

# Psalm 89 – “God’s Covenant Faithfulness”

“And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” –Rev 6:10

## Introduction

- **Spurgeon** - *We have now reached the majestic Covenant Psalm, which, according to the Jewish arrangement, closes the third book of the Psalms. It is the utterance of a believer, in presence of great national disaster, pleading with his God, urging the grand argument of covenant engagements, and expecting deliverance and help, because of the faithfulness of Jehovah.*
- **Matthew Henry** - *In singing this psalm we must have high thoughts of God, a lively faith in his covenant with the Redeemer, and a sympathy with the afflicted parts of the church.*

## Author and Composition

- Psalm identifies Ethan the Ezrahite as the author. **1 Kings 4** - <sup>31</sup> For he (*Solomon*) was wiser than all men—than **Ethan the Ezrahite**, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations.

## Outline

- 1. Verses 1-4. Opening Praise, and Recalling the Covenant.**
  - Matthew Henry - *The psalmist has a very sad complaint to make of the deplorable condition of the family of David at this time, and yet he begins the psalm with songs of praise; for we must, in every thing, in every state, give thanks; thus we must glorify the Lord in the fire. We think, when we are in trouble, that we get ease by complaining; but we do more—we get joy, by praising. Let our complaints therefore be turned into thanksgivings; and in these verses we find that which will be matter of praise and thanksgiving for us in the worst of times, whether upon a personal or a public account.*
- 2. Verses 5-7. Faithfulness of God extolled.**
  - a. The Saints to have Reverence and Awe before Him.
- 3. Verses 8-13. God’s Attribute: Omnipotence.**
  - a. None *outside of God* can prevent Him from keeping His Promise – *He is Almighty.*
- 4. Verses 14-18. God’s Attributes: Righteousness, Justice, Mercy and Truth.**
  - a. God’s own nature (attributes) prevents Him from breaking the Covenant.
- 5. Verses 19-23. God’s Chosen One – the Messiah.**
  - a. Attributes of God’s Messiah revealed.
  - b. He is taken from amongst the people.
- 6. Verses 24-29. God’s Covenant stands Firm with the Messiah.**
  - a. David’s Son Revealed to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- 7. Verses 30-32. Recalling the Davidic Covenant. Terms include Discipline. God true to His Word.**

- a. Also see *Hebrews 12*.

**8. Verses 33-37. The Covenant is Unbreakable.**

- a. **Spurgeon** - "Alterations and afterthoughts belong to short-sighted beings who meet with unexpected events which operate upon them to change their minds, but the Lord who sees everything from the beginning has no such reason for shifting his ground. He is besides immutable in his nature and designs, and cannot change in heart, and therefore not in promise. A word once given is sacred; once let a promise pass our lips and honesty forbids that we should recall it,—unless indeed the thing promised be impossible, or wicked, neither of which can happen with the promises of God. How consoling it is to see the Lord thus resolute. He, in the words before us, virtually reasserts his covenant and rehearses his engagements. This he does at such length, and with such reiteration, that it is evident he takes pleasure in that most ancient and solemn contract. If it were conceivable that he had repented of it, he would not be found dwelling upon it, and repeating it with renewed emphasis."
- b. All Covenant Promises are fulfilled by Christ.  
**2 Corinthians 1:20** - <sup>20</sup> For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

**9. Verses 38-45. The Hinge in the Psalm. Transition to Lament.**

- a. God who has ordained the present ruin of David's family.
- b. **Matthew Henry** - A very melancholy complaint of the present deplorable state of David's family, which the psalmist thinks hard to be reconciled to the covenant God made with David. "Thou saidst thou wouldst not *take away thy lovingkindness, but thou hast cast off.*" ' Sometimes, it is no easy thing to reconcile God's providences with his promises, and yet we are sure they are reconcilable; for God's works fulfil his word and never contradict it.
- c. **Matthew Henry** - "David's house seemed to have lost its interest in God, which was the greatest strength and beauty of it. God had been pleased with his anointed, but now he was *wroth with him* (v. 38), had entered into covenant with the family, but now, for aught he could perceive, he had made void the covenant, not broken some of the articles of it, but cancelled it, v. 39. We misconstrue the rebukes of Providence if we think they make void the covenant. When the great anointed one, Christ himself, was upon the cross, God seemed to have cast him off, and was wroth with him, and yet did not make void his covenant with him, for that was established for ever"

**10. Verses 46-48. How Long?**

- a. **James Montgomery Boice** – "How long?" can often be captured in thought as, "When are you going to show that you are faithful?"

**11. Verses 49-51. The reproach of God's People.**

- a. The World reproaches the People of God, and they reproach God and His anointed One.

**12. Verse 52. And yet, after lament – Doxology! Brings to close Book 3 of the Psalter.**