

\* The Heights Baptist Church \* Series: The Psalms \*  
\* Topic: Numbering Our Days \* Psalm 90 \* 6/8/25 \*

MAIN POINT

Satan would love to get us to waste our lives here on earthly things. It is a wise thing to understand how temporary our lives here are, and to invest our limited time here on earth on things of eternal value.

INTRODUCTION

**In a typical week, what would you say is your biggest waste of time? What is your best use of time?**

While it is okay to enjoy life (1 Timothy 6:17-19) and God has designed us to need to take breaks to rest and refocus on Him (Mark 2:27-28), we need to avoid falling into the opposite trap; squandering our lives on things that have no eternal value.

Today we will be looking at Psalm 90, which is the only Psalm in the book of Psalms written by Moses. This likely makes this Psalm the oldest of the Psalms. This Psalm is known as a communal lament, since Moses is lamenting about not just his life, but the difficult state of the nation of Israel.

*Note to study leader: This Psalm doesn't state exactly when Moses wrote it, but it fits very well into the time after the spies returned from scouting out the promised land. Due to a lack of faith, they recommended that Israel not enter the promised land as God had directed them. This lack of faith caused God to condemn them to a lifetime of wandering in the wilderness. And after their entire generation died off (except for Joshua and Caleb), Joshua would lead the next generation into the promised land.*

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 90:1-9

**What do we learn about God and ourselves in these verses?**

**How would you explain the word “everlasting”? What does it mean that God is eternal?**

God, the Great I AM, has no beginning and no end. He exists in a continuous present. He does not experience a succession of time like we do. For God there is no past, present, or future as we conceive of them. In His eternal nature, God knows and controls all things past, present, and future.

**Moses likely prayed this prayer as the nation of Israel was wandering in the wilderness basically waiting to die, and the next generation was also waiting for the older generation to die so they could enter into the promised land. How are the points Moses brings up in this Psalm especially relevant?**

The 40 years of desert wandering was meant, in part, to help Israel understand their need to rely completely on God every day. From our perspective, time is a precious resource, since we only have a finite amount of time available to us in this life. But from God's perspective, an infinite amount of time is available to accomplish His will. Israel's faith and obedience were more important in God's economy than 40 years of time.

**How long had the Israelites suffered under God's wrath? How might they have felt while living under prolonged judgment?**

God was willing to have them all “waste” 40 years of precious time, which meant that for every adult who left Egypt except for Joshua and Caleb, they would not live to enter the promised land. And for the next generation, they would have to wait for much of their lives before entering. But God is willing to invest this time to get Israel's focus off of their enemies in Canaan and back on Him.

## **What did Moses request God do on behalf of His people?**

The Israelites sin and lack of faith had brought God's discipline upon themselves. Acknowledging the brevity of human life, Moses prayed that God would deliver His people from their current distress. He anticipated that God would deliver His people from the wilderness into the land flowing with milk and honey. And this can be expanded to include the coming reign of the Messiah during His millennial reign (Ps. 2; Isa. 65–66; Dan. 7–8; Rev. 20:1-6).

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 90:10-17

## **In contrast to the characteristics of God revealed in the previous verses, what do verses 10-17 reveal about us?**

Our time in this world is very brief.

## **According to verse 10, how did Moses describe the best of times that Israel was experiencing while wandering in the wilderness?**

The Hebrews certainly knew the brevity of time, and it wasn't because they were having fun. Their days were filled with difficult circumstances. And as time passed, their entire generation, including all of the people of their generation that they knew and loved passed away.

## **What was Moses' hope and expectation of God in verses 13-17?**

That God would have compassion on them and restore their joy. And that God would show His splendor to their children.

## REFLECTING ON THE CONCEPT OF TIME

*Note to study leader: We will be breaking down this discussion about time into two main sections. The first will be about time from God's perspective, and the second about time from our perspective.*

## **What was Moses' request of God for the Israelites in verse 12? To what end?**

Moses asked God to teach us to number our days, so that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

## GOD'S PERSPECTIVE ON TIME

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ PSALM 90:4 AND 2 PETER 3:8-9

## **What do these verses teach us about how God relates to time? How is this different than the way we relate to time?**

God experiences time in a way we cannot. God, the Great I AM, exists in a continuous present. He does not experience a succession of moments like we do as people. In His eternal nature, God knows and controls all things that have ever happened and ever will happen. Peter is showing us that for God, a long period of time seems only as a day, and a short period of time seems to Him like a thousand years. All of creation exists within history, but God stands above history as its sovereign and eternal creator and Lord.

## OUR PERSPECTIVE ON TIME

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ GENESIS 1:14

**Psalm 19:1-6 tells us that one of the reasons God created the sun, moon, and stars was to declare His glory. Considering Genesis 1:14, what is another reason God created the sun, moon, and stars?**

They would mark day and night, and the stars would be signs to mark seasons, days, and years. In Psalm 90, the psalmist called on God to help us to “number our days”, and we see from Genesis that God has created the sun, moon, and stars to help us “number our days, so that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

**About how much time are humans allotted in this life here on earth, and how does this relate to us numbering our days in a way that will help us gain a heart of wisdom?**

On average, we may expect God to bless us with 70 or 80 years. It would be wise of us not to live our lives as if we have an eternity of time to spend on this earth.

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ PSALM 103:15-18 AND JAMES 4:14

**What do these verses add to our understanding of our numbered years?**

Moses expressed in Psalm 90:5-6 that time is fleeting. So, whether God blesses us with 100 years, or just a very few years, life will still rapidly disappear. The next generation matters now!

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ DEUT. 33:27, PSALM 119:89, ISAIAH 40:6-8, AND ROMANS 6:23

**The context of the verses we read earlier from 2 Peter 3 is that one day God will destroy this present creation by fire. What will outlast this temporary universe?**

God, His word, and the souls of people.

**What does this show us about where we should be investing our time as Christians?**

We should be investing our time in God, His word, and people. We already read in Psalm 90:8 that we should not be throwing our lives away pursuing sin. But wisdom also teaches us it's not just wasting our lives on sin, but also not chasing anything that will squander time God has granted us on this earth.

APPLICATION

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ EPHESIANS 5:8-20

**Considering the fact that our lives here are fleeting, what applications can we draw from these verses in Ephesians 5?**

Don't waste your life pursuing sin. Invest your life in things that are eternally significant. “Make the most of every opportunity” (NIV) or “Redeem the time” (KJV).

**How can we better number our days correctly?**

PRAYER

Praise God for His sovereign care over human history. Thank Him for loving us enough to enter history as Jesus Christ to redeem all who were caught in the curse of sin and death. Pray that God would help us to use our time on earth to invest in eternity.

## COMMENTARY

### Psalm 90

90:1-2. Throughout Israel's history, the Lord provided physical aid and spiritual sanctuary for His people. The psalmist emphasized God's immutability as the basis for His faithfulness. The nuance of gave birth when referring to God always emphasizes His role as Creator and Almighty Father (see Col. 1:15-17).

90:3. The sovereignty of God over creation includes His authority over life and death. Descendants of Adam could also be translated "sons of man" (8:5). The psalm contrasts humanity's limitations and God's eternity.

90:4. The nature of God makes Him unconstrained by time. The expression a thousand years implies infinity.

90:5-6. You end their lives is literally "You interrupted them." Grass is a favorite Old Testament metaphor for mankind's frailty and the brevity of human life (see Ps. 103:15-16; Isa. 40:6-8; Jas. 1:9-11).

90:7-8. Secret sins are transgressions committed discreetly or unrecognized by the individual (19:13). But God is always aware of mankind's unjust ways because He is omniscient.

90:9-10. Seventy or eighty years may represent the average lifespan of God's people, since dietary restrictions and attention to purity promote longevity. Even the best of them alludes to the difficulties of daily life in temporal bodies, but see note at verses 14-15.

90:11. Who understands is literally "who knows" (see 2 Sam. 12:22; Prov. 24:22; Ecc. 3:21; 6:12; Jon. 3:9). God's inscrutability troubled the psalmist since God's ways are unknowable.

90:12. The psalmist asked the Lord to teach us to take advantage of our short lives on earth in order to nurture a heart directed by wisdom (1 Kings 3:12; Prov. 16:23; Ecc. 8:5; 10:2).

90:13. The Lord "returns" (Hebrew, shuv) all living things to dust (v. 3), but the psalmist implored God to turn to His people. The psalmist identified no specific enemy but perceived God as the agent of distress.

90:14-15. God's provision and answer to prayer traditionally occurred in the morning (88:13). The psalmist did not expect to live a life without adversity. Rather, he asked the Lord for an equal balance of blessing and adversity. A life without trials would lead to an attitude of self-sufficiency and independence from God.

90:16-17. The blessings of God's people are visual witnesses to His faithfulness. Establish ... the work of our hands implies that Israel does have a role in provision, and also makes a direct connection between success and God's providence.