

PSALM 90

This is the oldest of the psalms. Moses well deserves the name appended to this psalm, "the man of God." He was chosen by God, inspired by God, honored by God, and faithful to God in all his house. He gives in this psalm a most affecting description of man's mortal and transitory state on earth since the Fall, and complains that few persons meditate upon death in such a manner as to prepare themselves for it. He offers up a prayer for grace to do so, and for the mercies of redemption.

Alexander Maclaren summarizes it up nicely: "The sad and stately music of this great psalm befits the dirge of a world. Next to its restrained emotion and majestic simplicity, how artificial and poor do even the most deeply felt strains of other poets on the same theme sound. It preaches man's mortality in immortal words."

A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.

- 1 Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.
- 2 Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.
- 3 You turn man back into dust and say, "Return, O children of men."
- 4 For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night.
- 5 You have swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep; in the morning they are like grass which sprouts anew.
- 6 In the morning it flourishes and sprouts anew; toward evening it fades and withers away.
- 7 For we have been consumed by Your anger and by Your wrath we have been dismayed.
- 8 You have placed our iniquities before You, our secret *sins* in the light of Your presence.
- 9 For all our days have declined in Your fury; we have finished our years like a sigh.
- 10 As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years, yet their pride is *but* labor and sorrow; for soon it is gone and we fly away.
- 11 Who understands the power of Your anger and Your fury, according to the fear that is due You?
- 12 So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom.
- 13 Do return, O YAHWEH; how long *will it be?* And be sorry for Your servants.
- 14 O satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

- 15 Make us glad according to the days You have afflicted us,
and the years we have seen evil.
- 16 Let Your work appear to Your servants and Your majesty to their children.
- 17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us;
and confirm for us the work of our hands; yes, confirm the work of our hands.

PRAYER

O merciful Father, in this transitory world give us grace to spend our time in virtuous and holy exercises, that when the day of our death arrives we may feel the sweet refreshing of your Spirit comforting our souls and sustaining our infirmities. Then shall we appear before your throne wearing the robe of righteousness purchased for us by the blood of Jesus Christ, and purchased at a great cost to yourself. Receive our gratitude and praise, for we ask in the name of your only Son. Amen.