

THE ETERNAL WORD PSALMS 119:89-96

Vs.89, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."

We learn of the Giver of the Word, the duration of the Word, the unchangeableness of the Word, and where it is kept. The Giver of the Word is Jehovah, I AM, the eternal God. As it is the eternal God who gave the Word, then it is His eternal Word. It is settled, or unchangeable, therefore its judgments and promises both alike are sure. It is in heaven, i.e. out of the reach of man who would like to destroy it. It is safe in the possession of the Living Word, and all things are under His feet. It is the solid Rock, and the firm foundation on which every believer can rest his eternal hope.

Needless to say we live in a restless world, a world in confusion, and a world on the brink of judgment. These are the perilous times which are mentioned (2 Timothy 3:1-7), of which the worst is that they profess to believe, but are never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. It seems that their only worry is the economy, but they have no concern for their eternal souls. ". . . and upon earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; **Men's hearts failing them for fear**, and looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:25,26). Their hearts are failing them, i.e. they are ready to die because of the approaching calamities. They have no foundation on which to stand, and nothing firm which to grasp.

This passage of Scripture to the believer is his solid Rock on which to stand, his firm foundation of unchangeable truth, and his eternal hope. It is his assurance and peace in the midst of doubt and unrest. He knows his God is the eternal God, and that God's Word is the eternal Word. Here he casts all his eternity, and knows he is safe.

All the Psalms should first be considered as they relate to the Messiah, and then to the application and comfort to us. Here we see the Messiah singing of the unshakeable rock, the Word of God, from which all the tests of the last eight verses failed to detach Him. He declares that rock to be firm, infinite, and eternal (vs.89,96).

We could write so much on this verse because it stands as the solid Rock, and firm foundation of our faith. The Scriptures speak for themselves on this subject. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:8). "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35; Luke 21:33). "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). The Word of God stands and is established forever.

While the men of the world build their houses on the sand of temporal things, the believer builds his house on the solid Rock, Christ Jesus, thus establishing his faith and hope on a clear understanding that God's Word cannot, and will not change. The believer is assured, and rests, upon the unchangeableness of God's Word. "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever . . . Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever" (Psalm 119:152,160). (Also see Psalm 33:11).

Our life is transient, but amid the changes and trials of earth, the eternal and unchanging Word of God is a priceless possession which is **forever settled in heaven** (Isaiah 40:8: 1 Peter 1:24,25). In heaven where nothing can reach it, or shake it, and **our hope stands sure** upon His promises, His truth, and His unchangeableness. The enemies of the Word of God give unceasing efforts to corrupt or destroy it, but all have failed, and will fail, because it is settled in heaven out of their reach, and preserved by

God (Psalm 12:6,7).

What is truth and blessing to the believer, i.e. all His promises are true and sure, should be a fearful prospect for the unbeliever, i.e. the judgments and threatenings of God to them rest upon the same unchangeableness as His promises to His people. For example, God's Word to Jeremiah concerning Babylon, ". . . woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation" (Jeremiah 50:27). The fulfillment, "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken . . . And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant" (Jeremiah 51:7,29). (This is type of the fall of Babylon in Revelation 18,19). Also we read, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, . . ." (John 17:9). There is no intercession by Christ for the world.

As believers (the elect of God) we can rest all our faith and hope on this truth that His Word is forever settled in heaven. Our security in Christ is assured by his unchanging Word. Where the Word quickens unto life in Christ there can never again be spiritual death. Where the Holy Spirit baptizes us into Christ, and places Christ in us, there can never be an annulling of it. Salvation is of the LORD, and it is as eternal as God is. Does God see or know anything now that He has not foreseen or foreknown from eternity? There is no more sure ground for our salvation and hope than His unchangeable Word (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 6:17).

If we can prove a word to have been spoken by God, i.e. "Thus saith the Lord," or "It is written," we need not question it any more than to question His Being. While it might seem to fail on earth, it is forever settled in heaven. God's Word remaineth as the throne of God, unshaken and eternal. Thus the believer's hope is fixed, as well as the unbeliever's terror. God's Word is more firmly fixed than the heavens, and all temporal things are changable and fleeting, but the Word of God is unchangeable and eternal. God's revealed will, and His secret counsels, are both settled forever (Deut.29:29). He will fulfill the thoughts of His heart and no word shall fall to the ground without fulfillment. It matters not how much earth and hell combine against it, God's Word and the establishment of His kingdom on earth, and the kingdom of His dear Son in heaven, are sure. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Psalm 2:6-8; 110:1,2). All things are under His feet (Ephesians 1:20-23).

Before there ever was a world the Lamb of God was fore-ordained (1 Peter 1:20), and all the elect of God were chosen (2 Thess.2:13; Ephesians 1:4). Thus we read, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2). Therefore all who are to come to saving faith in Christ has all been settled forever in eternity. Thank God for His electing grace and love, but election is not salvation, rather it is unto salvation. Election is what makes the gospel of God's grace in salvation work. Without God's choosing men unto salvation, none would ever be saved. "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Romans 9:15). The Word is forever settled in heaven, and, "All so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, . . ." (Romans 11:26). "For by grace are ye saved by faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

What of those other things already settled in heaven, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of

God the Father" (Philippians 2:10,11). Is there going to be an appearing of Christ? a second coming of Christ? a tribulation? a one world government under anti-christ? a thousand year reign? a white throne judgment? will God preserve His own? are the elect justified? are His promises sure? It is all settled in heaven.

Vs.90,91, "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants."

Because His Word is forever settled in heaven He is faithful to all generations. His promises are sure to every age, and will be performed in their season. The established earth is one proof of God's Word fulfilled. The constancy of it is that it abideth. ". . . all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16,17). It is what it was at first made---the laws of motion and gravity, etc.---which were put into effect are still in force. "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22). (See also Eccl.1:4-10; Jeremiah 31:35,36; 33:20,21).

They continue this day, i.e. the sun, moon, stars, all the heavens and the earth, and all the hosts of both, and they remain where God hath set them. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isaiah 40:26). Abraham looked to the stars which were without number, and they are still the same. They perform the purposes for which they were created. All the creatures are in their places according to their capacities serviceable to their Creator. Matter does not resist God's power, but the sinner does. The sun, moon, stars, earth, and skies did not give God any opposition when He created them, but the world, the flesh, and the devil, do their utmost to resist God in the new creation. It is only man who is a rebel toward God, and while he revolts from his allegiance to his Creator, he is still subject to Him.

Vs.92, "Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction."

The Psalmist has written over many times his delight in the Word of God. "I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word . . . Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors . . . Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight . . . And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved . . . but I delight in thy law . . . Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight . . . yet thy commandments are my delights . . . I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight"(Psalm119:16,24, 35,47,70,77,143,174; see also 1:2; 37:4). It is apparent that Messiah found in His affliction and oppression the Word of God more precious to Him. Unless the Word had been His delights, He would have perished in His hardship, distress, pressure, anguish, and sufferings. Without God's Word the affliction would have been crushing. God's law was His delights, and the supreme joy of His heart. To perish suggests that He would have sunk under the pressure of severe suffering, i.e. Gethsemane and the cross, but He was kept alive by resting on the words of Scripture.

God's people know that trials, ordered by the Lord, are often insupportable by human strength. There is no help from man in those trials. Man cannot decide which is preferred, being kept from persecution and affliction, or being kept from perishing in them. The weight of earthly sorrows is often such that nothing except the Word of God received in faith, and applied by the Holy Spirit, can sustain the believer's heart.

The support of the Word is as sure as its basis, i.e. forever settled in heaven. David was a man of many afflictions. "LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions" (Psalm 132:1). It was his delight in God's Word which sustained him. "I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me" (Psalm 30:1). Friends can mean well in our affliction, but of themselves they can do nothing. They can feel for us, pray for us, but they cannot speak to our hearts. Only God's Word can do that. It is indeed a mystery how a sinner destitute of the support and comfort of God's Word can ever uphold himself in his trials and afflictions.

If the Word of God be our support, it must be a matter of our faith. What delight can we have in the promises of God if we don't believe them? "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living" (Psalm 27:13). The Word of God must be our delight in prosperity if it will be our delight and comfort in affliction. We must simply receive it, search it diligently, and pray earnestly over it, and it will bring our heavy-laden hearts to Christ who is our present and eternal rest. We cast our anchor upon the unchangeable Word of God. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope" (Psalm 119:49). One promise applied by the Holy Spirit of God is worth more than ten thousand worlds to an afflicted soul. "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me" (Psalm 119:50). God's Word supplied with the riches of Christ is an abundant storehouse for comfort and delight.

Martin Luther stated, "I have asked the Lord to send me neither visions, dreams, or even angels. I am content with this one gift of the Word of God which abundantly teaches and supplies me with all that is necessary for now, and that which is to come." To possess the Word of God is wealth untold, and to belong to the Author of it is joy unspeakable.

Vs.93, "I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me."

This is his resolution because of his experience in affliction. The Holy Spirit through the Word had accomplished its work. This resolution is the language of sincerity, not of perfection. If we retain the quickening power of the Word in our heart, the precepts are not forgotten, even though in our memory we may have failed to preserve them. Keep in mind that whether the Word of God convicts us, leads us, or gives us encouragement, we must never forget its precepts. It may be needed in some hour of temptation, and the Spirit that breathed upon it before may breathe upon it again refreshing our souls. It is not without cause that God's own love and remember His Word. The best evidence of our love for God's Word is never to forget it. A renewed soul can never cast off that which quickened him from his spiritual grave.

The quickening of the Word of God initially is a one time act, i.e. God's Word is the source of life, and His Word is the instrument. Many share in the outward hearing of the gospel, and the truth, but only unto the elect, the most unlikely, the most unworthy of all, is the life giving power given (Luke 4:25,26). The precept must be accompanied by the Holy Spirit to be profitable (John 6:63). There must also be a continual quickening daily. This quickening comes through the Word of God (Psalm 119:25,37, 50,88,93,107,149,154,156,159). The precepts of God's Word are life and knowledge, they are a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path. They are not to be forgotten, but believed and lived, for they supply life for our daily walk and growth.

Charles Bridges makes this statement concerning this verse. "Men of the world, however, with accurate recollections of all matters, connected with their temporal advantage, are remarkably slow in retaining the truths of God. They plead their short memories, although conscious that this infirmity does not extend to their important secular engagements. But what wonder that they forget the precepts, when they have

never been quickened with them---never received any benefit from them? The Word of God is not precious to them: they acknowledge no obligation to it: they have no acquaintance with it. It has no place in their affections, and therefore but little abode in their remembrance."

Vs.94, "I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts."

I am thine by electing love and grace (Deut. 7:6-8; 1 Samuel 16:11-13; Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13), by the purchase of Christ's blood (1 Corinthians 6:19,20), and given to Christ by His Father (John 6:37; 10:29; 17:2,6-11). "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isaiah 43:1). Save me, or preserve me, though trial and persecution. Save me from myself and my deceitful heart, from the love of sin, from it's daily guilt and power, and from anything thou seest ensnaring to my soul. Save me because thou hast made me thine. God can and will save His people (John 6:38,39; 17:12; 18:9).

No man seeks the Lord or His precepts without first having been sought by God (Genesis 3:9; Romans 3:11). God seeks out, and finds, His elect by the preaching of the cross, i.e. the gospel, and those who are His hunger and thirst for the Bread of life for daily food and cleansing. It is sufficient proof that we are the elect of God when we seek to know and obey His Word. "I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Psalm 34:4). A new heart, and a new love for Christ and His Word (2 Corinthians 5:17), are the visible seal of the Lord's interest in us.

The evidence of redeeming grace is found in seeking the truth in the Word of God. "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: . . . It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, . . ." (Song of Solomon 3:1,2,4). "The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein" (Psalm 111:2).

Vs.95, "The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies."

Man's hatred of the Messiah failed to awaken in His heart any doubt as to the faithfulness of God's Word and the value of it's promises (vs.89,90). As God's people we are in His keeping. "The LORD is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? . . . Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should arise against me, in this will I be confident" (Psalm 27:1,3). "Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me . . . In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me" (Psalm 56:1,4). "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (Psalm 118:6). "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5). Spiritual enemies are continually upon the watch to destroy all believers. Their plots and plans fueled by Satan's hatred of Christ in us are many, cunning, and often deadly. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:12,13).

It is these times of enmity which drive us to consider His Word. "Thus saith the LORD," and, "It is written," are our only sure defence. The Word of God is our hiding place of safety (Psalm 32:7; 119:114,115; Colossians 3:3). The Word of God is our safe

defence if our soul be among lions. "My soul is among lions: . . ." (Psalm 57:4), and the enemy is astonished at our answer. "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me: . . ." (Daniel 6:22). Among the roaring of the enemy we hear our Lord say, "Peace be still" (1 Peter 5:7; Mark 4:39).

All too often in the time of difficulty we seek out human devices and counsel, rather than seeking our counsel from God's Word. But the Lord's promise to us is in committing our way unto Him (Psalm 37:4; Proverbs 3:5,6). This trust is founded on the Word forever settled in heaven, and the all-sufficiency of Christ the stay of our soul. We can only build our faith on the Word of promise, for without faith we cannot be established. With the enemy out to destroy us, we must be resolute, and say, "I will consider thy Word, and the faithfulness of thy truth." "Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (Psalm 105:15). "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zechariah 2:8). "But there shall not an hair of your head perish" (Luke 21:18).

The believer is absolutely invincible until God allows the enemy liberty. Even if a believer is destroyed, God's Word cannot fail. Whether delivered to the wicked to die, or whether delivered to live, we are the Lord's. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8). One thing we are always assured of is that God's purposes concerning us shall be accomplished (Philippians 1:6; 2:13; Hebrews 13:5; Isaiah 26:3).

Vs.96, "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad."

There is a limit to God's work in creation, but no limit to His Word in revelation because it is infinite and eternal. God's creative work overwhelms the mind, but His Word excels all creation (Psalm 19:1-11). The emptiness of the world is contrasted with the fulness of God's Word. Here the Psalmist has a deeper insight into the Word as the result of considering (meditating) its testimonies. He had seen the vanity of all created good; the vanity and vexation of which earthly men count as bliss; the imperfection of the most accomplished human character; the terrible end of the most prosperous lives; the miserable disappointment of those who trusted in men; and those who idolized earthly possessions or enjoyments.

We are to weigh in the balances the Word and the world, each with all its fulness. Of the world we see an end---of the Word of God it is forever. The world and its wisdom will not stand us in good stead in affliction, death, judgment, or eternity. "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:17). "And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge (worldly) increaseth sorrow" (Eccl.1:17,18). "And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" (Eccl. 2:10,11).

God's commandment covers and includes all action, words, thoughts, emotions, and all that man can do, say, or think. God's Word covers all cases, and meets all the needs of all those who embrace it. Each fresh view, every new revealed truth, and every moment of illumination by the Holy Spirit, teaches us the unfathomableness of God's Word. To this there is no end. It is Divinely perfect, but to our finite minds there is no end. The gospel is equally broad, covering all men alike, and there is no salvation in any other which brings from death to life, from darkness to light, from enmity to love, from

ungodliness to holiness, and from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son.