

# Psalm 89

**The question which this Psalm poses is, what is to be done when the promises of God are denied by the facts of experience?**

**The answer the Psalmist gives is to turn the promises into prayers, and plead them before the Creator God.**

**Psalms 89:1-2** [New King James] *“I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever; with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, ‘Mercy shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens.’”*

These are the words of the Psalmist extolling God’s loving kindness to Israel and faithfulness throughout every generation.

**Psalms 89:3-4** [New King James] *“I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: “Your seed I will establish forever, and build up your throne to all generations.” Selah.”*

**These words of God are quoted by the Psalmist based on God’s own declaration in former times, [2 Samuel 7:8-16].**

**Psalms 89:5-8** [New King James] *“And the heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the saints. For who in the heavens can be compared to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the LORD? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him. O LORD God of hosts, Who is mighty like You, O LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You.”*

**The Psalmist extolls the divine attributes of God as seen and experienced in heaven.**

**Psalms 89:9-13** [New King James] *“You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them. You have broken Rahab in pieces, as one who is slain; You have scattered Your enemies with Your mighty arm. The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; the world and all its fullness, You have founded them. The north and the south, You have created them; Tabor and Hermon rejoice in Your name. You have a mighty arm; strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand.”*

**God’s influence and presence on the earth is now emphasised by the Psalmist.**

God owns all the earth through being its Creator [verses 11 and 12]. The most noticeable features to the Psalmist are the mountains of Palestine, monuments to the greatness of the Creator God.

**Psalms 89:14-18** [New King James] *“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face. Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance. In Your name they rejoice all day long, and in Your righteousness they are exalted. For You are the glory of their strength, and in Your favour our horn is exalted. For our shield belongs to the LORD, and our king to the Holy One of Israel.”*

**Righteousness and justice are the foundation of all God’s dealings with humanity.**

The “rejoicing sound” could well be the songs of praise to the bountiful God during the Feast of Tabernacles, the time of the autumn harvest from the fields.

“The shield” refers to the covenants that God had made with His people, Israel, [verse 18].

The Psalmist now turns to one specific covenant that God had made.

**Psalms 89:19-29** [New King James] *“Then You spoke in a vision to Your holy one, and said: ‘I have given help to one who is mighty; I have exalted one chosen from the people. I have found My servant David; with My holy oil I have anointed him, with whom My hand shall be established; also My arm shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not outwit him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him. I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague those who hate him. But My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with him, and in My name his horn shall be exalted. Also I will set his hand over the sea, and his right hand over the rivers. He shall cry to Me, “You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.” Also I will make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. My mercy I will keep for him forever, and My covenant shall stand firm with him. His seed also I will make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.’”*

**The Davidic covenant is extended beyond the physical life of David to that of his physical descendant, the human Jesus Christ.**

**Psalms 89:30-37** [New King James] *“If his sons forsake My law And do not walk in My judgments, if they break My statutes And do not keep My commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, nor allow My faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me; it shall be established forever like the moon, even like the faithful witness in the sky.’ Selah.”*

**Even if the direct descendants of David sinned against the Creator God, which they did and still are, God will remain faithful to His side of this covenant with David but will bring the rod of correction on them, [verse 32].**

**Psalms 89:38-46** [New King James] *“But You have cast off and abhorred, You have been furious with Your anointed. You have renounced the covenant of Your servant; You have profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. You have broken down all his hedges; You have brought his strongholds to ruin. All who pass by the way plunder him; He is a reproach to his neighbours. You have exalted the right hand of his adversaries; You have made all his enemies rejoice. You have also turned back the edge of his sword, and have not sustained him in the battle. You have made his glory cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth You have shortened; You have covered him with shame. Selah. How long, LORD? Will You hide Yourself forever? Will Your wrath burn like fire?”*

The Psalmist protests to the Creator God that He has now spurned the covenant.

The protest has two themes which reflect the two themes of the preceding part of the Psalm.

First, the honour and power of the Creator God and His goodness to Israel, [verses 5-18] are reversed in the evidence of the destruction He has wrought.

The inversion of His promises, and the disgrace and shame brought to Israel, [verses 38-45].

Secondly, the explicit and solemn promise covenant with David [verses 20-37] is reversed in the seeming abandonment of the undertaking, [verses 46-51].

A deliberate parallel or pattern of words is used by the Psalmist.

The raging sea [verse 9] is replaced by wrath towards the king.

The humiliation of Rahab is surpassed by the degradation of the crown, [verse 39].

The fullness of the earth [verses 11 and 12] is matched with the destruction of David’s kingdom.

The right hand and power of God’s arm [verse 17] now fought only in pretence, [verse 43].

**The once glorious throne of David was now covered with shame.**

**Psalms 89:46-47** [New King James] *“How long, LORD? Will You hide Yourself forever? Remember how short my time is; for what futility have You created all the children of men?”*

**The weakness and brevity of life is contrasted to the permanence of David, [verses 22-29].**

**Psalms 89:48** [New King James] *“What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his life from the power of the grave? Selah”*

**It seems to the Psalmist that God has made humans for a mere nothing, all must die and comparatively quickly.**

Unless the Creator God reaffirms the covenant speedily, the Davidic dynasty, the trusting Psalmist and all human beings will come together to the grave and deliverance will be too late.

**Psalms 89:49-51** [New King James] *“Lord, where are Your former lovingkindnesses, which You swore to David in Your truth? Remember, Lord, the reproach of Your servants, how I bear in my bosom the reproach of all the many peoples, with which Your enemies have reproached, O LORD, with which they have reproached the footsteps of Your anointed.”*

The Psalmist’s final thoughts, where are the Eternal’s faithfulness and mercy, which are the counterpart of His perpetual presence and guidance which were implicit in **verses 30-35**.

In conclusion, the Psalmist reverts to his opening words, a song of praise to the Creator God, [**verse 52**].

**We must not miss what the Psalmist is actually doing.**

**The Psalmist epitomises the promises of God and makes them into prayers.**

This is saying that the last word will **not** be with the adverse conditions that humans have brought to this world down through human history, but with the God whose faithfulness will yet be triumphantly vindicated.