

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
XC. Handling This Sinful, Brief, Futile, Earthly Life
(Psalm 90:1-17)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Though mankind seeks fulfillment in life, the quest that our forefathers in the Declaration of Independence called “the pursuit of happiness,” many people find life today to be sinful, brief and futile:

(1) It shows up in abuses of our Constitution: ““The American political system is no longer confined to three branches of government as the Constitution’s framers intended . . . Political power . . . now functions as a distributed bureaucratic oligarchy with different expert institutions acting as nodes in a network operated by the ruling class” as “(u)niversities, social media, and news organizations shape public opinion, while (non-governmental agencies), financial institutions, and unelected government bureaucracies create public policy . . . (and) . . . no . . . single elected representative, or even president, is going to . . . erode their position.” (Auron MacIntyre, “The importance of capturing castles,” *The Blaze*, January 3, cited in “Quotable,” Republican-American, January 8, 2024, p. 8A)

(2) It shows up in the Federal Reserve’s anti-growth economic policy: “(T)he Phillips Curve . . . was the . . . ‘theory’ by neo-Keynesian economists of the 1960s and 1970s that to slow inflation, the Federal Reserve needs to raise unemployment and slow down economic growth. The . . . concept of an inverse relationship between unemployment and inflation blew up when it was put into practice in the mid-1970s and the result was rising inflation AND rising unemployment. Then in the 1980s and ‘90s, with free-market supply-side policies in place, we had low inflation and low unemployment . . . What Americans want right now is prosperity,” but “(n)either Congress nor the Fed are taking us there . . .” (Stephen Moore, “The tyranny of anti-growth economics,” *Ibid.*, January 1, 2024, p. 8A)

(3) It shows up in the widespread cheating that occurs in academia: “Claudine Gay resigned as president” of Harvard due in part to her academic “plagiarism . . . But” in “a Harvard Crimson survey, 25% of the class of 2023 reported having cheated, including nearly one-fifth of those with 4.0 grade-point averages . . . Friends who teach at colleges say faculty often don’t report plagiarism or cheating to administrators because the process of doing so is laborious, and students often get off with a slap on the wrist . . . Nontenured professors” hesitate to report cheating as they “worry about poor student evaluations – which may determine whether their contracts are renewed . . . Faculty are also often intimidated by students who impugn their motives if they try to clamp down on cheating . . . (So,) failure to enforce academic integrity standards has created an air of impunity among students.” (Allysia Finley, “Claudine Gay and the Cheating Crisis on Campus,” The Wall Street Journal, January 8, 2024, p. A17)

(4) It shows up as a form of “shamanism” in evangelicalism: The Word of Faith movement takes the Mark 11:24 claim that whatever we ask in prayer, we should believe that we have received it and it will be ours, and it adds the idea that “words can be used to manipulate the faith-force, and thus actually create what they believe Scripture promises . . . Laws supposedly governing the faith-force are said to operate independently of God’s sovereign will and that God Himself is subject to these laws.” (“Is the Word of Faith movement biblical?” gotquestions.org; “Examples of Occultism in our World and the Church,” September 10, 2000, John Ankerberg Show, jashow.org)

It is idolatrous to say that God is subject to anything! However, believers with friends under Word of Faith influence have asked me, “Should we anoint our home with oil and pray a hedge of protection around it?” “Can we decree or declare something to be?” “Can we use a set prayer formula to motivate God to give us what we desire?”

Need: *So, we ask, “How does God want us to handle the often sinful, brief, futile, earthly life that we face today?!”*

- I. **The introductory notes of Psalm 90, part of the Hebrew text (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1055), state that Moses wrote the psalm, and it conveys Moses’ grief over the sinful, brief, seemingly vain lives of his generation:**
- A. Psalm 90 contrasts “God’s eternity with human transitoriness, and” confesses “that man’s days pass away in God’s wrath,” so Moses “prayed that the compassionate God would give His people success for their labors and joy for their sorrows.” (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 859)
 - B. The historical setting fits this theme: Moses witnessed the tragic death of an entire generation of Israel in the wilderness due to their sin against God (cf. Numbers 14:22-23) while Moses himself was also destined to die without entering the Promised Land because of his own sin as God’s messenger in Numbers 20:1-13!
 - C. Accordingly, in Psalm 90, “Moses acknowledges the eternity of God (vv. 1-2), the frailty of man (vv. 3-6), the sinfulness of man (vv. 7-8), the shortness of life (vv. 9-12), and prays for God’s grace on His people (vv. 13-17).” (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Psalm 90)

- II. However, God graciously answered Moses' petition in a way that has edifying application for us today:**
- A. Though God punished Moses for sin in causing him to die in the land of Moab without entering the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 34:1-6), the Lord graciously set him in the Promised Land after his death in his glorified body at the Transfiguration of Christ in Matthew 17:1-3! This was a foretaste of life in Christ's coming Messianic Kingdom, showing that Moses will dwell in the Promised Land without a sin nature and without the record of sin due to God's merciful glorification of Moses due to the cross of Christ! (1 Corinthians 15:51-58)
 - B. Fittingly, then, when Moses appeared with the prophet Elijah at Christ's transfiguration, both men spoke with Jesus about His coming atonement for sin on the cross (Luke 9:28-31), God's basis for handling man's sin!
 - C. Furthermore, Moses' closing request in Psalm 90:17 was that God might establish the work of the hands of His people that their lives not be lived in futility, and God has answered this prayer for us believers today:
 - 1. 1 John 2:17 declares that though the sinful world system and its lusts of the flesh, of the eyes and of the pride of this earthly life are passing away, the believer in Christ who does the will of God remains forever!
 - 2. For us believers today, the will of God consists of heeding God's commands for life and service through dependence on the Holy Spirit as we use the spiritual gifts God has given us for Christian service!
 - 3. God will evaluate our works in eternity, and those works that gain His praise will remain forever, and we will receive eternal rewards for them! (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 19:8 ESV)

Lesson: *Disturbed over the sinful, brief, seemingly futile existence of himself and his generation of Israel in the wilderness, Moses asked God to show them mercy and to establish their works that their existence might not be vain. In reply, God through Christ will give spiritual victory in His Kingdom to all believers in history and make it possible for us believers today to have our works that are performed in God's will last forever with eternal rewards.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we obey God's Scriptural directives regarding life and service for Him that we might see our works last forever with God's eternal rewards.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

The works God has for us to do in response to the issues of concern in our introduction are stated in Scripture, and we note them here that our response to those issues might last forever with God's eternal rewards (as follows):

(1) On the overpowering abuses of our nation's Constitution by "the ruling class," (a) though our nation's Constitution gives us valued individual liberties, since it also provides for a republican form of government where the people elect their leaders, the Constitution's weakness is its presumption that the people and their elected officials will remain upright even though 2 Timothy 3:13 predicted that people would go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived! Increasing sin has led to the abuses of our Constitution! (b) Thus, God calls us (i) to obey every ordinance of man for our testimony (1 Peter 2:11-17), with the exception that we obey God over man when God's and man's demands of us differ (Acts 5:29), and (ii) to recall that our ultimate citizenship is in heaven where no sin exists (Philippians 3:20 NIV), so that we live and work for Christ's future righteous, sovereign, blessed monarchy on earth.

(2) On cheating that occurs in higher education, (a) cheating ultimately hurts the cheater as it hurts his own learning, so instead of cheating, we students must work to learn that we might be better equipped to succeed in life. Proverbs 14:23 claims that in all toil there is profit, and working hard to learn well is in our best interests as students.

(3) On the Federal Reserve's "neo-Keynesian" anti-growth policy, (a) John Maynard Keynes from whom "neo-Keynesian" economists rose "was a Fabian Socialist who believed wealth could – and should – be redistributed through many means," one being "to use a continuous process of inflation to steal the majority of the people's wealth. Only one man in a million, he reasoned, would know what was happening." (Brannon S. Howse, Marxianity, 2018, p. 159) (b) Stealing is sin (Exodus 20:15), so we should not adopt Marxist ideology like Fabian Socialists who seek a one world government by evolving societies through many crises into socialism (Brannon Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 478-479), but work for our own living like Ephesians 4:28 with 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12 teach.

(4) On the evangelical "shamanism" in the Word of Faith movement, though Jesus in Mark 11:24 pledged that whatever we ask in prayer, if we believe we will receive it, He did *not* say that we are to imagine whatever we want to imagine to possess and acquire it by some set prayer formula from a "faith-force" to which God Himself is subject! Rather, 1 John 5:14-15 asserts that if we ask anything *according to God's will*, He hears us and gives us what we ask! God is the sole God and Sovereign Lord of the universe (Isaiah 45:5-7), *so we must pray in accord with God's will!*

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we obey God's Scriptural directives to see our works last forever with eternal reward.