

There will be times in the lives of God's people when it will appear as though God is nowhere near. There will be moments when even the most faithful can cry "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" In those moments we can begin to think God is angry with us and has turned against us. After all, this can be a possibility. It is possible for us to do things and say things that do anger God and cause Him to turn against us.

Sometimes when we are broken down and low, it will almost appear as though God is on the side of the enemy, not on the side of those who are right with Him. If you have ever felt this way, you can well relate to Psalm 89.

From the superscription we see that Psalm 89 is a "maskil" psalm. What this means is that this Psalm was written for didactic, instructional and educational purposes. The Psalm was written by Ethan the Ezrahite. Ethan was an extremely wise man who lived in the days of David and Solomon (I Kings 4:31). This is his only Psalm that is published in the Psalms. It is possible that he was a musician (I Chron. 15:17-18).

Now the Psalm is obviously written when there had been some defeat and depression. The Psalm begins with praise, but it ends with an appeal to God to turn His anger away and pour out His blessings once again. **There is something that is striking about this because all through the Psalm God is praised for His greatness and faithfulness.** This is a key to the Psalm:

WHEN WE ARE EXPERIENCING NEGATIVE THINGS AND THINK WE HAVE BEEN ABANDONED BY GOD, WE NEED TO KEEP PRAYING AND KEEP FOCUSED ON THE TRUE THEOLOGY REVEALED ABOUT THE GREATNESS OF GOD.

This is what Israel needs to do and this is what we need to do. Let's face it, God could take His blessings away from any of us and have good reasons for doing so. Who of us have not done or said things that would give God the absolute right to stop blessing us from now until we get into eternity? The last thing we want to do is to lose sight of how great God is.

As I look through the Psalm there are about nine parts to it:

PART #1 – Ethan will sing of the lovingkindness and faithfulness of God. **89:1-2**

No matter what we have done, no matter how miserable we may be because we have done things to make ourselves miserable, we can always sing of the mercy and faithfulness of God. The truth is any chance we have of having God bless us is due to His mercy and His faithfulness, not ours. Notice from **verse 1** the mercy and faithfulness of God is "to all generations." If it were not for the mercy and faithfulness of God, no one would ever get to see heaven. Let us ask ourselves three simple questions:

- 1) Has God been good to you?
- 2) Has God been merciful to you?
- 3) Has God been faithful to you?

No matter how depressed you are, you too can sing of the same things Ethan did.

PART #2 – Ethan praises God for His choice to make a covenant with David. **89:3-4**

One of the things that is so important for God's people to remember, when they feel out of step with God, is that God chose us and made a covenant relationship with us. He did that with David and He has done that with us. Now David was not a perfect man and neither are we. But God chose David and God entered into a covenant relationship with David and any who believe on Jesus Christ, the Davidic King, also are in a covenant relationship with God.

No matter how low you feel, think about this fact. God chose you and made us kings and priests. We can sing of that forever. "Selah"—stop and think about that.

PART #3 – Ethan praises God for His sovereign greatness. **89:5-8**

I am totally convinced that God uses dark times in our lives to cause us to realize what a great and awesome God He truly is. No angel in the sky and no human on earth can begin to compare with God. Do not overlook what is said in **verse 7**; godly people have a "great fear and reverence for God." The nearer one is to God, the more one will reverence God. Charles Spurgeon said, "Irreverence is rebellion."

PART #4 – Ethan reminds God of His sovereign ruling power. **89:9-14**

Ethan realized that God ruled over everything. He has the power to create and control everything. He controls the ocean (**v. 9**). He controls and destroys political powers (**v. 10**). Rahab is often used as a synonym for Egypt (Is. 51:9-10). He is in sovereign control of the heavens and the earth and everything in the world (**v. 11**). He made everything in the north and in the south and all the mountains (**v. 12**). Tabor and Hermon are mountain ranges. God is a strong, mighty God. He exalts with His right hand (**v. 13**). But there are four governing principles by which God always operates with all of His majestic power (**v. 14**):

- 1) Righteousness.
- 2) Justice.
- 3) Lovingkindness and mercy.
- 4) Truth.

PART #5 – Ethan reminds God of the positive nature of blessed people. **89:15-18**

When God chooses to bless His people there are some very positive things that happen:

Action #1 - People being blessed by God make a joyful sound. **89:15**

Action #2 - People being blessed by God have an obedient walk. **89:15b**

Action #3 - People being blessed by God have perpetual joy. **89:16a**

Action #4 - People being blessed by God have an exalted righteousness. **89:16b**

Action #5 - People being blessed by God have a divine strength. **89:17a**

Action #6 - People being blessed by God have a divine exaltation. **89:17b**

Notice the key to being exalted, the favor of God.

Action #7 - People being blessed by God have a strong defense. **89:18**

The reason why people blessed by God have a strong defense is because God is the defense.

PART #6 – Ethan reminds God of His exalted election. **89:19-29**

Ethan believed in the doctrine of election and it was this belief that motivated him to pray. There were seven realities brought out about this great doctrine of election.

Reality #1 - God had made His election known in a vision. **89:19**

This is clearly a reference to the vision of Samuel who saw David as king (I Sam. 16:12-13). Israel is no afterthought; she is the chosen of God and that choice was given by God in a revelatory vision.

Reality #2 - God anointed His elected servant. **89:20**

Reality #3 - God will strengthen the one He has elected. **89:21**

Reality #4 - God will not permit the enemy to deceive or destroy His elected servant. **89:22**

Reality #5 - God will destroy the enemies of His elected one. **89:23**

Reality #6 - God will be faithful and merciful and will exalt His elected one. **89:24-28**

Reality #7 - God will be faithful to bless His descendants. **89:29**

God does all of these things for the one He elects. The doctrine of God electing you is a precious doctrine because this doctrine guarantees that even though we may have some moments of faithlessness, God will always be faithful.

PART #7 – Ethan reminds God of His eternal care promise. **89:30-37**

Look at this section of Scripture. God made a promise to Israel that even if she refused to obey His Word, He would still not cut off His promises to her. He would punish her but He would never abandon her. Once God makes a promise that He will do something, His promises are secure and sure. The perpetual existence of the moon is a great illustration of the perpetual promises of God. “SELAH”—stop and think about it.

PART #8 – Ethan reminds God of His present sovereign decree of hardships. **89:38-45**

There is absolutely no question that no matter how difficult things get, faithful people of God acknowledge the sovereignty of God. Ethan believed God sovereignly controlled everything, the positive and the negative. There is no question that disobedience can bring about some serious negative consequences. If sin is not truthfully and honestly faced, it does have serious repercussions. Many of these things we may observe do apply to Israel right now. She has not faced up to what she did to Jesus Christ and it has cost her:

Sovereign Reality #1 - God sovereignly permitted the Davidic kingdom to be rejected.
89:38-39

Sovereign Reality #2 - God sovereignly permitted the Davidic Kingdom to seem to be ruined.
89:40

Sovereign Reality #3 - God sovereignly permitted the Davidic kingdom to be reproached.
89:41

Sovereign Reality #4 - God sovereignly permitted the adversaries to seem to be exalted. **89:42**

Sovereign Reality #5 - God sovereignly permitted the righteous to lose. **89:43**

Sovereign Reality #6 - God sovereignly permitted the righteous greatness to cease. **89:44-45**

PART #9 – Ethan asks God to remember His promises. **89:46-52**

There are four things Ethan asks God to remember:

Remembrance #1 - Remember a person's life is short and if he is to experience God's blessings, it must come in a short span of time. **89:47-48**

Remembrance #2 - Remember your former mercy and faithfulness to David. **89:49**

Remembrance #3 - Remember the reproach that enemies bring against your people. **89:50-51**

Remembrance #4 - Remember you are the blessed God forever. **89:52**

Ethan ends this maskil by saying God is blessed forever—Amen and Amen. Truly, truly. No matter what is going on, this theological reality is reality. God is blessed forever.