

PSALM 88

If ever there was a song of sorrow and a psalm of sadness, this is it. From beginning to end there is no note of joy, no note of victory, but it dies away in Job-like lamentation. It is as gloomy as the preceding psalm is cheerful. A number of writers have pointed out that it is a good thing this psalm is included in the Psalter. Otherwise, there might be some experience that men who fear God may undergo that would not be reflected in a book that seems to reckon with all the possibilities a man may meet in life's stormy voyage. Let it never be forgotten that God has purchased to himself an elect people by the precious blood of his dear Son.

**A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.
For the choir director; according to Mahalath Leannoth.
A Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.**

- 1 O YAHWEH, the God of my salvation, I have cried out by day and in the night before You.
- 2 Let my prayer come before You; incline Your ear to my cry!
- 3 For my soul has had enough troubles, and my life has drawn near to Sheol.
- 4 I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit;
I have become like a man without strength,
- 5 Forsaken among the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave,
whom You remember no more, and they are cut off from Your hand.
- 6 You have put me in the lowest pit, in dark places, in the depths.
- 7 Your wrath has rested upon me, and You have afflicted me with all Your waves. Selah
- 8 You have removed my acquaintances far from me;
You have made me an object of loathing to them; I am shut up and cannot go out.
- 9 My eye has wasted away because of affliction;
I have called upon You every day, O YAHWEH; I have spread out my hands to You.

- 10 Will You perform wonders for the dead?
Will the departed spirits rise *and* praise You? Selah
- 11 Will Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave, Your faithfulness in Abaddon?
- 12 Will Your wonders be made known in the darkness?
and Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

- 13 But I, O YAHWEH, have cried out to You for help,
and in the morning my prayer comes before You.
- 14 O YAHWEH, why do You reject my soul? *Why* do You hide Your face from me?
- 15 I was afflicted and about to die from my youth on; I suffer Your terrors; I am overcome.
- 16 Your burning anger has passed over me; Your terrors have destroyed me.
- 17 They have surrounded me like water all day long;
they have encompassed me altogether.

18 You have removed lover and friend far from me; my acquaintances are *in* darkness.

PRAYER

Gracious Father, incline your ear as we prostrate ourselves before your divine majesty, as we humbly acknowledge the many and great sins which from time to time have disgraced our Christian profession. The remembrance of them is grievous to our souls, and except for your mercies toward us in Christ Jesus, except for the atonement of our precious Saviour, your indignation would have been impossible to bear. Grant us spiritual strength and consolation and thus revive our souls. Enable us to walk as becomes the disciples of a crucified Messiah, in meekness and love, in faith and newness of life. Mortify in us all that is evil in your sight, all our pride, covetousness, sloth, slander, and envy. Plant in our hearts glorious visions of your majesty, and let the terrors of your wrath spark in us an earnest zeal to share the gospel message with all mankind. Hear us now for Jesus' sake. Amen.