

Overview

Psalm 90 was written by Moses. It is believed to have been written when the people of Israel refused to go in and conquer the promise land (Numbers 13-14). Moses had sent spies into the land. Out of the twelve spies sent into the land only Joshua and Caleb believed God would give the Israelites victory. The other spies said in Numbers 13:31: "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." Numbers 14:2-3 reads: "All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, 'If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! ³ Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword?'" As a result of Israel's lack of faith they were forced to wander in the desert for 40 years until the whole generation of disobedient people passed away. It is believed that in the midst of all these circumstances that Moses wrote Psalm 90. Moses starts out in Psalm 90:1-2 by giving an eternal perspective on God. It is God who created everything; he is from everlasting to everlasting. God has no starting point and no ending point. In verses 3-6 Moses illustrates the brevity of man's life here on earth. All life will return to dust, it is short like a watch in the night, and it is like new grass that quickly springs up, but then withers away. Instead of enjoying the bounty of the promise land the Israelites were going to spend the next 40 years wandering the desert. God had delivered them from Egypt, brought them across the Red Sea, and provided them with food and water. Even all this wasn't enough for them to believe. Their lack of faith had turned their blessing into wrath. In Psalm 90:9 Moses states that this unbelieving generation will "finish our years with a moan." Their years of wandering were just that: pointless. The days, seasons, and years passed by with them living nomadically in the wilderness. They would have nothing to show for it. Psalm 90:12 reads: "Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Moses realizes that life is brief and nobody wants to spend their days wandering.

None of us will find ourselves wandering the desert today. Even with the busyness of schedules we have more time available than any generation in history. We don't have to go hunting or wait for the harvest for us to have food. Where do you spend your time? Do you count your days? Do you treasure the days of your life and view them as a gift from God? When all is said and done everyone will return back to dust. Don't spend your life wandering, filling your days and years with everything possible, except God. Count your days; view your time as a gift given to you not to be used solely for your benefit but for God's.

Bible Study: Psalm 90

1. Read Matthew 6:21. Discuss as a group if the same can be said for time. Where you spend your time is where your heart is also.
2. Read 2 Peter 3:8. God is above all time. All humanity is confined by time. If time and mortality were not an issue then how would you spend your days? Would it be any different than what you are doing now?
3. Read Psalm 90:9-12. Even after all that God had done for Israel they still lacked faith. How do you believe Moses felt wandering in the desert all those years instead of being in the promise land? Discuss a period in your life when you lacked faith and ended up "wandering".
4. In what ways can the perspective of knowing your days are numbered lead to a heart of wisdom?
5. Read Psalm 90:1-6. Concerning these verses, Warren Wiersbe wrote: "These verses explain why human beings need an eternal refuge. We are frail, we are dust, we are creatures of time; unless we are rightly related to the eternal God, we are nothing. Only through faith in Christ can we know God and share His eternal life." In what ways can you keep an eternal perspective within the busyness of life?

6. The last breath of life is an experience that everyone will have. Believers can face it with confidence. Unbelievers can face it with repentance or feel sorrow and anger. In what ways can the way a person handles death speak to how they handled life?

7. Read James 4:13-15. The uncertainty of tomorrow is something we all face. In what ways have you seen people procrastinate spiritually because they believe there will always be a tomorrow?