

Psalm 9:1-20

OPENING
up to the Word

When you wanted something from your parents, how did you customarily approach them?

DIGGING
into the Word

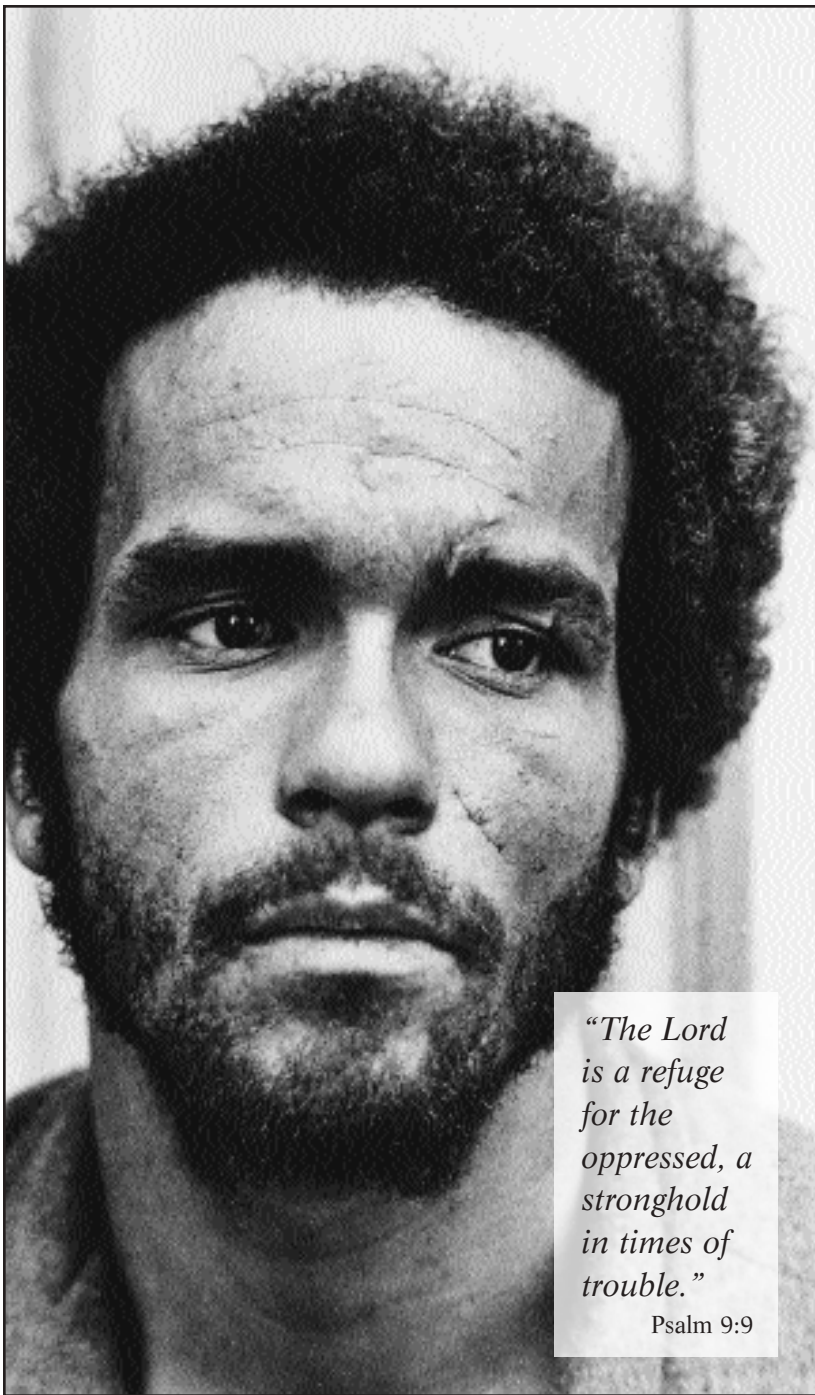
1. On what note does this psalm open? What miracles come to mind when you tell of God's wonders and grace?
 2. Who does he invite to join him in praise? Is praise the whole point or merely the preface of this psalm?
 3. What signals the downturn or shift in focus?
 4. How did God treat the various groups: David's enemies? The oppressed? God-seekers? The wicked? The needy and afflicted?
 5. According to this psalm, how is God best known? And by whom? Who forgets God altogether?
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LIVING
out the Word

1. When bad people get away with their crimes, how do you pray about it? Do you pray that they would get what's coming to them? Or that they would find Jesus and his unconditional grace?
 2. In your prayers, to whom are you partial? Of whom are you forgetful?
 3. Will you begin this week by leaving God to judge others, as David did?
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WINDOW
on the Word

*The Bible on which our English translations are based has **separated into two psalms** what was originally one psalm connected by one superscription and an acrostic (alphabetical) device evident only in the Hebrew. The first half of Psalm 9-10 reads like a praise hymn for God's past redemption and continued vigilance (Ps 9:1-18), which gives the worshippers confidence to lament their present condition (9:19-10:15), knowing God will once again deliver (10:16-18). These two psalms were probably separated into their present form for different liturgical purposes.*



*“The Lord
is a refuge
for the
oppressed, a
stronghold
in times of
trouble.”*

Psalm 9:9

Do Something About It!

Psalm 10:1-18

OPENING
up to the Word

When something needs fixing around the house, do you debate what to do, ignore it, disparage the builders, do something about it or dispatch others?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Was this psalmist debating, daydreaming, disparaging, doing or dispatching? Who's disparaging or dispatching whom, and why?
2. Why was the psalmist so upset? (a) God won't help, (b) God won't punish, (c) God won't wake up, (d) evil runs rampant.
3. What was the wicked person like (vs. 3-11)? (a) proud and boastful, (b) full of curses and lies, (c) full of trouble, (d) oppressing the needy.
4. After complaining, the psalmist asked—or rather told—God to help (vs. 12-15). What gave the psalmist that right or privilege?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Of the many faces of the wicked (vs. 3-11), which ones have you seen in the mirror? At work? At home? What are you doing about that? What are you asking God to do about that?
2. When do we have the right or privilege to suggest to God what to do? (a) never, (b) when we are in need, (c) when we pray according to his will.

WINDOW
on the Word

On *enemies*, see Psalm 7 and related note. See also Psalm 9 and related note. **Curses, lies and threats** (v. 7). Whoever said “words can never hurt me,” did not know the full impact of the tongue. To curse was to invoke the powers of pagan gods to undermine others.

“If I Were You . . .”

Psalm 11:1-7

Do you read any advice columns? Do you ever act on the advice?

1. Were “the wicked” trying to get David with actual bows and arrows or figuratively with false accusations (v. 2; see Ps 10:7-8; 12:2-4)?
 2. What advice did David receive when wicked adversaries were trying to get him? (a) run for his life, (b) fight back, (c) watch his back, (d) do nothing.
 3. Why did David resist all such advice? (a) it was a cop-out, (b) he was stubborn, (c) running away never solves anything, (d) Saul would have found him anyway, (e) David had special access to the King of kings.
 4. Does this psalm of trust teach that the righteous always prevail or that justice is always served in this lifetime? When would David see the Lord’s face?
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What kinds of advice do you receive or give yourself when faced with adversity? How do you sift the different voices, to hear and heed the Lord’s voice?

DAY 11

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

DAY 12

Zip Your Lip!

Psalm 12:1-8

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever been told to zip your lip? Why?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What effect were malignant rumors, false accusations, vile speech and boastful words having on David and the faithful?
 2. How will God protect the faithful from those who malign them (vs. 3-7) and seem to get away with it (v. 8)?
 3. How do the words of the Lord differ from the talk of liars and schemers?
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LIVING
out the Word

1. In comparison to the words of the Lord and everyone else, what are your words like? (a) totally honest, (b) full of hope, (c) weighed and measured with wisdom and grace, (d) purified of filth before you speak, (e) some lies slip through the purifying filter, (f) your zingers are quite malicious, (g) your boasts are prelude to a fall.
 2. How can God help you purify your speech?
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WINDOW
on the Word

*This psalm is a simple cry for **vindication** (vs. 1-4, 7-8), punctuated by prophetic words of assurance (vs. 5-6) that God will protect his own.*

“How Long?”

DAY 13

Psalm 13:1-6

When someone asks you “How long?”, what is that usually in reference to? (a) until dinner, (b) until we’re there, (c) until the end of a time out, (d) until you pay them what you owe them, (e) until a project is done, (f) has this been going on?

1. With what tone of voice do you hear David (and the Israelites) crying out, “How long”?

2. What could David have been complaining about? In the salvation history of Israel, what were the people longing for?

1. David thought that God had ignored (“forgot”) him, had withdrawn his blessing (“hid his face”) or had let the enemy triumph. When have you felt like that?

2. Based on this psalm, what should believers do with their doubts, fears and timetables? (a) rant and rave, (b) give them up, (c) pray hard, (d) quit complaining, (e) take matter into thier own hands, (f) wait on God and rejoice in him anyway.

***How long?** (vs. 1-2). Such language of impatience and complaint, while frequently on the lips of the psalmist, does not imply despair, but bold confidence that the relief God promises is already on the way, although not yet here.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

*“The Lord looks down from heaven
on the sons of men
to see if there are any who understand,
any who seek God.”*

Psalm 14:2



Photo courtesy NASA

“There Is No God”

DAY 14

Psalm 14:1-7

Do you know any “practical” atheists—people who, for all practical purposes, act as if there’s no God?

1. Who or what is this psalm about?
2. What thematic links does this psalm have with Psalm 10? With Psalm 11? With Psalm 12? With Psalm 15?
3. What use does Paul make of verses 1-3 (see Ro 3:10-12)?
4. Why do you think some people say that God doesn’t exist? (a) so they can live as they please; (b) they can’t see him, so they assume he must not be real; (c) they don’t want to answer to him. (d) they have been disillusioned by institutional religion, and ascribe the problems to God, (e) they can’t understand why God would allow such suffering in the world.
5. What benefits eventually come to those who discover and trust that God is there after all?

1. Have you been through a time of atheism or agnosticism (not knowing for sure if God exists)?
2. When have you acted foolishly, as if God didn’t exist?
3. Have you benefited from the belief that God was there all along?

*In the OT, the **fool** (v. 1) was not mentally deficient but morally deficient, with a streak of stubbornness and rebellion that contributed to gross immorality. A practical atheist, the fool leaned on his own resources as if God didn’t care or didn’t judge. This psalm is repeated nearly verbatim in Psalm 53, but stands in sharp contrast to Psalm 15, which is about a faithful seeker of God.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

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on the Word