

## From Here to Eternity

Psalm 90:1-2

In the midst of this worldwide pandemic, the question on the minds of the people is this: “Where do we go from here?” Where will our lives go from here? What will our children’s lives be like? Will things get back to normal (whatever “normal” is?) How will we live? And, of course, the broader questions about eternity are always looming in the background. Where will we be for all eternity? And when someone reads in the Scriptures about a blessed eternity for all believers, he must ask: How do I get from here to eternity?

Psalm 90:1-2 gives us timeless wisdom to answer these questions:

**“A Prayer of Moses the man of God. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.”**

The Eternal God, our Lord and Creator, is the personal dwelling place for every believer.

### *Moses, the Man of God*

The story of Moses (Exodus 2-15) is one of the most remarkable in all of the Scriptures. When Moses used a forceful approach, he failed. But when he depended on the Lord, he delivered his people from bondage. It’s important to remember that *failures aren’t finished*. The Bible presents men and women transparently, with their problems on full display. [Another example is Peter](#), who denied the Lord with cursing, but returned to preach as a Spirit-filled messenger

at Pentecost. Jesus Christ was tested in every point, just as we are. He understood what it was to be [“the Lord of the letdowns,”](#) and still triumph by the grace of God. The life of Moses helps every one of us to see how God could use us in spite of our failings. In his humble meekness, Moses truly was the man of God. So meek in fact, that Moses was the model prophet for the great Prophet whom God would send ([Deuteronomy 18:15-19](#)).<sup>i</sup> This was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Moses was the man of God who had found a personal dwelling place in the eternal God, His Lord and Creator.

### *A Prayer of Moses*

Though appeals to God appear throughout the psalms, only a few of them are entitled “prayer.” These include psalms 17, 86, 90, 102 and 142. Three of these were written by David. This unique psalm-prayer of Moses has elements of a lament, especially in verses 5-11. But this is also a prayer of intercession (the act of intervening for another), especially in verses 13-17. Each of us longs to pray and receive answers from the Lord. But [James 4:3](#) reminds us that our self-seeking passions often hinder our prayers. So each one of us is confronted with a question about prayer: *“Do I pray to honor God, or to honor myself?”*

### *A Prayer of Moses: A Model Intercessor*

A story from the life of Moses brings out this contrast in a clear and convincing manner. In Numbers 14, the people had rebelled (again). During this current pandemic, it is common to hear media outlets speak of “facts, not fear.” [But the leaders in Numbers 14 made huge mistakes by insisting that they were factual when they were really fearful.](#) The real problem

was their lack of faith. But in the midst of that crisis, the Lord put Moses to the test. In a remarkable offer, the Lord expressed the intention to strike the people with a deadly pandemic.<sup>ii</sup> But the Lord told Moses that he would make him the father of a great nation – mightier than Israel (Numbers 14:12). How would you respond to such an offer – especially if the people in question were causing you real problems? Would you intercede for them, or take the offer from God to bless you while He blasted the rebels?

There is a sense in which every believer today is faced with this choice. Knowing that you are secure, and that you have a home in heaven, you might find it easy to avoid prayer. After all, if hard-hearted people are causing you great pain (as those people did to Moses), why should you pray for them? But Moses passed the test of an intercessor by the way he approached the Lord. He understood the rebellion of his own self-serving heart as he looked upon the rebellion of the people. Instead of acting in a self-serving manner, Moses appealed to God for the glory of God. In each valley of trouble, Moses found [a door of hope](#).

In [Numbers 14:13-24](#), the prophet intervened based on God’s glorious reputation rather than any self-seeking motive. Moses expressed dismay about how the Egyptians and the Canaanites would view the Lord if He destroyed His people. Numbers 14:14 is of special interest to us in this study of Psalm 90:

“And they will tell *it* to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD are among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud stands

over them, and *that* thou go before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.”

The people of Israel had no dwelling place in the wilderness; they had no dwelling place except under God Himself. With a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, He protected His people – as a tent would protect them from the elements. If God were to destroy this rebellious people, Moses argued, the nations would doubt God. They would question whether He was able to take them into the land which He had promised them (Numbers 14:15-16). In a way that modeled intercessory prayer for all of us, Moses appealed to God’s power, His patience, His mercy and His forgiveness. The Lord did pardon His people because of Moses’ intercession, but He punished the ten leaders who had fearfully doubted God’s ability. Moses’ prayer honored God rather than honoring himself.

*Moses the Man of God: A Picture of Christ*

This was not the only occasion on which Moses received this offer from God. In [Exodus 32:7-14](#), Moses was instructed to leave God alone, but he would not. He proved to be a faithful intercessor for his people. So much so that, according to [Exodus 32:30-35](#), Moses asked God to blot him out of God’s book (of life) if He would not forgive the people! Truly this is the heart of an intercessor. Calling upon God as his witness in [Romans 9:1-5](#), the Apostle Paul expressed the same sentiments. He said that he would wish himself to be accursed if his brethren could be

saved. Of course, this is exactly what happened to Jesus Christ – who really was cursed to save us from our sins. In the words of Galatians 3:13:

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangs on a tree:”

This is the Lord Jesus Christ who sacrificed His life for the sins of mankind: He was made a curse for us. In the words of 2 Corinthians 5:21:

“For He has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

Moses was only a type – a foreshadowing – of the Son of God who would come to save His people from their sins. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world ([John 1:29](#)). Jesus lived the spotless life before the Father that every one of us should have lived. But then, in our place, He died the cursed death of the cross, becoming sin for us. He did so to exchange places with us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. On the cross, He uttered the words, “It is finished” to proclaim that His payment for sins was complete. In rising again, He demonstrated that the Father had accepted that payment and vindicated Him. Today, He is interceding for us at the right hand of the throne of God the Father ([Romans 8:34](#)).

### **Our Lord, Our Dwelling Place**

“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.” (v.1)

## Lord

Moses addressed His prayer to the Lord (using the title “Adonai,” meaning “Lord, master or owner.”<sup>iii</sup> Moses, the meekest man on earth ([Numbers 12:3](#)), addressed His prayer to his Lord, master and possessor. But what he said next according to Martin Luther “ . . . is a remarkable expression, the like of which is nowhere in Sacred Scripture, that God is a dwelling place.”<sup>iv</sup>

## Dwelling Place

The Lord is a dwelling place. What came to the mind of Moses when he used the expression “dwelling place?” The Hebrew word refers to a habitation or dwelling.<sup>v</sup>

Was he thinking of the story in Exodus 2:15-22, when he fled from Pharaoh after he killed an Egyptian? Dwelling in the land of Midian, Moses named his son, “Gershom” meaning “I have been a stranger in a strange land.”

Or was he pondering the first Passover in Egypt (Exodus 12:13) when the Lord commanded His people to paint the blood of the Passover lambs upon the doorposts of their dwellings? And the death angel passed over the dwelling because of the lamb’s blood on the door.

Or perhaps was Moses thinking of the Tabernacle, God’s dwelling place, with all its symbolism in Exodus 26? Maybe it was that the Lord Himself demonstrated His presence with them (Exodus 13:21) by the cloud and fiery pillar. According to Exodus 33:9-11, when Moses would

walk to the Tabernacle, the people could see the cloudy pillar descend, and the Lord would speak to Moses face to face. They saw God as their dwelling place.

Did Moses see the Lord as their “tent” their “dwelling place” in the wilderness? As long as the cloud remained (Numbers 9:18-23), the people rested in their tents.

When Moses went on to write, “in all generations,” he was undoubtedly thinking of the patriarchs. Abraham went out of Ur, not knowing where he went (Hebrews 11:8). Jacob awakened from his astonishing dream (Genesis 28:16-22) and called the place “Bethel” (meaning “house of God”). Jacob proclaimed, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not!”

### Our Dwelling Place

It is of great importance to us today to think about the word “our.” Moses did not say, “my” but “our.” He was referring to the patriarchs and then to the people of his own day. Moses the intercessor thought in terms of “our” dwelling place rather than merely “my” dwelling place. He thought of the Eternal God, our Lord and Creator, as the personal dwelling place for every believer. But these things were also written for us (1 Corinthians 10:11) to give us hope (Romans 15:4).

In Psalm 91:9, the psalmist used the same word for “dwelling place:” “Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;*” There he speaks of a personal application, or a personal appropriation of the Most High God as his dwelling place.

This is God's grace in the secret place. The [world may scoff at this](#), but repentant believers know the grace of the dwelling place with God. To speak of "our dwelling place" is intensely personal.

No matter where we dwell, we think of our homes in a similar fashion. The roof over our heads gives us protection from the sun, the rain, the snow and the hail. Our walls protect us from wild beasts and intruders. Our dwelling places are arranged for our comfort. In them, we have everything we need for regular life and health. Moses undoubtedly had these kinds of things in mind when he comforted his people with the word "our."

Today, we could apply this idea of God's dwelling place with men in the New Testament church, the household of God.

"Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; <sup>20</sup> And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; <sup>21</sup> In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord: <sup>22</sup> In whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:19-22)

Our dwelling place is in the church, the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12-13).

The Apostle Paul, the tent maker, had the concept of a dwelling place in mind in 2 Corinthians 5:1-8. There he described death with the euphemism of a tent that falls apart. The Christian believer has the confidence to know that when his earthly body falls apart, he has a house not

made with hands, eternally in the heavens. Paul could confidently say that to die would be to be present with the Lord. In Colossians 3:3, he reminded believers that “your life is hidden with Christ in God.” Paul also taught that the Eternal God, our Lord and Creator, is the personal dwelling place for every believer.

Jesus communicated this same idea of an eternal dwelling place in John 14:2-3

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

### **Our Lord, Our Creator**

**“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, . . .” (v. 2a)**

Here Moses reflected on the Lord God, the Creator of all. In Genesis 1 and 2, the creation account speaks for itself. When God said, “Let there be light,” there was light. He spoke the earth and the heavens into existence. Mountains have always seemed majestic to the people of the earth. Recently, as the result of the lockdowns brought on by the pandemic, the people of Punjab can see the Himalayas plainly. This is the first time in thirty years that they have been able to do so, because the air pollution is greatly reduced.<sup>vi</sup> They can see the snow-capped majesties rising up – one hundred miles away! To us the mountains seem as old as time itself, but to God, they are merely youngsters. Moses’ prayer speaks of a time when they were

brought forth; they were formed. He does so in order to contrast the temporary nature of mountains with the eternal nature of God.

### **Our Lord, Our Eternal God**

**“ . . . even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.”**

Because we are creatures of time, we think in terms of “eternity past” and “eternity future.” God alone dwells in the “ever-present now.” But Moses captures the idea for us with the words, “from everlasting to everlasting You are God.”

We need not fear that our dwelling place will fall apart. Our dwelling place is in the eternal God. If you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, then you know the comfort these words give you. From “right here” (wherever your “here” is at this moment) from here to eternity, you know that God is your dwelling place.

In Revelation 21, the Apostle John described it this way:

<sup>1</sup> And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup> And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. <sup>4</sup> And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any

more pain: for the former things are passed away. <sup>5</sup> And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. <sup>6</sup> And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely

This psalm of Moses teaches us that the Eternal God, our Lord and Creator, is the personal dwelling place for every believer.

Across the years, this psalm of Moses has inspired a number of hymns, most notably, Isaac Watts' hymn/paraphrase: "O God Our Help in Ages Past." There were people who faced a deadly tragedy on Sunday evening, April 14, 1912 at 11:40 p.m. (108 years ago this week). The passengers on the Titanic probably thought about the last hymn they had sung in the church service that morning as their ship sank. Where would they go? Would they survive? How do you get from here to eternity?

The hymn they had sung that morning was Watts' hymn "O God Our Help in Ages Past."<sup>vii</sup> Think about these words paraphrasing Psalm 90:

*Our God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home:*

*Pastor Gordon Dickson, Calvary Baptist Church, Findlay, Ohio*

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<sup>i</sup> That prophecy was still very much on the minds of the people in Jesus' day, according to John 1:21, 6:14

<sup>ii</sup> Hebrew [deber] דֵּבַר pestilence, plague

<sup>iii</sup> Robert Alden, "[27 אדוּ](#)," ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 12.

<sup>iv</sup> Martin Luther, cited in Charles Spurgeon, Treasury of David, commentary on Psalm 90, accessed at <https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=spur&b=19&c=90>

<sup>v</sup> Carl Schultz, "[1581 עוּ](#)," ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 654.

<sup>vi</sup> Rob Picheta, "People in India can see the Himalayas for the first time in 'decades,' as the lockdown eases air pollution" CNN Travel, April 9, 2020 accessed at <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/himalayas-visible-lockdown-india-scli-intl/index.html>

<sup>vii</sup> Sung to the tune of St. Anne, which was probably written by William Croft, see [https://hymnary.org/text/our\\_god\\_our\\_help\\_in\\_ages\\_past\\_watts#tune](https://hymnary.org/text/our_god_our_help_in_ages_past_watts#tune)