

1. This lesson covers Psalms 6 through 8. What is interesting to me is there is a neat progression to these Psalms that can bless our lives. Since you're here, ☺ let me explain further:
  - a) Psalm 6 is a confessional psalm that focuses on our sins and in effect asks God to forgive us of the sins we have become aware of committing.
  - b) Psalm 7 then says in effect, "OK, now that I've turned over my sins to You, I can focus on what is happening around me. I realize that I need Your help in dealing with what is happening in my life and I can't get through this situation without Your help."
  - c) Psalm 8 then says in effect, "I've cleared my conscious of what I have done wrong and what others have done wrong around me. I have put both of those things into your hands. Now, I am free to praise You God, just because of You are and because You have created all of the world and have given me the ability to praise You for who You are."
  - d) The purpose of these three psalms "together" is to teach us to let go of what is bothering us so we can just praise God and enjoy a two-way love relationship between Him and us.
    - i) Was that the intent of whoever organized these three Psalms to place them in this order for us to see that progression? I don't know, I just see this pattern of how they together draw us closer to Him. My job is just to report this to you. ☺
2. That does not mean there are also wonderful things to learn from each of the psalms. There are lessons in confessing our sins to Him and how to deal with others who have hurt us.
  - a) At the same time, God wants us to just enjoy our relationship with Him. In order to do that we have to let go of both what we have done wrong and what others have done wrong that have affected us. Once we let go of those factors, we can enjoy the type of relationship that God desires for us: One of peace, one of joy in our worship of Him and one of trusting in God for who He is and what He has done for our lives.
3. Let me ask an implied question here: Does that mean we don't pray for others? Of course not. That is covered all through the bible, but it is not the point of these three psalms.
  - a) The purpose of the psalms is about expressing our love to God. These three psalms focus on our personal relationship with God and teach how we grow in that relationship.
  - b) God wants a loving relationship with us. In order to have that loving relationship, we need to let go of things we have done wrong and let go of things that worry us. Then and only then can we have the type of loving relationship God wants between Himself and us.
4. Let me explain this principal about a loving relationship with God another way: The one thing God desires on His end is a loving relationship with people. If God "is" a God of love, then He wants to express that love upon something and He has chosen people to express that love upon.
  - a) What God wants in return, is for us to love Him in return, not because we have to, but just because we want to. We have to let go of whatever is bothering us so we can have a loving relationship with Him, and that is the point of these three psalms.
  - b) OK, with that uplifting introduction completed, ☺ let's start with Psalm 6.
5. As I stated, Psalm 6 is a "confessional" Psalm. It focuses on confessing our sins to God.
  - a) This Psalm, along with about six others scattered through the book of Psalms, focuses on the topic of confession. So if there are total of seven psalms on confession, why aren't they in a nice neat row, or combined as one psalm when we want to confess something?
    - i) What I suspect the answer is (which means I don't know for sure) is that there are going to be times in our lives as believers in God where we do feel guilty about something, and those times are usually not on consecutive days of our lives.
    - ii) Just as we grow in our faith in God, so comes times every now and then when we realize something needs to be confessed and thus we pause to confess our sins.

- b) Does that mean I have to turn to Psalm 6 or "psalm whatever" when I need to confess my sins? No, confession just a matter of telling God He was right about something and we were wrong and now we are going to make an effort to do things His way.
  - c) So if we don't need individual psalms to confess our sins, what is the purpose of Psalm 6?
    - i) The purpose is to give instruction on how to examine areas of our life that need confessing. It is about letting go of the things we have done wrong so we can then enjoy the peace of a wonderful relationship with God.
    - ii) With that said, we can actually start this Psalm.
6. Psalm 6, introduction: For the director of music. With stringed instruments. According to *sheminith*. A psalm of David.
- a) Like the other psalms that mention music, the original music for this psalm is long gone. (Some bible scholars have guesses at the original music, but that is about it.)
  - b) Because this psalm is to be directed to music, we do know that this is a "public psalm", in that it was not just meant to be prayed privately, but to be performed in a group setting.
  - c) The introduction also has an untranslated Hebrew word: "sheminith". This word, which essentially means, "go up one octave". For those who are not familiar with music, there are seven basic notes that repeat at higher or lower levels. This musical direction tells the singer or choir to go up a series of notes. My guess (it is just that) is the going up one octave is to show the seriousness of confessing our sins to God.
7. Psalm 6, Verse 1: O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath.
- a) The plea is to not be punished when God is angry. The idea is that David knew he was guilty of some sin. David is asking God to go easy on him for punishment he deserves.
    - i) There is a mistaken notion in Christianity that God does not punish us when we confess our sins. When we do confess, God instantly forgives us. That is the principal behind 1st John 1:9. My point here is that God still may want to teach us things due to our sin. God will still correct us for our sin. Let me explain:
    - ii) What God can and often does is allow "things" to happen in our life due to that sin. Things could go wrong due to that sin, or God may simply allow things to happen to teach us the consequences of that sin.
    - iii) My point is there is a difference between "forgiveness" and punishment. Think of a parent and a small child. The parent may have forgiven their child the moment they did whatever they did wrong, but the parent still punishes the child to teach the child that there is consequences for doing a bad action.
  - b) This leads us back to God. A loving God "loves us too much to leave us alone". If God simply just forgave us every time we confessed a sin, and there were never any consequences, we would have no reason to fear repeating that sin. If we suffered some sort of consequences due to that sin, we would avoid that sin in the future.
  - c) This leads me back to the opening line of this psalm. My question is, is David pleading with God to avoid punishment or avoiding God's wrath?
    - i) Going back to our parent and child example, it is usually a mistake for a parent to punish a child in anger. It is best for a parent to wait until they are not angry before disciplining the child. That is the prayer request being made here.
    - ii) Does this mean God has mood swings and we want to wait until God is in a good mood before being punished? ☺ Of course not. David is not requesting to avoid punishment. David is asking God to go easy on him because he understood what he did was wrong and he is pleading with God to "ease up".
  - d) So what does this mean to you and I? It has to do with our awareness of what we have done wrong and our plea to God to "ease up" on punishment, not that we don't deserve to be "chastened", but because we know what we did is wrong.

8. Verse 2: Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am faint; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are in agony.
- a) The second verse is another plea for God to "ease up" on punishment.
  - b) Like I mentioned in the last lesson, when the word "LORD" is all in capitals, it is a way of referring to God's most holy name, which is usually pronounced "Jehovah". The idea of stating God's name is to remind us in effect God is capable of doing anything at anytime.
  - c) Verse 2 is an emphasis on David's pain. David is very aware of what he did wrong, just as we are usually aware of our sins before God.
    - i) The question for us is, are we "agonizing" over the sins we have committed? Do we hate those sins equally or more than we love ourselves? That is the type of agony David feels at this moment.
  - d) Let me approach our sins another way: Most of us again, are very aware of our short comings and are aware of our sins before God.
    - i) Often, we complain that we should have "done better" in the sense that we think we are capable of being better people. The mistake we make is to think that we are better than we really are. The reason we ask for God's blessing is that is the only way we can live the life God desires for us. We ask for His strength in order to do His will. In other words, one cannot live the Christian life without God's help to do so, in the first place.
  - e) This leads me back to Verse 2. David is pleading for God's mercy. For those who don't know, the concept of God's "mercy" is about avoiding the punishment for what we do deserve. On the other hand, God's "grace" is about receiving blessing that we do not deserve. God promises both His mercy and His grace are there "for the asking". In this verse, we are focusing on His mercy.
  - f) In summary, David knows he deserves to be punished for some unnamed sin, but He is pleading for mercy in this particular situation. He is pleading for God to "ease up on me" because David is aware that this sin has offended God.
  - g) I'm a big believer that Christians can't "get away with anything". What I mean by that is that nonbelievers are less likely to get caught doing some sort of "sinful" activity. That is again because God loves us too much to leave us alone.
    - i) The unbeliever will face God's wrath for ignoring Him all of their lives.
    - ii) The Christian faces God's punishment in this lifetime as again, God loves us too much to leave us alone.
    - iii) Given that fact, we should pray for His mercy and His grace and we should confess our sins before Him when we become aware of them.
  - h) John, you said this psalm is meant to be sung publicly. Does that mean I have to wait until I am in a group setting to confess my sins before God? Of course not.
    - i) It means it is appropriate for a group to pray for mercy based on something that group is guilty of, before God. For example, a group such as a church body can be guilty before God as they collectively refuse to turn to Him. My point here is that sins may not be something we personally did, but a sin that we as a "group" have collectively allowed to exist and we have not done anything to stop that sin.
      - a) For those who were with me through my study of the book of Joshua, there was a time where God punished the entire nation of Israel due to the sin of one person. God did that to get the attention of the "whole group" and make that group aware that God has no tolerance for that type of sin.
        - (1) (Reference: Joshua Chapter 7.)
    - ii) Does that mean, for example, God will punish say, our whole church of the sins of say, one individual? He can, if He wants to get the groups attention for that sin.
      - a) There are times when I believe it is important for a church or a Christian group to stop and silently confess areas of sin of their life. That is a form of "group confession".

9. Verse 3: My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long?
  - a) Whatever David did to get to this point of sorrow for his sins, he turned to God and asked in effect, "How long do I have to suffer for this sin?" No answer is given.
  - b) The issue here is not confession, but suffering due to the consequences of that sin. David is asking God for relief and I have learned from experience that God does give relief when He believes it is time for such relief.
  - c) Let me think of an example: Suppose one suffers from a long addiction problem and now one have given their life to Christ. They may have to spend years dealing with the effects of that past problem. I've seen cases where God takes away the "urges" instantly and I've seen cases where such people have to spend years dealing with those issues. What helps is to know that God is watching out for you and will guide you through whatever you do have to deal with in relation to a sin issue. That is the essence of this verse.
10. Verse 4: Turn, O LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love.
  - a) Verse 4 is similar to Verse 3, but makes one key (different) point. David is not asking God to help him because David is a "good person", but because of God's unfailing love. We don't petition God based on how good we are, but solely based on His love for us.
  - b) OK John, how do you tie His love with punishment? The answer is that God "loves" those He disciplines. Good parents punish their children because they love their children. The same principal applies to God and His relationship with those who love Him.
  - c) This whole prayer can be summarized in effect by saying, "I messed up, I confess my sins to you (God) and now I trust in Your love to relieve me and do what You see best."
11. Verse 5: No one remembers you when he is dead. Who praises you from the grave?
  - a) The purpose of Verse 5 is that the only time we can cry out to God to make a difference for our lives here on earth is when (emphasis on when) we are living on earth.
    - i) In other words, you or I can't make our lives on earth better after we are dead.
  - b) It may help to discuss what this verse is not saying:
    - i) It is not saying when one dies, one "evaporates forever" as Jehovah Witnesses argue based on this verse. It is not saying people in heaven cannot pray. (On that question the bible is fairly silent.) It has nothing to do with the suffering of hell.
  - c) The verse is simply saying that the only time one can cry out to the Lord for the forgiveness of their own sins is when they are on earth. Those who have already died no longer get to respond to God that way.
12. Verse 6: I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears. <sup>7</sup> My eyes grow weak with sorrow; they fail because of all my foes.
  - a) Speaking of "confessing" to God when one is still alive, I give you Verse 6 and 7: Verse 6 says in effect that David has "groaned so much" that his bed and his couch are covered in his tears. Verse 7 says that David's eyes grow weak due to all the sorrow He has gone through complaining about his sins. The final phrase says his eyes fail because of all the "damage" in front of him due to his enemies.
    - i) First of all, let us remember this is poetry. It is to be taken seriously, not literally.
    - ii) I don't know the circumstance that caused David to be in this much pain. There are theories out there as to when David wrote this, but no one knows for sure.
  - b) Here's the point for you and me. It does not mean that we have to cry "this much" before God responds to our confessions of our sins. The point has to do with the realization of the pain caused when we make the decision to turn from God in sin.
    - i) What we should model is David's behavior in his hatred of things God hates, which in one word is sin. Whatever sin David committed, he understood that it was due to the consequence of turning from God. Now David is suffering for those decisions.
    - ii) David is saying in effect, "I have suffered due to the sins I have committed and I ask God to give me relief. I am tired of suffering for these sins and I want relief.

- c) That is a good prayer to pray. There have been times in my life where I have prayed in effect, "Lord I don't know what to do next. I can't take this particular pain anymore". Usually but not always, God does come and rescue me fairly quickly. Other times there is something He still wants to teach me and lets me suffer for a longer period.
    - i) When we realize we have messed up due to some sin, we should stop and think about our part in that situation and turn the whole thing over to God. A prayer of confession is a prayer of "letting go" and giving it to God. It is a prayer of the realization of the pain caused by our sins and a desire to turn from that action that was displeasing to God to begin with.
13. Verse 8: Away from me, all you who do evil, for the LORD has heard my weeping. <sup>9</sup> The LORD has heard my cry for mercy; the LORD accepts my prayer.
- a) Let me stop and ask a question: Did you think David's problems instantly went away right after he prayed this prayer? Of course not. David knew that God accepted this prayer not based on how much David has cried, but based on the fact he has surrendered the whole situation into God's hands.
  - b) David understands that God does forgive sins when we truly let go of the sin and give it to Him. David understood that God does show mercy to those who confess their sins and that is how David knew that God was going to be merciful upon him.
  - c) The first part of Verse 8 has David's cry to "for those who do evil to get away from me". In effect, it is David saying, "I want to do God's will and I don't want any part of those people who don't want God in their lives". Part of the confession of sin is to say in effect we don't want to be part of any lifestyle where one does not seek God in the first place.
    - i) Turning from one's sins is more than just confessing they are wrong and praying for God's help. It is also the desire to turn away from those who wish to draw us back toward that particular sin or bad habit.
    - ii) We may have to face such people on a daily basis. We may simply have to say the next time they ask us to join them, to say no. We can pray for God's strength to help us turn from such people, and God will give us that strength if we are willing to ask Him for our help.
  - d) This leads me back to David. Do I think his life "got better quickly"? I would guess that it did, not in terms of facing his enemies, but now his heart is in the right place, and now that he has confessed his sins, God can lead him down the path He wants for David.
    - i) My point here is once we are willing to turn from sin, I am positive God does lead us down a road that He desires for our lives which is always a "healthier" route than the one if we continued to live with that particular sin.
14. Verse 10: All my enemies will be ashamed and dismayed; they will turn back in sudden disgrace.
- a) This psalm ends with a promise that David's enemies will be ashamed and dismayed. So what does that mean? It means that David is a "winner" no matter what happens to his life because he is trusting in God. It also means a judgment day is coming for all people. For the Christian, eternal judgment is only about our rewards based on our faithfulness in our relationship with God. For the unbeliever, judgment day is about paying the price for refusing to accept God's forgiveness.
  - b) So does this verse refer to eternal judgment or something in this lifetime? The answer can be both. When we make the decision to live for God, others do take notice. Over the long run such people who live for themselves will "lose" whether they realize it or not.
  - c) Let me describe this verse a different way: Do you think it is fair for one to suffer eternally for the sins of one lifetime? Suppose someone was a nice religious person, but they refused to turn to Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. Do they deserve to go to hell?
    - i) The problem is the "nice person" is trying to please God based on his or her own goodness. God is perfect and He requires perfect forgiveness to spend eternity with Him. The issue is rejection of God's free gift of eternal forgiveness.

- ii) Another answer is that "hell" is often giving people what they want. If someone chooses to ignore God for a lifetime here, that desire is continued for eternity.
  - iii) Part of the answer is that if we want to spend eternity with a perfect God, then we need to be perfect ourselves. For those who refuse to seek God's forgiveness, such people have to be "wasted away" for eternity as not to damage those who do seek God's forgiveness for eternity.
  - iv) The problem (for a lack of a better word) is that our souls live forever. Our bodies wear out, but our souls live forever. Eternal punishment is not based on how "bad we are", it is based on our decision to accept or refuse God's forgiveness of sin.
    - a) God cannot "undo" what He has created by destroying our souls. All God can do is give us what we want forever, which is either life in His presence or life without His presence.
  - v) What about children who die young or those who never heard of God? I believe a fair God will judge people fairly and in short I don't worry about those situations.
  - vi) OK, enough dealing with the issue of sin. It's time to move on to Psalm 7.
15. Psalm 7 - introduction: A *shiggaion* of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush, a Benjamite.
- a) Psalm 7 is another psalm written by David. The title says this psalm concerns someone named Cush, who was an Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin. The most likely (scholars are not positive) reference is about a man who told lies about David to Saul, the existing king of Israel at that time. The theory goes that Cush told lies about David in order for Cush to gain in his own standing with King Saul.
    - i) Whether or not that story is true, the point is one can see the anger David has against Cush for committing slander and that anger comes out in this psalm.
  - b) The title has an untranslated word "shiggaion". The meaning is not known. It may be a musical term. It may be describing the type of psalm and how David cried out to God.
16. Verse 1: O LORD my God, I take refuge in you; save and deliver me from all who pursue me,
- a) Well, whatever is going on with David at the time of this psalm, it is "not good". David opens the psalm asking God to help David from those who are pursuing him. Given this verse, many suspect David wrote it during the long period of time he was fighting against King Saul. The important thing is not that David is in trouble. The important thing is that David understood that God could help him through this situation.
  - b) We often make the mistake of turning to God as a "last resort". In other words we try anything and everything to get out of the mess we are in before turning to God. David is teaching us the opposite, which is to turn over our problems to God first, and then let Him guide us to work out our situation.
17. Verse 2: or they will tear me like a lion and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue me.
- a) I don't know if David is being literal or figurative as far as seeing his enemies as someone who will rip open David like a lion. Here is what I do know. Whatever problems we are facing, it often seems so bad that it appears as if it is too big for us to handle. That is why this psalm is reminding us that no matter how big or how small of an issue we face, God cares about our life and wants us to turn our problems over to Him.
  - b) OK John, I get that point. Once I pray about it and give it to God, what do I do next?
    - i) The answer is we still have to use whatever resources we have to tackle the problems that are in front of us. The good news is we have given the outcome to God and we can know that He is leading us down the path He wants to lead us to use that situation, ultimately for His own glory.
    - ii) To put it another way, if God has not made it clear to us what to do next, the answer may be "wait" or the answer may be just to use what resources we have available and let God worry about the results.
  - c) Meanwhile, David is in trouble. ☺

18. Verse 3: O LORD my God, if I have done this and there is guilt on my hands-- <sup>4</sup> if I have done evil to him who is at peace with me or without cause have robbed my foe-- <sup>5</sup> then let my enemy pursue and overtake me; let him trample my life to the ground and make me sleep in the dust.  
*Selah*
- a) At this point in the psalm, David is saying in effect, "If I have done something wrong that offends you, Oh God, then let this enemy win over me and let me die at his hands."
    - i) What is implied is David either does not believe he did anything wrong or is unaware of any sin he committed regarding this incident.
  - b) What David is praying for, is for God to reveal to him what it is he did to cause him to be in this mess in the first place. This psalm is saying in effect, "Lord, I don't know what I did to deserve the situation I am in, but if I did something wrong, let me know."
    - i) The revelation of any sin we have committed may or may not get us out of the problem at hand. However, it may bring an end to why God allowed this "situation" to happen in our life and therefore it is an important question one has to ask oneself when one is in a difficult situation.
  - c) Another way to put this psalm so far is, "Lord, before I ask you to deal with the problem I am facing right now. Is there anything that I did wrong that I should be aware of?"
    - i) If God does reveal something to us that offends Him, it is simply a matter of confessing that sin as wrong and vowing to do better in the future.
  - d) This verse ends in a *Selah*, which again is an untranslated Hebrew word which means to pause and consider what the author is saying. Psalm 7 is saying to consider when we are facing problems, to ask God to show us areas of our life that may have caused the situation to get as bad as it is.
    - i) Grant it, the answer may be nothing we did, but we won't know the answer unless we ask God in the first place if there is something for Him to reveal to us.
19. Verse 6: Arise, O LORD, in your anger; rise up against the rage of my enemies. Awake, my God; decree justice.
- a) Apparently David felt confident enough that he didn't do anything wrong in this situation so now he could ask God to help out in this battle that David is facing.
  - b) David is not saying he is sin free. He is just saying up to Verse 6 that he can't think of any reason or God has not shown him any reason why this bad situation is happening to him.
  - c) Given the fact that David can't find any personal fault, the next thing David does is cry out to God in effect to do something about David's problem here.
    - i) There is nothing wrong with asking God to do something. The key is once we pray what we want, we let go of the situation and say it is now "God's problem".
  - d) Notice David tells God to arise and awake in the first words of each sentence. This does not mean God is asleep and David has to wake God up. ☺ It means that from David's perspective, God is not acting on David's timing to deal with this problem.
    - i) There is nothing wrong with asking God to act now. We just have to remember that God is going to work things out His way on His timing. Since we don't know what God is going to do, we can ask for Him to act now.
  - e) There is a "strange relationship" between God and people in terms of how He gets involved in our lives. I believe God knows all things and cannot learn. At the same time I do believe that God responds to our prayers and acts accordingly. I can't reconcile that, other than to say that God exists outside of time and He knows what we are going to say to Him in prayer and He responds to our prayers when it is His will to do so.
    - i) Let me give an example. Lets say we have been traveling for miles in the middle of "nowhere". We ask God if He can provide somewhere for us to rest. All of a sudden a motel appears. The point is, God knew that motel would be there, but we didn't. From our perspective, it was still an answer to prayer.
    - ii) Meanwhile, David is still in trouble.

20. Verse 7: Let the assembled peoples gather around you. Rule over them from on high; <sup>8</sup> let the LORD judge the peoples. Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, according to my integrity, O Most High.
- a) David appears to be "stepping back" from his problems of the moment to focus on the big picture: That picture is to realize that God is in charge, He does rule over the world, those that love God in a sense, gather around God.
  - b) David is asking God to judge him according to his (David's) righteousness. David understood that he was not perfect. David is saying in effect, "God I am not perfect, but because I trust in the fact You have perfectly cleansed me of my sins, I can approach You."
    - i) That is what David meant by his righteousness. It is not about David being perfect, but this is about God being perfect.
    - ii) The other point is David has enemies. David wanted God to punish his enemies not because David was a good person, but because David was trusting in Him.
21. Verse 9: O righteous God, who searches minds and hearts, bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure.
- a) In this verse, David is asking God to separate those who do not have a heart for God and bring their wickedness to an end.
  - b) Let me ask a difficult question: Can we pray for God to hurt others as opposed to praying for others to draw closer to Him? The truth here is that David is in too much pain from whatever this Cush guy did to him, and David is giving that pain to God to deal with.
    - i) The positive news is that David knew that God was the solution to dealing with whatever Cush did. David knew that however this situation was to going to work out, starts by asking God to do the right thing for David dealing with Cush.
    - ii) In other words, David is in trouble and he needs God to bring to end the violence that is occurring around him due to something caused by nonbelievers.
    - iii) Then say in effect, "God this is your problem. If you want to save that person, lead them down the right path. If not, then bring his or her bad plans to an end."
  - c) OK John, good for David. ☺ What does that have to do with me? All people are either for God or against Him. So is it ok to pray for someone's destruction if they are not a believer? I believe the correct idea is to pray for God to limit or stop the damage the wicked are doing.
    - i) Let me give you an example. Lately God has placed the idea on me to pray for a specific country (Mexico) that is dealing with a high murder rate. I pray that God will bring peace to that land and people will turn their hearts to Him. I know that His peace is the only solution to the crime and murder problem that Mexico is experience at this time.
      - a) I have no idea how much my prayer is making a difference, but God has laid that burden on my heart, so therefore, I pray about it.
      - ii) In a sense, my prayer is similar to that of David's, where my heart simply wants to see God's love prevail and bring an end to the violence he is dealing with.
22. Verse 10: My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart. <sup>11</sup> God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.
- a) David is again praying for God's protection. David understands that God watches over those who have committed their lives to Him.
  - b) The interesting point is to contrast Verse 10 and Verse 11: Verse 10 says God protects those who trust in Him. Verse 11 says God expresses his wrath every day. What does that mean? For starters, it means that every day, some people die who are going to hell because they turn their back on God. It also means that those who are praying for God's protection do get their prayers answered in the sense that God works out life ultimately for the good of those who call on His name.



23. Verse 12: If he does not relent, he will sharpen his sword; he will bend and string his bow. <sup>13</sup> He has prepared his deadly weapons; he makes ready his flaming arrows.
- a) Let me paraphrase this verse: "If those people who want to hurt my followers, and they don't repent of their sins, I God will harm them and deal with what they are doing.
  - b) The idea of these verses is that those who are trusting in God can have safety from those people and those evil forces that seek to harm us.
    - i) Does this mean if we pray, we Christians will never be hurt? No. What it does mean is that we as believers can pray for God's protection and nothing does happen to us that is not "God approved". At the same time, I think when we die we will be amazed at what we have been protected from simply because we have been praying to God for our protection.
  - c) In these verses, David is describing God has having a sharp sword and flaming arrows that are fired with a bow. David is describing the type of weapons he was familiar with. It would be like sometime today asking God to fire guided missiles. Yes David is being poetic, but David's point is that the weapons God can use to fight the evil around us is much greater than any weapons you or I might have in my possession.
24. Verse 14: He who is pregnant with evil and conceives trouble gives birth to disillusionment. <sup>15</sup>He who digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit he has made. <sup>16</sup> The trouble he causes recoils on himself; his violence comes down on his own head.
- a) These three verses all make the same point using different examples. They say in effect that when wicked people devise violence, they only end up hurting themselves.
  - b) I can think of biblical examples of this: The Egyptians killed Israelite babies by drowning them in water. How were the Egyptian soldiers killed a generation later? By drowning in the same sea that the babies were killed in. (Reference: Exodus 1:22, 14:27.)
    - i) In the story of Ester, the villain named Haman was killed on the same hanging structure that Haman designed for the "hero" (the uncle of Ester). (Ref: Ester 9:25.)
    - ii) My point is that God often makes those who fight against His people die based on the methods they designed to hurt others. That is what David is praying for.
  - c) So what does this mean for us? It means that we can ask God to take the plans that the wicked have, and ask God to use those plans on those wicked people?
    - i) Let me answer it this way: There are demonic spiritual forces at work, who's job it is to make us a bad witness for Jesus. These forces understand they can't take away our salvation, but they can make us an ineffective witness for Jesus. How do they do that? By attacking us in ways where we become too scared to cry out to God for help or worse, try to solve problems using our own strength. Those demonic forces use people to do their dirty work for them.
    - ii) So should we pray for wicked people to hurt themselves by their own plans? I would think the answer is "better them than us". ☺ The idea is not so much to wish bad things on people, but for God to separate those who have committed their lives to trusting Him from those who refuse to do so.
    - iii) These verses say in effect, such evil plans not only can be stopped by asking for God's help, but that He will take such plans and have them backfire on those who designed those plans in the first place.
  - d) I admit that whenever I read verses like these verses, I think of the "Roadrunner cartoons" I grew up watching. The villain character, "Willie E. Coyote" usually devises plans to hurt the "good guy" (the roadrunner) and those plans devised by the coyote usually end up hurting himself and not the hero.
    - i) It's strange to think of that cartoon series as biblical, ☺ but essentially it does make the point in that the wicked schemes do end up being used on the wicked.
    - ii) Now that I've got everybody thinking about the roadrunner and the coyote, ☺ I can sneak back to Psalm 7 and finish it up.

25. Verse 17: I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.
  - a) This psalm ends on a note of praise. This psalm is ending in effect with, "I know that God does take care of those who are trying to hurt me, and I understand the ultimate ending of those who do put their trust in God and those who trust in themselves. I can sing a song of praise to God knowing that ultimately He will win in the end, and that I belong to the winning side no matter what happens to me in this lifetime."
  - b) To sum up this Psalm, it is acceptable to pray for those who would want to hurt us. We can pray that both their plans to hurt the innocent "fall on their own faces" and at the same time we can pray for them to turn to God before it is too late.
    - i) While you and I may never know what is happening behind the scenes, we can trust that God is and working out our lives for His glory.
26. Psalm 8, introduction: For the director of music. According to *gittith*. A psalm of David.
  - a) Once again, David is the author of the psalm. David wrote about half of the psalms. Once again we know that this psalm is meant to be played publicly and set to music.
  - b) The mystery of this introduction is the word "gittith". There are lots of theories as to the meaning of that word and its intent, but the truth is we don't know. The most common theory is that it is some sort of musical term related to how it should be played.
27. Psalm 8, Verse 1: O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.
  - a) OK, by now we are seeing a familiar pattern in the Psalms where it opens up by mentioning God's name. The idea is to focus on Him with this psalm.
  - b) This is one of a handful of psalms that focus on God's creation. This psalm is going to say in effect, "How big is the universe and it is amazing that God focuses His attention on those people who love Him in comparison to all that exists in creation."
  - c) OK, so why this psalm here and now? We've been through a psalm that focuses on our sins (Psalm 6) and a psalm that focuses on those that want to hurt us (Psalm 7). Now we move to a psalm that focuses on the "bigness" of the universe.
    - i) The idea is that we have let go of our own sins in Psalm 6 and have let go of those issues and people that want to hurt us (in Psalm 7), and now we can focus on worshipping God just because He is God and created us to worship Him.
28. Verse 2: From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.
  - a) Here is something I doubt most of you are aware of: This verse is considered "Messianic". It is quoted in Matthew 21:16 as being about Jesus. The occasion in Matthew 21 is "Palm Sunday" when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. During that moment of time, many Jewish people were praising Jesus as the promised Messiah. The bible refers to such people as "children and infants" because they were "spiritual" babies in the sense that their knowledge of Jesus as the Messiah was limited.
  - b) OK, so Matthew used this line in comparison to those praising Jesus. I doubt David, who wrote this Psalm roughly 600 years earlier, had that in mind. In other words, what does this verse have to do in context with the Psalm?
    - i) This psalm is about praising God for all of the things He has created.
    - ii) Think of it this way: When young children praise God, they don't understand the details of how God can and does work in their lives? Such children can praise God for the things they see around them.
    - iii) God also understands such children are just that, "children" and protects them from those spiritual forces that want to do them harm.
      - a) Such children are usually protected by their parents, but the point here is God is working in a similar way behind the scenes to protect those who call upon His name.

- c) OK, most of understand the concept of God protecting children. What does this verse have to do with you and me?
    - i) This psalm does praise God for the great things He has created. That is a good prayer for someone who is "new" in the faith, as they don't yet understand the more "advanced" concepts of personal spiritual warfare and how God works in our lives individually and collectively, for Himself.
    - ii) One starts as a new believer by praying for what they can comprehend, and that would be to praise God for the creation He has made. That is the point of this particular line of the psalm, that those who are "infants" in their faith in God, can praise Him for the wonderful things (the world around us) He has made.
29. Verse 3: When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, <sup>4</sup> what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? <sup>5</sup> You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup> You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: <sup>7</sup>all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, <sup>8</sup> the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.
- a) The reason I put all six of these verses together, is they are "one thought" to consider all of the things that God created. The key verse in this group is Verse 4. That verse is the reminder that in terms of all the things that God has created, He is "mindful" of mankind.
  - b) The verse specifically mentions the "son of man". In the bible, that expression can refer to all people, and can refer to a title of the future Messiah (from David's perspective). The fact that "son of man" is used in the singular does make that a reference to Jesus.
    - i) In Verse 5, it says the "son" is man is "lower than the heavenly beings" yet is crowned with glory and honor. If that refers to all of mankind, the idea is that God gives mankind the privilege to rule over all things of this world despite being lower than all the things in heaven.
    - ii) If it refers to the Messiah, then it is a reference to the fact the Messiah will be a human, yet have the power to rule over all the things of this world.
    - iii) In Verse 6, we have similar arguments. It could refer to the fact that God made humans the greatest of all the creatures on earth and in that sense, we rule over the earth. It could also refer to the Messiah who, one day will rule the world and all that exists in the world.
  - c) OK John, I get all of that. ☺ Why should I care or think about that aspect here?
    - i) In the next five verses or so, it explains that man does rule over the world and implies that one particular man will one day be the "head ruler" over the world.
    - ii) The idea for you and me is about showing gratitude. It is about stopping to praise God for the fact He made us to rule over the world. One day, those who trust in Jesus as the Messiah will somehow rule and reign with Him.
      - a) See Isaiah 32:1 and Revelation 20:6 on this issue.
    - iii) It is about showing praise to God not only for the Messiah to rule one day, but for the fact that people have the power over all other creatures on earth. So does that mean animals should stop and bow down to us? Of course not. It means that God created people with more intelligence than any other creature and He created us with the ability to worship God. No other creature on earth can do that sort of act.
    - iv) It is to say, God, despite all of the problems I am dealing with right now, I need to pause and show gratitude for the fact that you created me with the ability to worship You and You created me as part of the greatest of all the created things that I can see in this world. Even knowing how small the earth is in comparison to the universe, I can stop and praise You because You can think of us as "something special" over all the created things in this universe.

- d) Think of the verses this way: Do any fish or any animal or even any star stop from what they are supposed to do to give praise to God? Of course not. They focus on what they have to do to stay alive. God gave man a greater ability than that, in that we not only do what we need to do to live but we have the ability to stop and praise God for His creation and for making us part of that creation.
30. Verse 9: O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
- a) The verse ends with another reminder for us to praise His name simply in that we have the ability and the privilege of honoring Him as the greatest of all of His creatures.
  - b) God's name is special because He "did" create the world for our enjoyment and He did create all creatures to be subject to humans. He did create us with the ability to worship Him. In that sense, His name is "majestic" over all the world as we know it.
31. Let me close by tying these three psalms together:
- a) Psalm 6 focused on the confession of our sins before God. The idea is to focus first on things we have done wrong and bringing that confession to God.
  - b) Psalm 7 focused on being rescued out of danger caused by other people. This psalm reminds us to look to God for help by danger caused by others.
  - c) Psalm 8 focused on praising God, just because He is God and He rules over the world.
  - d) Putting the three psalms together, they are about: 1) Examining and confessing our own sins to God first, 2) turning our problems we face that is caused by the world around us and then finally 3) focusing on God, just because He is God and He created us as the greatest of all creatures, and we have the ability to worship Him.
  - e) So what does all of this mean to you and me? It shows a common pattern that one sees in the bible: First we ask God for the forgiveness of ours sins, then we ask God for help in dealing with the problems around us and finally, we just praise God, because He is God and He created us with the ability to worship Him.
    - i) To put it another way, once we confess our sins to Him, and once we pray for whatever is going on in our life, there is "nothing left to pray for" other than to just praise Him because He is God and should be worshipped as such.
  - f) What I also see in these three psalms is a progression in our prayer life to God.
    - i) First, God wants us to deal with whatever issues we are dealing with personally by confessing our sins and praying for His help in what's going on around us. Yes there are always others to pray for but that is a separate topic from this lesson.
    - ii) This lesson is about teaching us that once we give God "all we are dealing with" we are free to praise Him, just because He is God and He gave us the privilege to praise Him as God and as the One who rules over our lives.
32. On that positive note, I can wrap up this lesson in prayer: Heavenly Father, we come before You as Your children. We are imperfect people and we confess the ways we have sinned against You and have been unpleasing to You. Knowing that You have forgiven us of all our sins, we ask Your help with our lives. Our problems are too big for us to handle and we put the outcome of those situations into Your hands so that whatever happens, will turn out for Your glory. We ask that You work out our problems for Your glory so that we don't have to worry about them. Finally, we just praise You, because You are God. You created this world for Your pleasure and You made us with the ability to praise You and be the greatest of all of the things that You have created in this world. Help us to remember that no matter what happens in our lives, You have forgiven us, You will watch over our lives and We can have the privilege of worshipping You just because we want to and want to have a loving relationship with You. We say this in Jesus name, Amen.