

1. My subject for this lesson is about "salvation and rewards". If you have ever wondered about one's rewards in heaven, then you have come to the right place. All through the New Testament, there are statements promising rewards to those who trust in God. To understand eternal rewards, we need to start with the importance of what we should be doing with our salvation. Let me first define what "is" salvation: (These points were taken from John MacArthur's notes):
 - i) We have been saved when we first accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior.
 - ii) We will be saved when we go from "life to life" or from earth right to heaven.
 - iii) We are continuing to be saved, as we trust in God with our lives.
- b) With that said, I want to focus on what it means to "continue to be saved". That is where our rewards in heaven come into play. Yes it is about trusting God with our lives. It includes the idea of regularly honoring God as God, in both our prayer life and our actions. It includes the idea of trusting Jesus through all that we do. The effective point is we should not just be living to say, make a living or just living to acquire certain things, but living to make a difference for God with our lives. If we live a life like that, God promises rewards to those who are faithful to Him who do put their trust in Him.
2. OK John, that is neat theology. What does it have to do with these psalms? Glad you asked. ☺
 - a) In these psalms we are going to have references to trusting God during tough times like we have in past lessons. However, I see the focus in these psalms more on "God Himself" than on our problems. These psalms are all about reminding ourselves (as we are the one's who forget easily) that God is still there during our difficult times and He is the one guiding us down the path He desires for our lives.
 - b) The point is, God is going to not only help us through our problems, but He promises to take care of us not only in this life but in the eternal life to come. That is our rewards.
3. Psalm 60, Title: For the director of music. To the tune of "The Lily of the Covenant." A *miktam* of David. For teaching. When he fought Aram Naharaim and Aram Zobah, and when Joab returned and struck down twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.
 - a) In this title, we have lots of information. It was written by David and was designed to be sung. The title has the phrase "for teaching" which simply means that this psalm is designed to teach us things when we contemplate the meaning of each line of the psalm.
 - b) The last part of the title mentions Joab, who was in charge of the army. One of Israel's enemies was a group called the Edomites. David wrote this psalm after the Edomites were significantly defeated by Israel to the point where 12,000 were killed.
 - i) There a cross-reference to this battle in 2nd Samuel 8:13. In that account of this battle, it mentioned 8,000 being killed. 1st Chronicles 18:12 mentions that a man named Abishai (who is Joab's brother) killed 18,000 at the same location. Many believe all three of these references may be referring to the same event.
 - ii) Isn't the variation of the number of dead soldiers a contradiction? More likely they are different accounts of the same story with different body count estimates.
 - iii) The important point is that this psalm is a prayer of praise to God after a time of a great victory for the Israelites. Which is why it is mentioned in the title.
 - c) We still have one more reference in the title: It was written to a tune called "The Lily of the Covenant". We don't know what it means but it was probably some tune David knew.
 - i) I suspect but cannot prove that the "Covenant" of that title refers to God's promise to always look out and take care of His people as long as they were loyal to Him. The "lily" reference may simply be stating that a single flower is beautiful to behold like the people willing to commit their lives to seeking God as part of this special covenant (agreement) relationship with Him.

4. Verse 1: You have rejected us, O God, and burst forth upon us; you have been angry--now restore us!
 - a) OK John, here we are in Verse 1 and I am already confused. ☺ The title mentioned Israel having a great victory over an enemy and the first thing Verse 1 says is "God (You) have rejected us." What is happening here and why should I care?
 - i) Prior to David being the king of Israel, the Israelites were defeated in battling groups that lived all around them. Once David became King (instead of Saul), Israel started winning battles. It wasn't due to the Israelites special strength or better weaponry. It was due to "God's will" being done through the Israelites and the king that God wanted, is now on the throne.
 - ii) The Israelites were recognizing their victories now, is somehow connected to past times where God was angry at the Israelites for non-obedience.
 - b) So the Israelites lost battles before David became king and now with him as their leader, they were winning. The point is not about Israel's history. The point is about God's will getting done. We don't do that by electing the right leader. We do that by being obedient to what He has called us to do and making every effort possible to avoid sin.
 - i) The issue has nothing to do with salvation. This is about the "saved" living to make a difference for God. It is about trusting God with the outcome, but at the same time living to please Him with our lives.
 - c) The text says God was angry with us (The Israelites). If God can be angry with "The Chosen People" (i.e., The Israelites), He can be angry with Christians too. The danger is ignoring God after we have committed our lives to Him. Paul says we should fear being displeasing Him (See Romans 11:20). On that scary thought, let's try Verse 2. ☺
5. Verse 2: You have shaken the land and torn it open; mend its fractures, for it is quaking. ³ You have shown your people desperate times; you have given us wine that makes us stagger.
 - a) Just to warn you, things are not getting any easier in these verses. Verse 2 is not describing the effects of feeling an earthquake. These verses are being poetic to say in effect, "Everything around us is falling apart as if our whole world has been shaken."
 - i) The last part of Verse 3 describes a "wine that makes us stagger". The literal idea is describing someone so drunk that they can barely walk.
 - ii) The point of both analogies (earthquake and drunk) in effect is the same. They are both indicating a world that feels like it is falling apart all around them.
 - b) But wait a minute John; hold the complaints for a moment. ☺ Didn't the title of the psalm talk about some victory David's general had over the Edomites? Why this sob story?
 - i) First a technical answer: Before David won this battle the Israelites suffered a bad defeat at the hands of the Edomites.
 - ii) To me the literal historical reference is not nearly as important as the idea of what God is trying to teach us through this psalm. It is about the feeling of helplessness when it feels like our whole world is falling apart. Remember that the accusation here is that Israel as a nation had somehow turned away from God in the past, (for whatever reason) and now the nation is suffering as if they were a drunk trying to walk a straight line or trying to walk through an earthquake.
 - c) There are times in our lives when it feels like we "can't win for losing". We may think our problems have nothing to do with God, but it is only because "this particular problem" is happening. The solution to our problems always begins with repentance to God.
 - i) It would be like praying, "God right now I am suffering due to this situation in my life. I don't know how You will rescue me, I just know my only hope is in You."
 - d) So if I pray a prayer like that, does that mean my life will instantly get better? It will in the sense that You have told God that your problem is now His problem. It will in the sense that we are now thinking about God and desire to turn away from our sins.

6. Verse 4: But for those who fear you, you have raised a banner to be unfurled against the bow.
Selah
- a) Let me start with an understanding of what "bow" means: It refers to someone with a bow and arrow and they are about to fire that weapon at us.
 - i) The text says there is a banner to be unfurled (opened up) against that bow.
 - ii) So how can a big scroll stop an arrow from being fired at us? The answer is this is poetry and this verse is not something designed to be taken that literally.
 - b) OK John, if it is not literal, what does it mean?
 - i) Let's look at the opening phrase, "For those who fear you". Remember that whatever the tragedy was, it affected all who feared God in the nation of Israel.
 - ii) The text is asking those of us to fear God not to worry about the nonbeliever, but simply to focus upon God. The idea of "unfurling the banner" is about making an effort to show God our commitment to Him and asking His protection.
 - iii) OK John, suppose I have prayed about my problems, and those problems are still there. Do I keep on praying to show my commitment? We have to remember that sometimes a disaster is "God allowed" for some greater purpose. We also need to remember that sometimes repeated prayer shows God our seriousness about our commitment to a particular issue.
 - iv) That is why the bible encourages repeated prayer (and sometimes even fasting) over some issue. It is not to show God we are serious, but if we want God to act, He wants to see if we are willing to commit to a serious effort to trust in Him.
7. Verse 5: Save us and help us with your right hand, that those you love may be delivered.
- a) First of all God does not have a right hand. When most people think of someone's right hand (with my apologies to all left-handed people), we think of someone's strong hand. The idea is for God's strength to be used to deliver those of us who do trust in Him.
 - b) The point is if God is asking us to make some sort of commitment to take our relationship with Him seriously and make an effort to show we trust Him, in return we ask God to act in a way to use us to make a difference to the world around us.
 - c) I've never had a problem with God's faithfulness, but only with my faithfulness in what God has called me to do. I'm sure all Christians at times worry about whether or not we are living in a way that is pleasing to Him or if are we doing what He wants us to do.
 - i) OK John, God does not speak out loud to me, and I'm guessing He doesn't speak out loud to you either. How do you know if we are doing God's will for the moment? For starters, it is about not doing anything that would violate what He teaches in His word. Another way to tell is sometimes I just get a sense of comfort (or peace) when I am doing His will for my life.
 - ii) God never call us to do anything that He also does not give us the ability to do as well. A long time ago I stopped worrying about what God called other Christians to do. My job is just to focus on what God called me to do. That alone keeps me busy enough for one lifetime.
8. Verse 6: God has spoken from his sanctuary: "In triumph I will parcel out Shechem and measure off the Valley of Succoth.
- a) Verse 6 is saying in effect that God has already started doing His will in Israel. When the text says "parceling out Shechem" and measuring the "Valley of Succoth", it refers to when Joshua had victory over the inhabitants of the land of Israel and the land was divided up by tribe (hundreds of years prior to David).
 - i) If you study the book of Joshua, roughly half the book describes battles and roughly half describing the land that each tribe of Israelites gets. My question is, why is so much detail given to the land division? It is to show that God's hand is in the "parceling out of the land of Israel" and it wasn't just Joshua randomly picking pieces of land for groups to live in.

- b) What does this ancient history have to do with David's problems (the dividing of the land was hundreds of years before David) let alone have to do with us?
 - i) The point for David's time is in effect that "God started a work with the nation of Israel" and therefore, the Israelites need to remember that a God who has started something is not going to leave them "half-done". That is another reason why I believe God is not done with the nation of Israel today. It has nothing to do with salvation, but strictly to do with God keeping His unconditional promises to that nation. That is the main topic of Romans Chapter 11.
 - ii) Getting back to us, the point is if God called us to salvation, God is not going to leave us "half-done" wallowing in pity due to our problems. It is about trusting Him through whatever we are dealing with as either an individual or a group or a nation. It is about trusting in Him through our problems, which comes back to the idea of "raising the banner" when those "bows and arrows" are pointing at us.
9. Verse 7: Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim is my helmet, Judah my scepter.
- a) Let me start by stating that all the places listed in these verses are part of ancient Israel.
 - b) So why list these specific places? David is reminding the original readers of this psalm (Israelites) that God made a promise that the Israelite people are to dwell in this land as long as they are obedient to Him. Let me explain further:
 - i) Gilead was the place where Jacob (later renamed Israel) was separated from his father in law and in effect that is where the "tribes of Israel" were officially separated as a unique group.
 - ii) The next reference is Manasseh and Ephraim. These are two of the 12 tribes of Israel. Both of these tribal territories were part of the area that was "lost" when the northern tribes of Israel was separated from the southern part (centuries after David wrote this). I believe this is God is saying, "Even though the tribes may split into separate groups, they are still "mine" and this territory is still mine."
 - iii) God saying in effect, "I created all things, but this little piece of real estate (Israel) is mine, and it always belongs to me, no matter who lives there. I (God) have given this land to the Israelites to dwell under the condition of obedience to me.
 - iv) The text also says Ephraim is my "helmet". What commentators suspect that means is that Ephraim was the largest tribe. It is God saying in effect that the largest area of Israel is "mine" and don't mess with it.
 - c) The final reference is to the tribe of Judah. The text says Judah is my "scepter". That term that essentially means "lawgiver". What is puzzling about that reference is that the tribe of Levi, not the tribe of Judah that was associated with being in charge of God's laws and teaching those laws to the Israelites. So why is the tribe of Judah called the "lawgiver"?
 - i) Most commentators believe it is because God called David, of the tribe of Judah to be the king and that God promised that the Messiah would be a descendant of David. This verse does point to Jesus (a descendant of David) as being in charge of the laws of God.
10. Verse 8: Moab is my washbasin, upon Edom I toss my sandal; over Philistia I shout in triumph."
- a) To explain this verse let me back up to the last verse:
 - i) Verse 7 said in effect that the land and the people of Israel are mine. Verse 7 is in effect a summary of the agreement that God made with the nation of Israel.
 - ii) Verse 8 in effect is the opposite. The focus here is on the nations that surround Israel and in particular the nations (or groups) that have been enemies of Israel.
 - b) For David to say that God considers Moab (a nation) his "wash bin" is saying in effect that this nation has no significant value to him. The wash bin was a pot used to rinse things out. The next reference is for Edom. The visual picture is God throwing his shoe at them. That was an ancient sign of "no respect". The final group is Philistia, which are the Philistines. The verse simply says, "I shout in triumph (over them)".

- c) OK John, if these groups are so bad, why didn't God in effect "snap His fingers" and eliminate these people once and for all? Why did (and why does He still) allow enemies of Israel to exist all around that nation? If the Jewish nation of Israel is "God's chosen people", why does God allow lots of groups that hate that nation living all around them?
 - i) To answer that, remember that Satan's "basic goal" is to exist on earth as long as possible. His reign ends effectively when Jesus returns. Therefore, Satan is doing all he can to delay Jesus' reign. That includes keeping people from believing in God and making believers ineffective witnesses for God. It also includes the concept of trying to wipe out God's chosen people (the Israelites). If Jesus is going to return one day to rule over the world, He needs a Jewish nation to rule from. Thus, demonic forces are behind every and all efforts to wipe out the Israelites.
 - ii) But John, if God now works through Christians, why is Israel still important as a nation? This is not about salvation. This is about God's unconditional promise to the nation of Israel. Romans Chapter 11 teaches of a future day (future to us) when God once again focuses on the nation of Israel to set up an eternal kingdom with Jesus ruling from Jerusalem at His Second Coming.
 - d) Getting back to the text, God did want the Israelites to have victory over those nations, but not by God "snapping His fingers", but by the Israelites trusting in God to having literal victories over them in war. Remember the title of this psalm included a reference to David's general winning a big battle over the Edomites. This verse is reminding us that God will be victorious over those who refuse to follow the God of the bible.
11. Verse 9: Who will bring me to the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom?
- a) Since I spent a lot of time on the last verse I'll quickly paraphrase what this verse is asking: "If we as the Israelites are victorious over the Edomites (or whoever), who gets the credit for that victory? This verse is a reminder of who really leads them to victory.
 - b) If you ever get a chance, read the stories or watch movies about Israel's victory over the surrounding nations when it was reborn in 1948 or its "six-day war" in 1967. You will discover the only way that Israel won was that God was working through that nation.
12. Verse 10: Is it not you, O God, you who have rejected us and no longer go out with our armies?
- a) Remember that the introduction to this psalm mentioned when Israel was victorious over the Edomites. Yet here in Verse 10, the verse says that God rejected the Israelites and in effect has not gone out with the armies. What gives here?
 - i) The short answer is the introduction and Verse 10 are describing two separate events. The point is Israel has lost battles in the recent past (before this psalm was written.) The reason the Israelites lost had nothing to do with inferior strength or bad planning, it was about God not being with them.
 - ii) If the Nation of Israel is dependant upon God for victories, that means that loyalty to God is a necessary pre-condition to that nation having victory.
 - b) OK John, so the Israelites win when they are begging God for help and lose when they don't. Other than the fact you just summarized much of the Old Testament, what does that have to do with my life here and now?
 - i) God promises believers victories in whatever battles or struggles we have in this life. It means the outcome of our situation is certain in that we will win either by God taking us home or by God guiding us through whatever we are dealing with at the present moment. That is what trust in God is all about, both on the big things and the little things in life.
 - ii) By the way, that victory does or does not necessarily mean we are going to win the way we think we will win. God may allow us to lose "battles" in order to teach us some lesson at the moment. Trusting in God is not a guarantee that we will "win" in a way we think it is going to happen. Trusting God is about trusting that His will, not our will be done in any given situation.

13. Verse 11: Give us aid against the enemy, for the help of man is worthless. ¹² With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies.
 - a) The final two verses of this psalm both say in effect, not to trust in other nations or other people for help, but in God alone. The term "help of man is worthless" does not mean we don't ask others for help in tough situations. It means that ultimately our help comes from God and often He will bring others in our life to help us.
 - b) God wants us to call on Him to guide us through whatever we are dealing with and trust Him for the results. That last sentence is the essential idea of this whole psalm. Over and above that, it is ok to ask help from others.
 - c) With that said, I can move on to Psalm 61.
14. Psalm 61, title: For the director of music. With stringed instruments. Of David.
 - a) Unlike the last few psalms, this title does not give us a lot of information. It does say David wrote the words, and that it was given to the "director of music" to be played and that David envisioned it played with stringed instruments.
 - b) This psalm is about asking for God's protection during a time when one is away from where one wants to be. It is about seeking God when all "seems lost" and when one is away from where one should be. On that happy thought ☺, lets go to Verse 1.
15. Verse 1: Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. ² From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
 - a) Verse 1 is a direct request to hear David's plea for help. There is no mention of seeking God's mercy first, but a just direct request for help. There are moments in one's life, when one is in big trouble when we get to the point quickly of our prayer request.
 - b) Verse 2 reads, "From the ends of the earth I call to you". Many commentators believe at this time, David was on the run for his life and wherever he was, he was not in Israel. Verse 6 coming up gives us a clue that David was the king at this time. Scholars believe this was written during the time David was on the run for his life from his son, Absalom who lead a major rebellion to overthrow David as the king. (See 2nd Samuel Chapter 15.)
 - c) The point for you and me to remember is during times when we are away from where we are supposed to be, we can and should call out to God for help. Even if we don't know how to deal with our present problems, God does. That is why David refers to God here as the "rock" who is higher than I. Let me explain briefly the concept of "God as a rock":
 - i) In effect, asking God to lead us to the "rock that is higher than I" is a plea to the Holy Spirit to lead us to whatever is God's will for that moment in our life.
 - ii) Paul wrote that the rock that followed the Israelites in the desert (when they were going from Egypt to the Promised Land they found a rock that supplied water) refers to a type of Jesus. (See Exodus 17:6 and 1st Corinthians 10:4.)
16. Verse 3: For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe.
 - a) Sometimes when we are really hurting, it helps to recall when God has helped us through a previous tough time. There are times when I need to remind myself that the predicament I am in now is not a shock to God. He is well aware of my problems I am facing at the moment. That is why God is called a refuge during difficult times.
 - b) The verse mentions a foe (enemy). That foe can be anything that causes us to fear. The point is that fear is real to us and we need to trust God to see us through that fear.
17. Verse 4: I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings. *Selah*
 - a) I have mentioned a number of times in the psalms that David's greatest desire is to be with God forever. That should be the desire of all Christians. The point is not to desire death. The point is that we know and trust that God cares for us, desires to protect us and despite our problems, we can trust in God to see us through them.
 - b) Yes our problems are real and usually are not going to go away just because we pray. At the same time, we don't have to worry about the results, because the God we trust in gives us protection from our fears. That is the point of this verse.

18. Verse 5: For you have heard my vows, O God; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name. ⁶ Increase the days of the king's life, his years for many generations.
- a) Verse 5 starts with the reminder that God has heard our vows. What vows were those?
 - i) I would say it is the desire to live with God forever. That includes the idea of living to please Him with our lives and trusting Him through all of our situations.
 - ii) The reason we state those vows every now and then is not to remind God, but to remind ourselves of what we have committed our lives to do.
 - b) Let's move on to the phrase that says, "O God, you have given me (that's David) the heritage of those that fear your name."
 - i) One can read that as saying God has chosen David to be the king and in that sense, the people of Israel that are His (God's) heritage are under David.
 - ii) One can also read the text in effect by David saying, "God, you have given Jesus the heritage of those who fear you." Think of it this way: What is our true reward in heaven? It is that we get to be married to and close to Jesus for all of eternity.
 - c) This leads to Verse 6: On the surface, the verse is talking about the life of King David. For David to say in effect "May his years go for many generations" may simply be a plea to God for him to rule and reign for a long time. If this was written when David's son Absalom tried to overthrow David, it can be seen as a plea for David to continue as king.
 - i) I see this verse differently. David understands the concept that God is "king" over his life. Personally, I see this as another subtle reference to the Messiah, (The Jewish equivalent of who we call Jesus). The idea is that the entity that rules over the world and will one day literally rule from the earth. May He continue to reign over the lives of people and may His days continue on for many generations.
19. Verse 7: May he be enthroned in God's presence forever; appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him.
- a) If you want more proof that David was alluding to the Messiah (Jesus) in Verse 6, let us examine Verse 7. If David was on the run from his son Absalom (See 2nd Samuel 15:14), David could be asking for his own protection at that moment.
 - b) With that said, I still see the focus of this psalm (and this lesson) not so much on David's problems as it is on God "being in charge". In that sense, this verse too, is a reference to another figure besides God the Father who is "enthroned" in God's presence forever.
 - i) If this were true, why would David ask God the Father to protect the Messiah? Isn't God faithful to protect a promised King that would live forever? Of course. The issue is never God's faithfulness, but ours. The issue is reminding ourselves that despite our unfaithfulness at times, God is faithful and He will rule over our lives now and forever and the Messiah (literally "the king") will rule forever.
20. Verse 8: Then will I ever sing praise to your name and fulfill my vows day after day.
- a) If David is asking God to just protect him in this psalm, why then does Verse 8 promise that he will sing praises to God all of his days when this "entity" rules over the world?
 - i) That is another reason why I see this psalm alluding to God ruling over lives. The point is that we accept that fact and believe that God rules over us as we go about our lives living to make a difference for Him in all that we do.
 - b) OK John, if David wanted the Messiah to rule so he (David) could fulfill his vows, what were those vows and how does that affect us?
 - i) For David, it meant a commitment to the actual sacrifices as required by God for the Israelites. If David was on the run for his life at the time of this psalm, David is asking for God's help so he (David) could fulfill those sacrificial vows.
 - ii) For us, this verse is a reminder that our vows were to trust in Jesus as both our Savior (the one who rescues us out of this world) and our Lord (the one who is in charge of our life). That statement is a vow by us to be loyal to Him.
 - c) On that positive thought, I can move on to Psalm 62.

21. Psalm 62, title: For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.
 - a) In this psalm the "director of music" is named by name, which is Jeduthun. We don't know why David singled out Jeduthun, other than to recognize his role.
 - b) What is special about this psalm is literally the word "only". The Hebrew word that we would translate either "only" or "alone" appears a bunch of times in this psalm. The idea is that we serve and worship God "only" and no one else. The idea also alludes to the Messiah who is the only one who does rule over our lives now and will "only" rule over the world one day. With that "only" introduction complete, onto Verse 1.
22. Verse 1: My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him.
 - a) Yes that Hebrew word translated "only" is in effect the word "alone" in this verse.
 - b) The verse is saying we find rest only in God and our salvation only comes from Him.
 - i) What that means is when we are troubled the only way (I said "only" on purpose) that we can ease our worries is by reminding ourselves of our trust in God. That in effect, is what this opening verse is saying.
 - c) Let's say we are in some sort of physical pain. Suppose we take some sort of medicine and it feels better. Isn't our soul trusting in the medicine and not God?
 - i) First of all, who gets the credit for inventing the medicine in the first place? Second, I find that most medicines numb the nerves that cause the pain. The actual cure is from our bodies getting better.
 - ii) Even if the medicine does help us get better, do we thank the manufacturer of the medicine, or God who made it possible for us to have that medicine in the first place? Even if our help in life comes through something or someone other than God, He still gets the credit for bringing that help to us.
23. Verse 2: He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.
 - a) Again we have the word "alone" in Verse 2. The point of "alone" (or "only" in the King James Translation) is that God alone is my rock and my salvation and my fortress.
 - i) The point in effect is we should trust in God alone to see us through our lives and guide us in the way He wants us to go.
 - b) OK John, you keep alluding to God guiding us. I've never had God audibly speak to me, so how do I know if God is guiding me and guiding my life for His glory?
 - i) For starters, we pray to Him and look to His word as guidance as to how to live our lives. The events of our live help to determine what is God's will for the moment. If we are doing something or tempted to do something that we know is not pleasing to God, then that desire to turn from that bad thing is (without a doubt) God's will for us for that moment.
 - ii) If we are in some sort of trouble and we do get rescued out of that trouble it is God's will that we got rescued and He should be thanked as such for that rescue.
 - iii) If we are in a situation where we don't know what to do next, God does not say to us, "stand still and I'll force you to where I wants us to go". God does in effect say to us, "just keep moving " and through actions or through circumstances My (God's) will, will become more obvious and you (that's us) will know what to do.
 - iv) Recently a friend from church said that he had this desire to take a wrench and a screwdriver to a friend's house. He thought the reason for going there was just to help that person move. It turns out that house didn't have any heat and those tools allowed my friend to fix the heater. The point is we don't always understand why God wants us to do certain things, but sometimes, through time, God's will becomes more obvious of what he wants of us.
 - c) Meanwhile Verse 2 is still there. It is saying that while we "move", God doesn't move in the sense that He is everywhere. We can trust Him to guide us and whether we as Christians realize it or now, He is constantly guiding our lives to get His will done.

24. Verse 3: How long will you assault a man? Would all of you throw him down-- this leaning wall, this tottering fence? ⁴ They fully intend to topple him from his lofty place; they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse. *Selah*
- a) If there is one thing I have learned from studying the psalms, it is that David likes to jump back and forth between focusing on God and then on people who refuse to turn to Him.
 - i) Think of it this way: We may make the effort to praise God for a moment, but then our minds focus back to our problems at hand. Then we think about the ultimate end of our problems and get our focus back on God again. I think in that sense David is no different than you and me.
 - b) With that little speech out of my system, I can focus on the verses themselves. Whoever David was writing about in these two verses, the situation was not good. It appears to be about a group of people set upon bringing down a leader based on lies.
 - i) Think of politicians who oppose a leader. They may say a lot of half-truths in order to bring down the person in power. That is what is happening here.
 - c) OK John, so David was facing political opposition. How does this affect me?
 - i) For starters, it is a reminder that many, if not most people who don't trust in God can't also be trusted to tell the truth. If someone is willing to give God "lip service" (i.e., say things they don't mean or don't follow through on), they are also willing to put down those people who do trust in God. As Jesus said, "As they have hated me, so they will hate you as well". (That is my paraphrase of John 15:18.)
 - d) Remember that the opening verse said in effect that God is "unmovable" like a giant rock. Now we put that picture in contrast to those who don't think twice about lying to get what they want. Those who are willing to lie to get what they want are "movable" in the sense that God will judge them perfectly and see right through their lies. We don't have to worry about those who defy God because He alone is "unmovable".
25. Verse 5: Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him.
- a) Whenever I worry that I have jumped "off the deep end" and wrote something not relevant to the psalm, it is amazing how I look at the next verse and realize I was on the right path the whole time. The point of Verse 5 is the reminder that despite whatever damage is done by those who tell lies, our trust is not in people, but in God alone.
 - b) Let me ask an obvious question here: If we only trust in God alone, does that mean we shouldn't trust in people to help us? Of course not.
 - i) The point is people can and do let us down. Even the best intentions of close friends can make mistakes that can cause us pain. The point here is that people are imperfect and we need to keep that in mind when others are helping us.
 - ii) At the same, God's ways are perfect even when we don't always understand why He is allowing us to go through our present "predicament".
26. Verse 6: He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.
- a) We're back to the concept of God "only" or God "alone". Let me go back to my lesson title for a moment here. Our only hope of getting through life is our trust in God alone. It does not mean we ignore friends and family. It means we understand that it is our desire to please God in every aspect of our lives and we trust in Him not only for our salvation but for our protection in whatever we are dealing with at the moment.
 - b) Most of us go through times when we are not sure what to do next. That is a good time to remind ourselves of the "only" concept: We are dependant upon God not only for our salvation, but also to get us through whatever we are dealing with at the moment. Asking God's help through our lives is also a big part of salvation and a key point of this lesson. Trusting only in God is the key point of this one psalm.

27. Verse 7: My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. ⁸ Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. *Selah*
- a) Since I discussed salvation in the last verse, let me talk a little about honor. Honor before God is not about being perfect, but about making a serious effort to be pleasing to God in all that we do. Just because we are forgiven of all of our sins (past present and future), does not give us a license to sin. God still desires that we make the effort to please Him in all that we do. Making that effort to please God is what "honor" means here.
 - b) Let me take on one more concept based on this verse: That is God as our "mighty rock".
 - i) Let's say we get the idea that the bible and specifically here in the psalms that God is compared to a huge unmovable rock. What does that mean practically?
 - a) The idea is that we can trust in God to be there to help us when we need help and like a huge rock, He does not move nor change His standards based on what we do or don't do with our knowledge of Him.
 - c) Finally, let me deal with God as a point of refuge. Earlier in this lesson and in previous lessons, we had a comparison of believers being like a baby bird under its mother's wings. That is also talking about the idea of refuge. God as a place of comfort and refuge is about trusting in Him for our protection. If we are one of "His", then we have to understand that God is a place we can mentally run to for protection and comfort.
 - i) It's not about hiding out from our problems. It is about telling God our problems to remind ourselves that He does care for us, He does want to see us through whatever we are dealing with and most importantly, we can have a sense of peace knowing that God is in control of the outcome of our situations.
 - d) Verse 8 ends with a "Selah" which means to stop and contemplate what is being said. I've described the key terms of this verse in detail, so I feel comfortable I did my "Selah". ☺
28. Verse 9: Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath. ¹⁰ Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them.
- a) As we should recognize by now, David loves to contrast dependence upon God with trusting in people. Let me describe the people in these verses then tie it all together.
 - i) First David mentions "lowborn". This simply means people of low stature in life. The idea of "but a breath" simply means that the longest they can have an influence in one's lives is the length of one's life.
 - ii) Next David contrasts "lowborn" with "highborn". Highborn refers to people of great power, wealth or influence. To call them a lie does not mean they cannot be saved. It means they may be influential for a significant time period, but their influence does nothing to help with what is required to be "right" in God's eyes.
 - iii) These verses are not calling us to ignore making a living or holding positions of leadership. It is about who we trust in for our salvation and for our well being.
 - b) Finally, the verses discuss various forms of thievery. So why mention that? Sometimes one can get rich by practicing some form of deception or thievery. It is easy to justify bad actions because one is making money from such actions. It is another reminder that God does hold us accountable for what we do in this life.
29. Verse 11: One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong, ¹² and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.
- a) These last two verses say in effect that God is strong and loving and that He will reward each person according to what they have done. That ties back to my lesson theme.
 - i) The bible clearly teaches about rewards to those who seek God. (For example see Revelation 11:18 and 22:12.) So what does the bible mean by rewards? I am convinced that in heaven we are rewarded based on our service to God after we are saved. It is one thing just to be saved. It is another to earn rewards based on our faithfulness to God.

- ii) So John, are you saying that the size of our mansion in heaven depends upon how good of a person we are as Christians? The bible is fairly silent on what exactly are our rewards in heaven. However, the bible is very clear that how we live our lives does somehow affect our eternal status.
 - iii) As an example, Paul was obsessed with working hard for Christ. He believed He was saved, but at the same time, it was his obsession to work as hard as he could as a missionary for Jesus. I'm not saying all of us are called to travel like Paul. I am saying that there are eternal rewards in heaven strictly based on the issue of "Are we living a life to pleasing to God and doing what He wants us to do?"
- b) On that convicting note, I am going to sneak in one more psalm, as the next one fits the theme of this lesson very well.
- 30. Psalm 63, Title: A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah.
 - a) All the title says is that David wrote it, when he was in the desert. In this location, water is essentially nowhere to be found. That is the picture David wants in our head here.
- 31. Verse 1: O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
 - a) OK, so David was in a desert and he is using the analogy of comparing the lack of water to his desire to seek God at this point. Why should I care?
 - i) The point is that God wants us to seek Him as if our physical life depends upon it. It ties back to my theme of "salvation and rewards". The idea of living for God ties to the idea of seeking Him as if our physical bodies actually depend upon it.
- 32. Verse 2: I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.
 - a) David has seen God work in the past in his life. Yet now, David is in a place that is away from his home and once again he needs God's help. Just as there is no water at this location, so David is all the more dependant upon God for his survival at this time.
 - b) Let me put it this way: When do we usually call out to God, when things are going well or when we are in trouble? The answer is the latter, and that is what David is doing here.
 - c) We tend to picture David as going from moment to moment saying, "OK, time for another psalm, someone write this down". ☺ Remember that David was busy being a king. He also spent much of his life on the run. What made him special is not that he was a better person than us. It is that David constantly sought God's help through whatever he was dealing with. That is the goal for you and I in whatever we are dealing with.
- 33. Verse 3: Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. ⁴ I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.
 - a) Both of these verses say in effect God's love is more important than anything this life on earth has to offer. Because of that love, I will make a regular effort to praise Him.
 - b) Remember that wherever David physically was, it was a place where there was no water. He is saying more important than finding water, is remembering the love God has for us. He is saying in effect, "God may rescue me here or not. Either way, I will honor Him and praise Him because I know that His love for me never ends."
- 34. Verse 5: My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. ⁶ On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.
 - a) Verse 5 is saying that God's love is better than having the best meal we can imagine. This verse is not about an actual meal, but about God's love being better than that meal.
 - b) Right before I wrote this verse, I caught myself daydreaming and focusing on something other than this study. How do we focus on God when we easily lack focus at times?
 - i) God is not expecting perfection just trust. He is not expecting us to be focused on Him every moment of the day. God is expecting us to trust in Him through all we go through. Because of our trust in Him, we do and should regularly pray and remember that His love for us is greater than anything and everything this world has to offer. That in effect, is the point of these two verses.

35. Verse 7: Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. ⁸ My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.
- a) These verses say in effect we know God is going to help us and we know that He is always watching out for us. Because of that we sing praises to Him.
 - b) OK John, you are zipping through this psalm quickly. How does this tie to our lesson theme of salvation and rewards? The idea of "dry times" like David is experiencing in this desert, should still be about trusting in God to take care of him (and us). A big part of our eternal rewards is about being faithful so when we go through "dry times". It is about our willingness to praise Him when we don't know what else to do.
36. Verse 9: They who seek my life will be destroyed; they will go down to the depths of the earth. ¹⁰They will be given over to the sword and become food for jackals.
- a) It seems like every psalm has at least one point of David complaining about someone trying to kill Him or someone doing evil. The reason for that is because we focus on God when things are going wrong and our minds go back and forth between praising Him and thinking about our problems. That is what David is doing in these two verses.
 - b) David is stating that his enemies will die by the same type of weapons they are using to try to kill him. Then he says their bodies will be food for animals. So how does David know this is the way these people are going to die? I don't think David does. I suspect he is in effect speculating about his situation to help him through this dry time in his life.
 - i) The point is not that thinking positive thoughts will get us through our problem. We as Christians are to trust in God for our protection and He promises to guide us through whatever we are dealing with at this time.
37. Verse 11: But the king will rejoice in God; all who swear by God's name will praise him, while the mouths of liars will be silenced.
- a) Verse 11 mentions a king. Yes it could be referring to David as a king and David is saying that he will continue to serve as a king despite his problems of the moment. The reference could be greater in scope, but the focus here is on those who trust in God "praising Him" and "trusting Him" no matter what is the situation of the moment.
 - b) The main point of this psalm is that those who continue to trust in God will be rewarded for their trust in Him. That is why I wanted to include this psalm in this lesson: So I can state the fact that those who continue to put their trust in God no matter what the situation, will be rewarded for that trust.
38. John, the one thing you never stated in this lesson is what is the reward for trusting in God all of our lives and making an effort to do His will? Why should I "push so hard for God" if I don't know what is my reward for my effort?
- a) I suspect the reason the bible is silent on the specific's of our rewards (despite the fact the New Testament has a lot of references to the fact we do get rewards in heaven), because God is saying to us in effect, "Just as I ask you (that's us) to just trust in Me through this life, trust that I will reward everyone that is faithful to Me in the next life.
 - b) So does that mean I do get a big mansion to kick back in for all of eternity? If you think about it, we would quickly be bored with such a reward. That is why I suspect our reward has to do with "things" to keep us occupied as we do rule and reign with God.
39. In this lesson, instead of ending on a prayer, I want to end on a promise to the believer:
- a) "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:6-7).
 - b) There are two things I want you to notice about this quote. First of all, notice that "raised us" is past tense. As in it is a "done deal" and we can't change that fact. The second thing is "coming ages". That means in our next life God will spend that time showing us the "riches of His grace". I'm not sure what that includes, but I'm willing to bet my eternal soul to find out what that means. With that said, have a blessed week, John.