



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

PSALMS 1-30

Week 4

Forsaken But Not Forgotten

Psalm 22:1-31

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

Have you ever been betrayed—perhaps by a spouse, parent, child, a business partner or boss?

1. Jesus quoted and identified with this prophetic psalm as he hung on the cross (v. 1; see Mt 27:46). Would you say Jesus was actually forsaken by God or did he only *feel* alone and in pain?

2. Does God actually forsake anyone (see Ro 8:38-39)? (a) never, (b) sometimes, (c) for a good purpose.

3. Note the mixed metaphors and similes—crushed like a worm, broken like a potsherd, attacked by bulls, etc. (vs. 12-21). What could the psalmist have been suffering from?

4. The forsaken David still trusts God (vs. 3-5, 8-10). Why the switch? (a) relationship with God since birth, (b) previous answers to prayer, (c) ancestors had experienced God as faithful, (d) too many wild beasts to fend off by himself.

5. David wants God to draw near (vs. 11, 19). What good will that do?

6. Despite all his troubles, David gives thanks (vs. 22-31). What for?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Suffering saints throughout the centuries have seen themselves in this psalm. What experience do you have of enemies? (a) backstabbing, (b) betraying, (c) abusing. As you pray through this psalm, how will you respond?

2. Explain the Cross of Christ using just Psalm 22.

3. Consider verses 25-31, which prophesy the outcome of Jesus' sacrifice—the possibility of salvation for all humanity!

WINDOW
on the Word

This is the most quoted psalm in the NT (see Mt 27:35, 39, 43, 46 and parallels; Jn 19:23-24, 28; Heb 2:12). It has a parallel in Psalm 69, which adds a call for avenging one's enemies that did not fit Jesus' purpose (69:22-28). Note the alternating movement from distress to trust, from lament to praise.

A PROPHECY ABOUT CHRIST

Psalm 22 looks forward to Jesus' atoning work on the cross. Several verses from Psalm 22 are quoted in the New Testament, showing how this prophetic psalm was fulfilled.

From Psalm 22	New Testament Fulfillment
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Ps 22:1)	"About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ' <i>Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?</i> '—which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" (Mt 27:46)
"All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: 'He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him'" (Ps. 22:7-8).	"Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads 'He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God'" (Mt 27:39, 43).
"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me" (Ps 22:14).	Crucifixion (Mk 15:24) caused the victim's bones to be pulled out of joint. And, "...one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water" (John 19:34).
"...they have pierced my hands and my feet" (Ps 22:16).	Jesus' hands and feet were nailed to the cross. After his resurrection, he showed the wounds to his disciples. "Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself!... When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet" (Lk 24:39-40)
"They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing" (Ps 22:18).	"When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots" (Mt 27:35).
"I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you" (Ps 22:22).	"So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, 'I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises'" (Heb 2:11-12)
"All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations" (Ps 22:27-28).	"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20)

Your Wish Is My Command

Psalm 23:1-6

OPENING
up to the Word

What items have stayed on your want list or wish list the longest?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What is the controlling metaphor and theme of this psalm?
 2. What want list does this sheep bring, that the Shepherd-King is more than able to provide? What about the ultimate Shepherd-King, Jesus?
 3. What elements of the covenant between the Lord and David, as Shepherd-King and vassal king, do you see in this psalm? (a) welfare provisions, (b) protection from enemies, (c) loyalty oath, (d) goodness, love and other benefits.
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LIVING
out the Word

1. Are you like a sheep? How? (a) fearful and hungry, (b) secure in the herd, (c) stubborn, (d) needing protection and guidance, (e) easily fleeced.
 2. Does Jesus provide for your wants? Does he protect and guide you? How?
 3. Recite Psalm 23 as a renewal of the covenant between you and the Lord.
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WINDOW
on the Word

*This psalm is often misunderstood as simply a pastoral one, but its connotations are royal and covenantal. **Shepherd** (v. 1) was an ancient Near Eastern metaphor for a king, a metaphor Israel adopted for its Davidic kings (see 78:71-72; 2Sa 5:2; Jer 3:15; 23:1-4). With the Lord as its Shepherd-King, Israel's covenant was assured (see 28:9; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; Ge 48:15; Isa 40:10-11; Jer 31:10-12; 50:17-20; Eze 34:11-16). Jesus Christ was Israel's ultimate Shepherd-King (Jn 10:11-16; Heb 13:20-21; 1Pe 5:4; Rev 7:15-17) and the fulfillment of Psalm 23.*

*“The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in
green pastures, he leads me
beside quiet waters....”*

Psalm 23:1-2

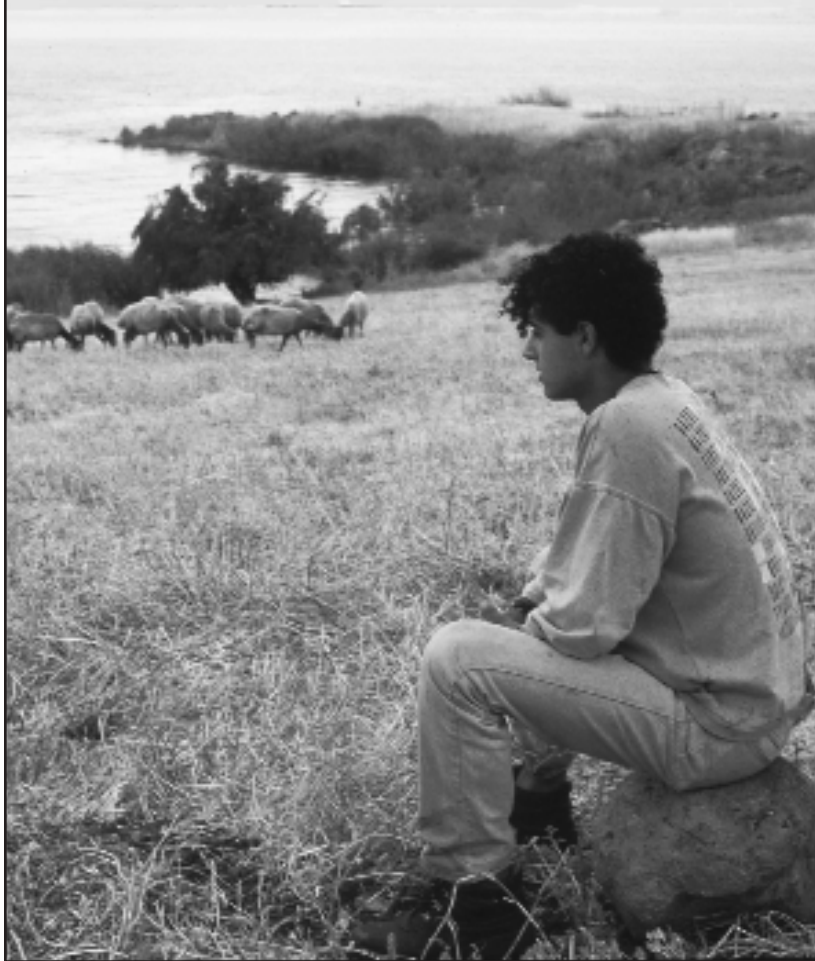
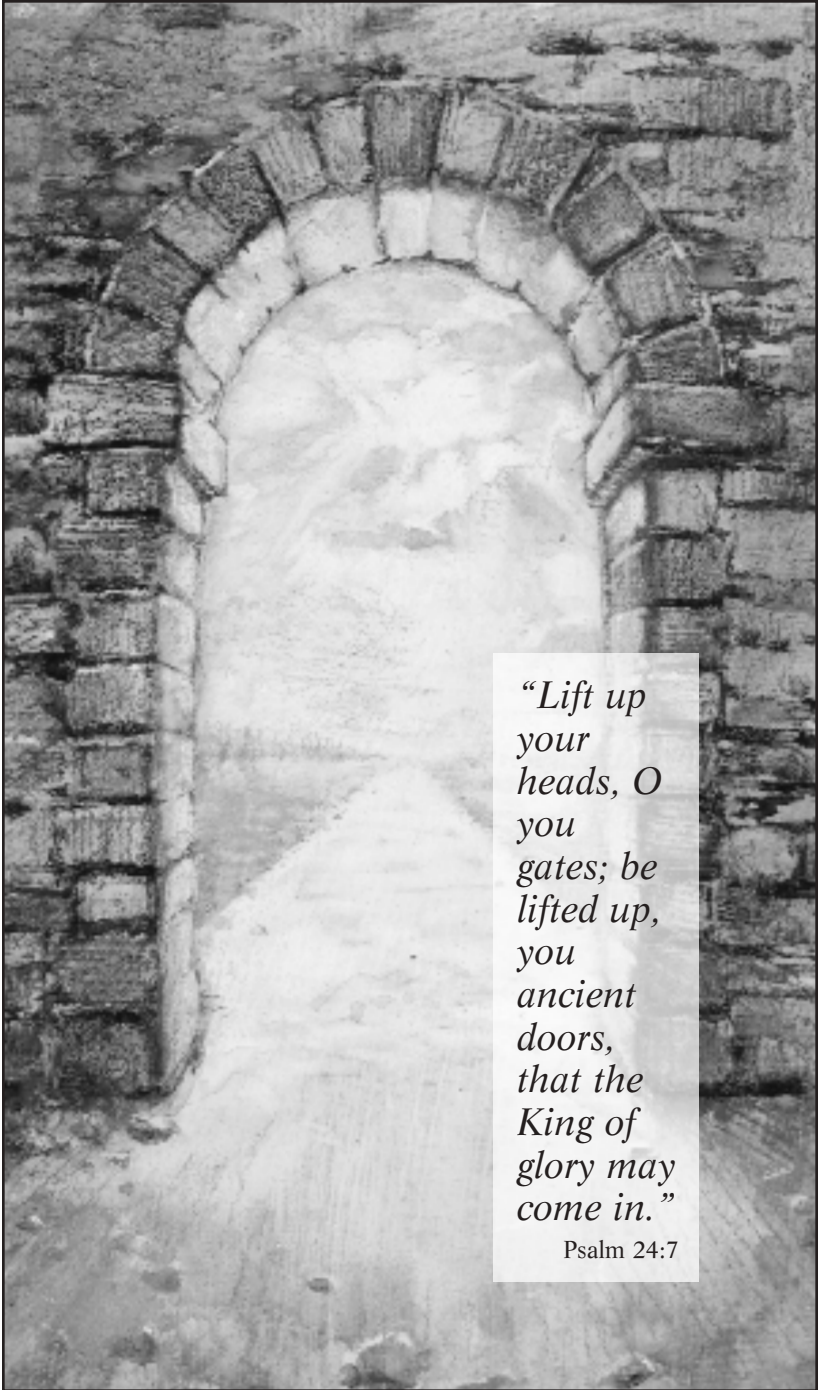


Photo by Barry Stahl—PTM



*“Lift up
your
heads, O
you
gates; be
lifted up,
you
ancient
doors,
that the
King of
glory may
come in.”*

Psalm 24:7

Open up! Let me in!

DAY 24

Psalm 24:1-10

Has anyone in your family been a latch-key kid?
Did you ever get locked out of your house?

1. What does the introduction tell you about the Lord and his claim on us (vs. 1-2; see Ge 1:1-10; 1Co 10:25-26)?
2. What and where was the hill or holy place of the Lord (vs. 3)? What and where is it now?
3. What qualified someone to enter in? Check your answers with Ps 24:3-6 and those derived from Ps 15. Who has already qualified us to enter God's heavenly presence?
4. Have you seen a formal processional—perhaps at a church service or at a wedding or funeral? Can you picture thousands of worshippers proceeding into an assembly hall accompanied by music?
5. Which type of worship does this psalm promote? (a) formal, (b) traditional, (c) modern, (d) free expression, (e) uplifting, (f) style isn't the key—attitude is.

1. What God-honoring requirements for entering worship does this psalm suggest to you? (a) a new praise song book, (b) new clothes, (c) right attitudes, (d) a clear conscience, (e) trust in God, (f) uplifted hands, (g) removal of doors and other barriers to worship.
2. Do you know this King of Glory? Have you let him in through the door of your life?

*This **processional hymn** fits with Psalm 23:6, in raising the question about who may enter God's holy place, or come into his presence. On their annual uphill pilgrimage to Zion, Israelites sang this hymn, which may have been occasioned by David's return of the Ark to Jerusalem (2Sa 6). Zion was on a hilltop surrounded by city gates or doors, which were personified for dramatic effect (24:7, 9). The early church interpreted this Psalm as being prophetic of Christ's ascension into the heavenly sanctuary after his resurrection on Easter morning.*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

Relief Is on the Way

Psalm 25:1-22

OPENING
up to the Word

Could you use some relief right now? Where? (a) illness or health problem, (b) child care, (c) taxes, (d) work or school, (e) other.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What did David ask God for in verses 1-3? In verses 4-7, 11? In verses 16-21?

2. Why was David in trouble again? (a) he fought with every Tom, Dick and Harry; (b) his enemies were a constant threat; (c) his name was mud; (d) everyone was out to get Israel; (e) God allowed trouble to come.

3. Despite his troubles, David was sure of whom he trusted (vs. 8-15), unlike neighboring nations whose fickle gods could not be trusted. What was there about the God of Israel that gave David confidence?

4. When we fear the Lord, what happens? (a) we obey him, (b) we worship him, (c) (d) we have him for a teacher, (e) he always delivers us in the way we expect (f) we fully trust him, wait for him and accept his outcome no matter what.

LIVING
out the Word

1. Are there any elements of David's prayer—the request for protection or guidance, the confession of sin, the affirmation of covenant obligations—that you typically include in your prayers?

2. What makes you hang on to God when the going gets tough?

3. As in David's day, we too are helped by acronyms or memory aids, such as: (a) ASK—ask, seek, knock; (b) ACTS—adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication or (c) ABC—acknowledge, believe, confess. Choose one to close your devotional with.

WINDOW
on the Word

*This is an **acrostic** psalm or alphabetic poem, where each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This mechanical device was used to help people memorize these lyrics.*

Tried, Tested and True

DAY 26

Psalms 26:1-12

How are you at taking tests? Did you ever appeal for a higher grade?

1. Why was David so sure he would pass the integrity test and be delivered? From what you know of David's moral integrity, what grade would you give him?

2. What effect did God's love and truth (vs. 3, 8) have on David—his attitudes, allegiance, associations, actions and appeal (vs. 4-11)?

3. Allegiance to God's love, truth and sanctuary means dissociating from sinners—deceitful men, hypocrites, the wicked and the bloodthirsty. But it also means telling them of God's wonderful deeds (vs. 7, 9)? How does one do both? Did Jesus dissociate himself from sinners?

1. Do you feel comfortable basing your appeal to God solely on your own integrity?

2. In God's integrity test, what grade would you get? What areas of hypocrisy are still present in your life?

3. How can you lead a blameless life, dedicated to God's love, truth and glory and still reflect God's light? Can you do such a thing apart from God?

Blameless life (v. 1). *Imagine anyone but Christ claiming to be blameless, protesting his total innocence, asserting his righteousness or possessing "clean hands." The paradox or pretense of righteousness must be dealt with when interpreting the Psalms. These terms demand a broader theological context to understand them. Here, as elsewhere (see 7:9; 18:20-24), David merely claims innocence with respect to the charges brought against him and claims loyal service to God, in contrast to his enemies. It is not moral or sinless perfection that David claims for himself (see Ps 51; 143:2), but a right relationship with God. If it were otherwise, no one but Christ could pray these psalms. Righteousness is a gift of grace, not a human achievement. The righteousness of the sinner is alluded to in the OT (see Ge 15:1-6), brought out fully in the NT and left as a paradox in these psalms.*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

*“For in the
day of trouble
he will keep
me safe in his
dwelling; he
will hide me
in the shelter
of his
tabernacle and
set me high
upon a rock.”*

Psalm 27:5

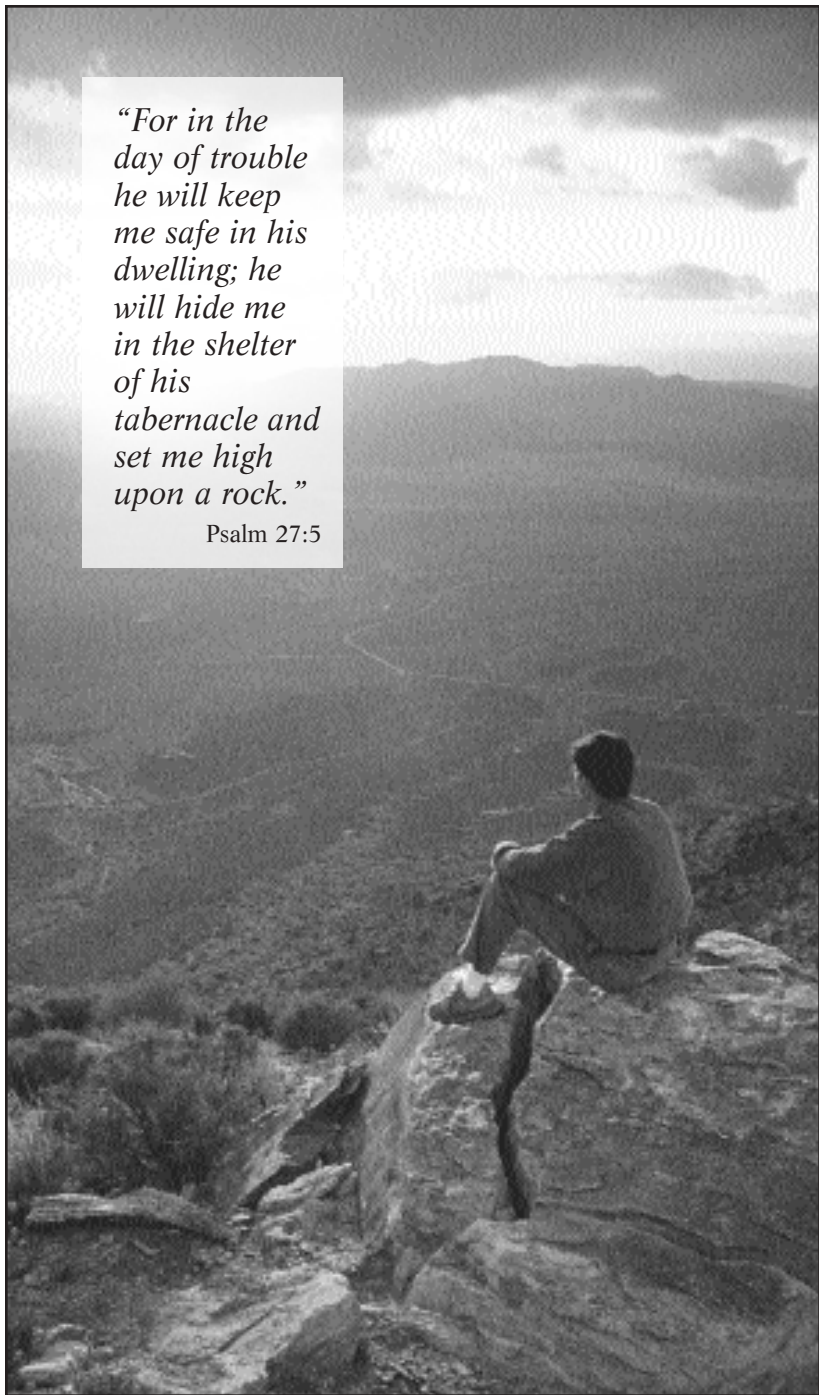


Photo by Michael Warren

Home Is Where the Lord Is

DAY 27

Psalm 27:1-14

Where do you feel most at home—someplace that gives you that warm, secure feeling—where they leave the light on for you?

1. In the face of so many external threats, what aspects of God did David call upon? How did David benefit from knowing the Lord intimately?
2. In what sense was the Lord's temple a sanctuary for David? (a) seeking God first helps one block out worldly concerns; (b) the temple was hard to reach, had strong walls and good hiding places; (c) temples offered political asylum; (d) God's pep talk would help him go to war.
3. Secure in the Lord, what did David boldly ask for (vs. 7-12)?
4. Rejected by family and oppressed by many enemies, David feared the Lord would reject him too. Why?
5. As faith encourages faith, what did David still remember (vs. 13-14)?

1. When you pray, what should you do first—praise or plead? Which did David do first that you can emulate?
2. When you're afraid, how can Jesus be your light? (a) expose and refute evil, (b) guide your next step, (c) be present with you, (d) deliver you from death. In what area of your life do you especially want that light to shine?
3. David could devote his singular focus to worshiping God in his sanctuary (v. 4). Are you that singularly focused?

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

Who Ya Gonna Call?

Psalm 28:1-9

OPENING
up to the Word

You find yourself in jail and can call just one person. Who would you call for help?

DIGGING
into the Word

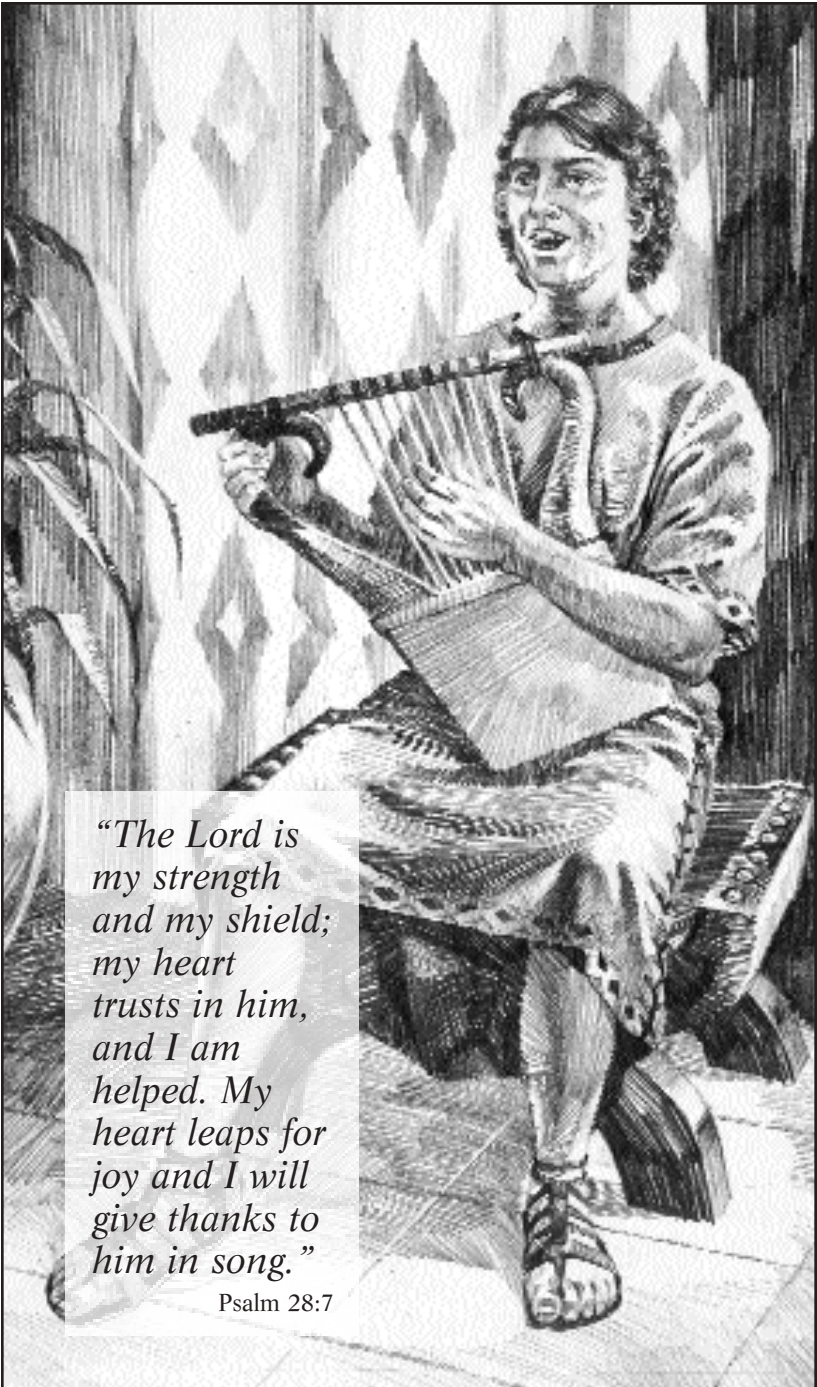
1. From the “pit” (a metaphor for grave), what favors did David ask of God?
 2. What names or qualities did David attribute to God (vs. 1, 7-9)? What did “rock,” “fortress” and “shepherd” imply about God (on *shepherd*, see Ps 23 and note)?
 3. What “works of the Lord” (v. 5) did God do for Israel that reassured David as he prayed through his oppressive situation?
 4. What anointed one or Shepherd-King would “save... bless... and carry” God’s people forever?
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LIVING
out the Word

1. What is your favorite name for God? When do you call him? (a) when you wake up, (b) when in the pit, (c) when preyed upon by others, (d) when feeling good.
 2. This past year, how has Jesus been your rock, fortress or shepherd? Remember, you can be 100% assured that God is hearing and considering your prayers.
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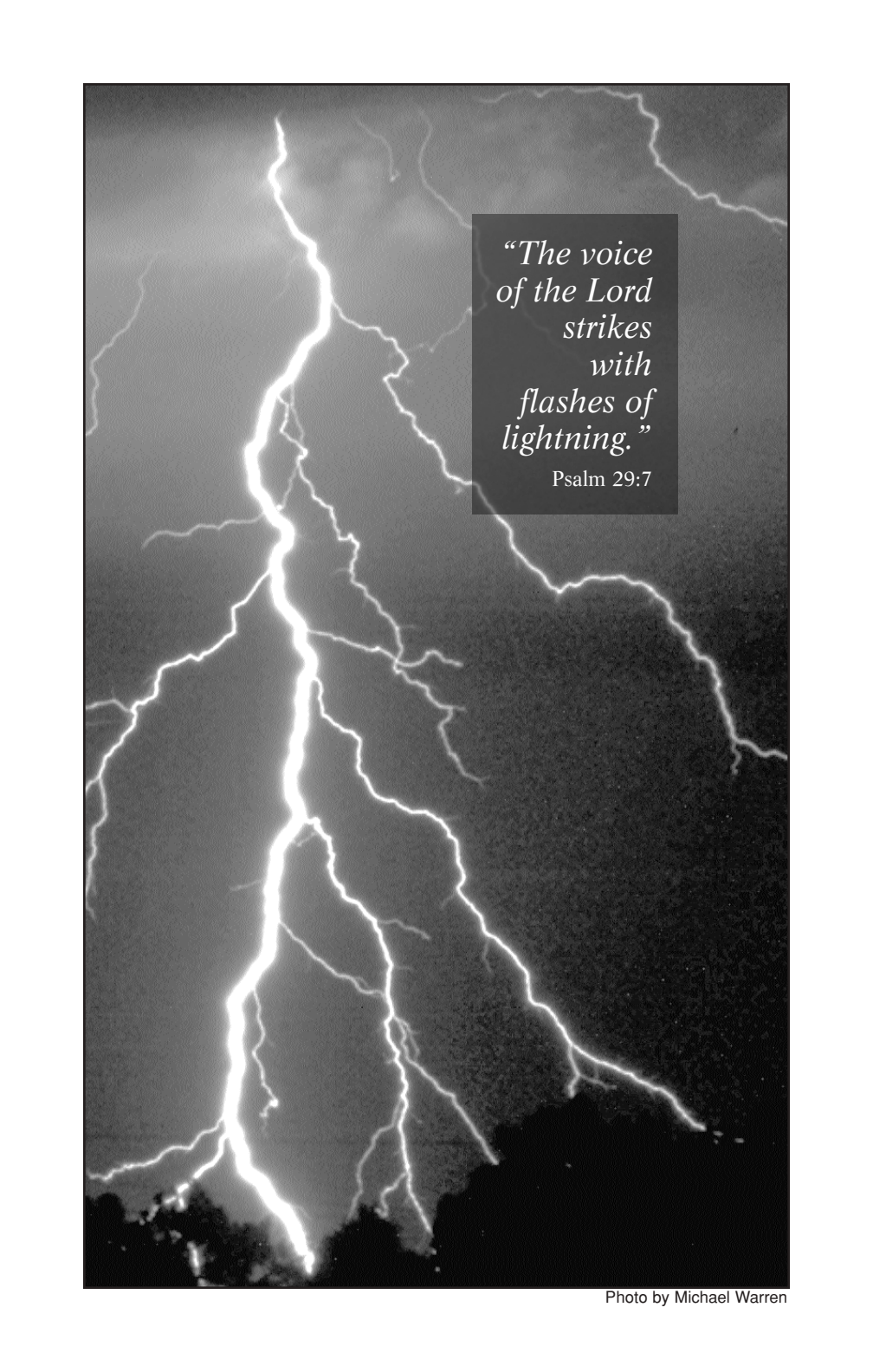
WINDOW
on the Word

*This **song of thanksgiving** begins with a lament (confession of sin or need, vs. 1-5), punctuated by words of assurance or absolution (vs. 6-7), to which the only appropriate congregational response is praise (vs. 8-9).*



*“The Lord is
my strength
and my shield;
my heart
trusts in him,
and I am
helped. My
heart leaps for
joy and I will
give thanks to
him in song.”*

Psalm 28:7



*“The voice
of the Lord
strikes
with
flashes of
lightning.”*

Psalm 29:7

Storm God

DAY 29

Psalm 29:1-11

What's the weather going to be like tomorrow?
Will that affect your mood?

1. How is God like a thunderstorm? (a) he pours it on, (b) he zaps people, (c) he can't be predicted, (d) he blows hot and cold, (e) he's awesome, (f) we're at his mercy.

2. What's the point of "the voice of the Lord" being mentioned time after time?

3. After the awesome storm passed, what did the Lord give his people (v. 11)?

1. Do you hear God in his creation? What natural examples echo God's great power?

2. Can you hear Jesus' voice in and through the storms of life that he allows to come your way? What is he telling you?

The voice of the Lord. This phrase appears seven times in this psalm, which praises the Lord as King of creation whose thunderous voice is heard in thunderstorms. Canaanite mythology said that Baal worked in the thunderstorms. This psalm uses similar imagery to say that the one true God of such storms is Yahweh. All the **mighty ones** (pagan gods or perhaps the angelic host) are to give this Lord the glory due his name. On myths of the Canaanite gods, see related note at Psalm 18.

OPENING

up to the Word

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Weeping Fades, Joy Lasts

Psalm 30:1-12

OPENING
up to the Word

Do you have a friendship that divides the grief and multiplies the joy?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What near-death experience did David seem to have (“grave” and “pit,” v. 3; “destruction,” v. 9; see 1Ch 21:17-30)?

2. On what basis did God heal David? (a) David's perfect life, (b) God's perfect mercy, (c) all weeping fades in time, (d) David's wish was God's command, (e) David's suffering had served its redemptive purpose.

3. Does God ever set limits on personal suffering (vs. 1-5)? How so?

4. Did David put any limits or conditions on the praise of God (vs. 1, 4, 9, 12)?

LIVING
out the Word

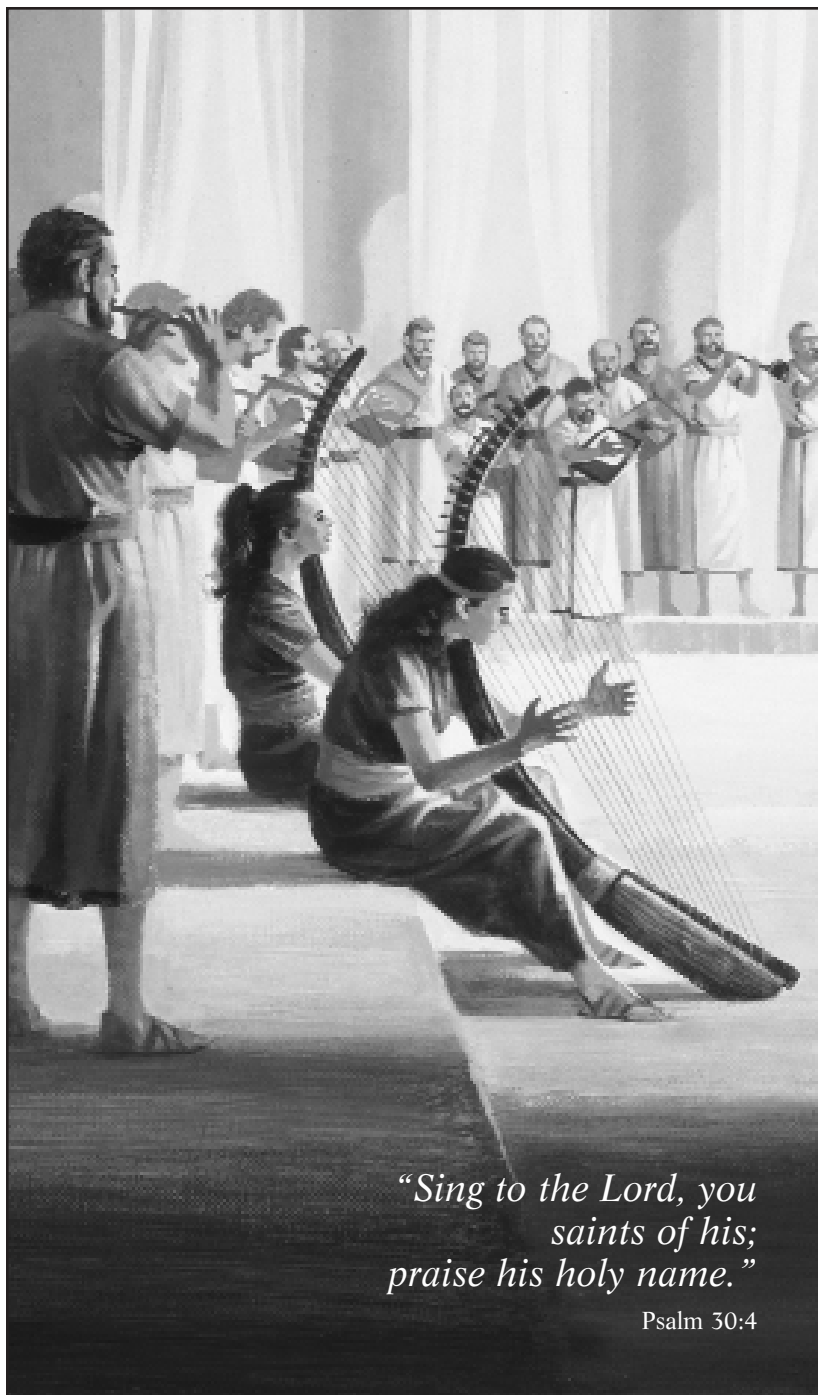
1. Have there been any near-death experiences in your family? Did this have an impact on your life and faith?

2. What problems do you have now that need God's healing touch, that you might again rejoice in the morning?

3. Has Jesus healed you, physically or spiritually?

WINDOW
on the Word

The title and ascription of the psalm to David indicate this psalm was used to rededicate the temple. Scholars believe that the illness and predicament from which he was healed (v. 2), and the act of self-reliance (“I will never be shaken,” v. 6) for which he repented, could well refer to the events recorded in 1 Chronicles 21:1–22:6. Later, Israel would use this hymn in rededicating the temple during Hanukkah.



*“Sing to the Lord, you
saints of his;
praise his holy name.”*

Psalm 30:4