



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

PSALMS 61-89

Week 2

I Love a Parade

Psalm 68

OPENING
up to the Word

What is your favorite part of a parade?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What groups are addressed in this psalm—paraded before a reviewing stand, as it were?
 2. From your reviewing stand, what redemptive events do you see paraded before your mind's eye? Can you see the Exodus, the miracle-feedings of manna and quail, the Conquest and the Temple-building? What else?
 3. What will God do to or for the various groups addressed in this psalm?
 ...for his enemies and the wicked (vs. 1-2, 21-23)?
 ...for the righteous (vs. 3-4, 35)?
 ...for the fatherless and widows (v. 5)?
 ...for prisoners and captives (vs. 6, 18)?
 ...for the poor (v. 10)?
 ...for kings and their armies (vs. 12, 29-31)?
 ...for the rebellious (vs. 6, 18)?
 ...for those burdened with sin (vs. 19-20)?
 4. As David recounts what God has done for Israel, what reaction does David expect from the congregation (vs. 24-27, 31-34)? Why the parade or procession?
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LIVING
out the Word

1. With which groups in this psalm do you identify?
 2. If you were to throw a thanksgiving parade in God's honor, what life-changing event or turn of good fortune would be the occasion for your celebration?
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WINDOW
on the Word

*Originally, this psalm may have commemorated the **return of the Ark of the Covenant** to the royal city of Jerusalem (see 1Ch 15). But much more is in view. Psalm 68 portrays the establishment of God's kingdom on earth, but has its ultimate meaning in **Jesus Christ** who "ascended on high" (v. 18) and to the final triumph of the spiritual body of Christ, which rules with him (see Eph 4:8-13).*

Psalm 69

Have you gotten into so much trouble that you felt like you were thrust into the deep end of a swimming pool—in over your head, with no life jacket, burdened with weights?

1. What was happening to David (v. 4)? List the descriptive metaphors, adjectives and nouns that indicate the effect it was having on him.
2. Who do you suppose was giving David such a hard time, and why?
3. What was David's response to this sea of trouble (vs. 13-21)?
4. What did David hope and pray would happen to his enemies (vs. 22-28)? How do you think God would answer that tearful, vengeful prayer?
5. David's cry for help and revenge suddenly turned to praise (vs. 30-31). Why the change of heart?

1. Have you ever been deep in trouble, with the world seemingly ganging up against you? Was this trouble of your own making, or not?
2. What thoughts and feelings consumed you at the time? (a) remorse, (b) revenge, (c) worship, (d) self-pity, (e) other.
3. Jesus forgave and blessed his enemies, but David did not in this instance. When have you followed Jesus' example? David's example?

Psalm 69 is quoted and given Christ-centered significance several times in the NT. It brings out many parallels between David and Jesus: (a) verse 4 quoted in John 15:25; (b) verse 9 quoted in John 2:17; (c) verse 9 quoted in Romans 15:1-3; (d) verse 21 describes an incident recorded in all four gospels (see Lk 23:36, Mt 27:34, Mk 15:23, and Jn 19:29); (e) verse 22 quoted in Romans 11:7-9, 10; (f) verse 25 quoted in Acts 1:16, 19, 20. Jesus and Paul understood this **imprecatory psalm** (full of curses) as describing Christ in relationship with historic enemies.

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

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Help Wanted!

Psalm 70

OPENING
up to the Word

When you need help and time is running out, do you call out for someone, do without or manage on your own? Illustrate.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What did David's enemies want (v. 2)?
 2. What did David want from God (v. 3)?
 3. What did God want from David (v. 4)?
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LIVING
out the Word

1. Are any of your prayers marked "Urgent" or "Rush"?
 2. When has God answered your cry for help? When has he delayed?
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WINDOW
on the Word

This psalm appears almost verbatim at the end of Psalm 40. This could be a copyist's duplicated entry, or Psalm 70 could be the short-form original. In either event, David is again singing a familiar refrain in a time of constant trouble.

OFFERING OURSELVES TO GOD

“Prayer is not a way of making use of God; prayer is a way of offering ourselves to God in order that He should be able to make use of us. It may be that one of our great faults in prayer is that we talk too much and listen too little. When prayer is at its highest we wait in silence for God’s voice to us; we linger in His presence for His peace and His power to flow over us and around us; we lean back in His everlasting arms and feel the serenity of perfect security in Him.”

—William Barclay (1907-1978)

The Plain Man’s Book of Prayers

Better With Age

Psalm 71

OPENING
up to the Word

When you become “old and gray,” which do you fear losing and why? (a) your memory, (b) your physical abilities, (c) your hair, (d) your job, (e) your family, (f) your wealth, (g) your wit and wisdom.

DIGGING
into the Word

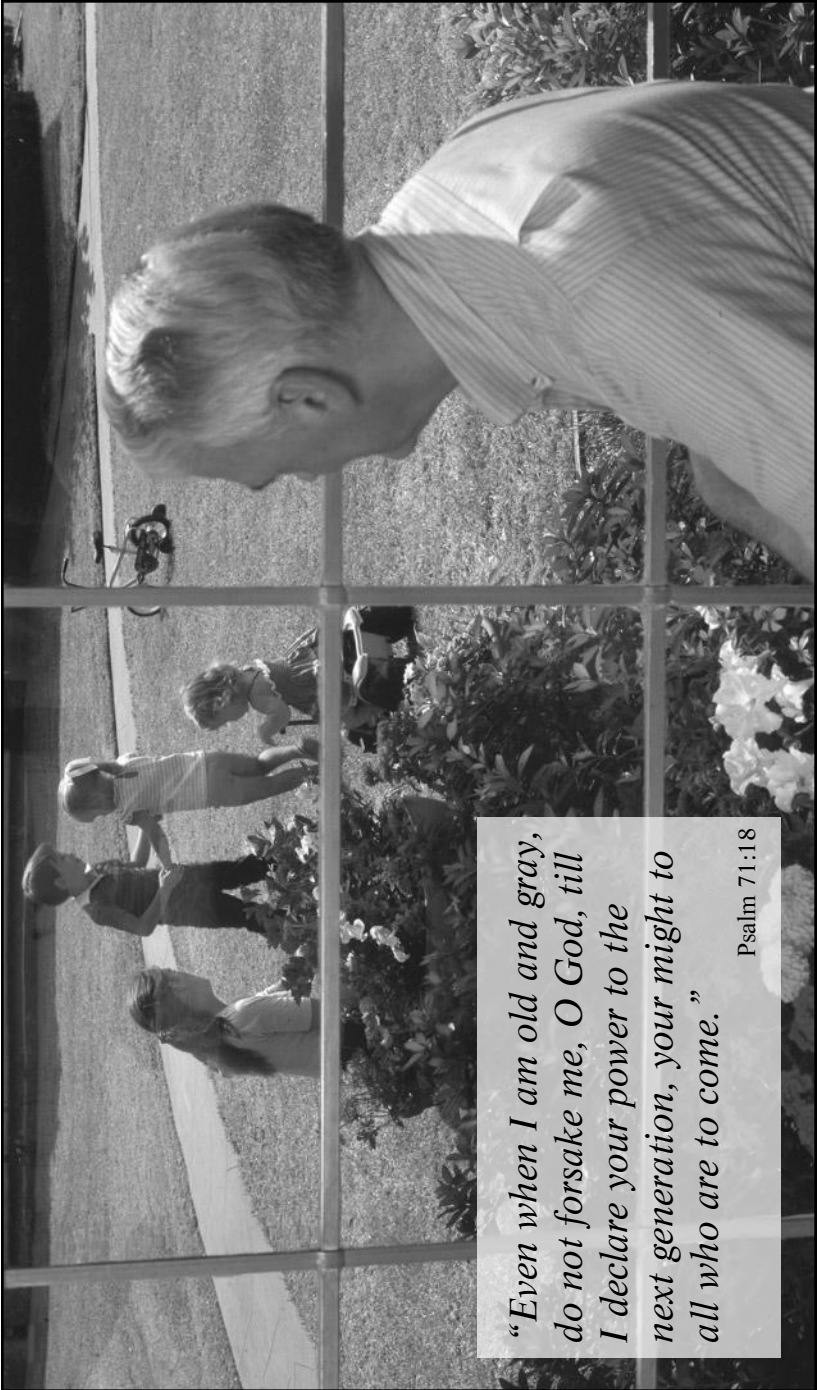
1. When did the psalmist begin to follow God (vs. 5-6)?
2. What scared him about old age (vs. 9-11)?
3. What got better with age for this psalmist (v. 14)? (a) his hope for the future, (b) his songs of praise, (c) his reliance on God, (d) his gratitude for all things, (e) his focus on things eternal.
4. What did God do in this psalmist’s life that he told to the next generation (v. 18)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Are you getting better or worse with age? In what respects?
2. In what area do you need to improve with age?
3. If you manage to age gracefully, what makes troubles easier to handle? What makes them more difficult?
4. What can you apply to your aging process from the life of this psalmist? What lessons learned do you want to leave as your spiritual legacy?

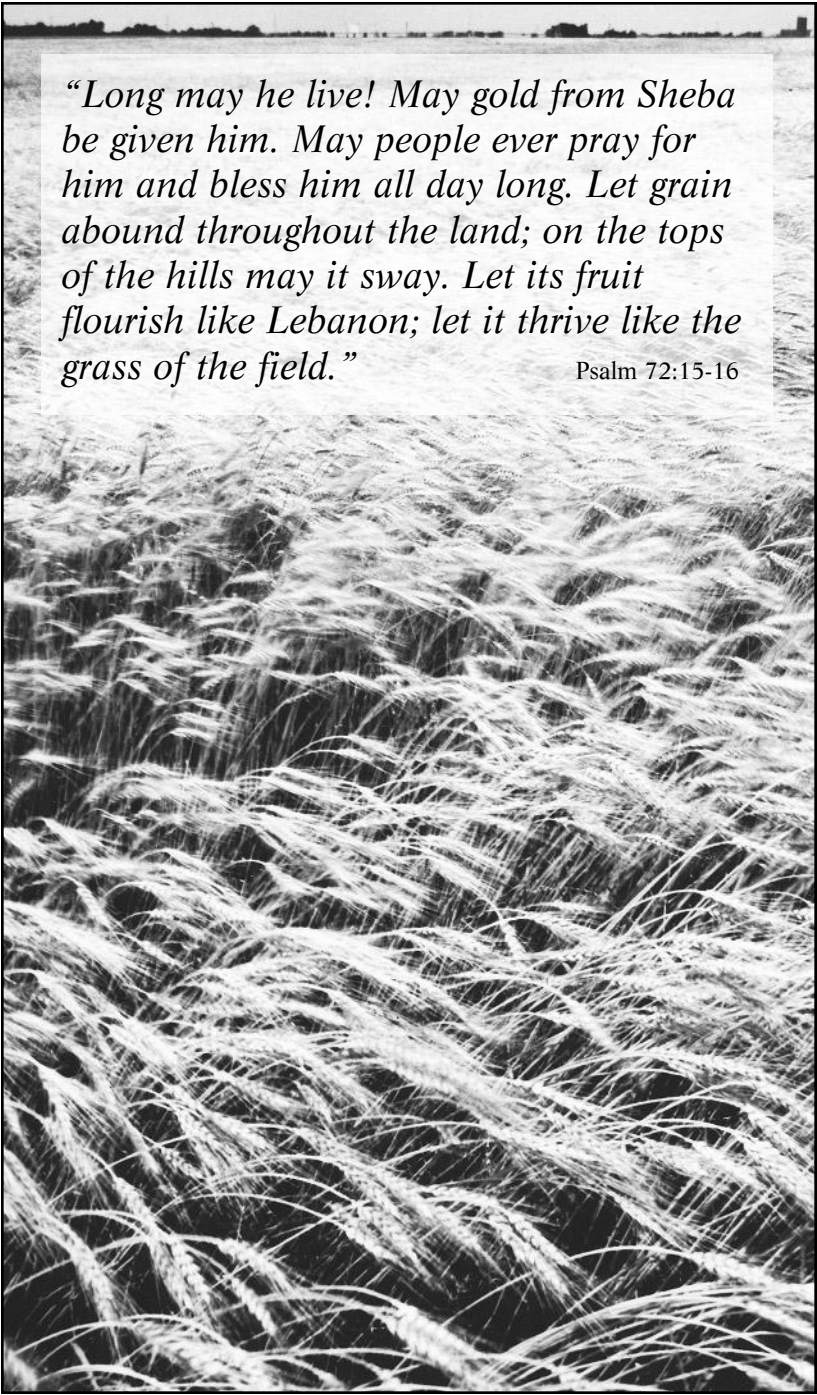
WINDOW
on the Word

A **portent** (v. 7) is a solemn warning or sign. A portent can be an event or person whose distinguishing features indicate that God is about to act. Elsewhere the same word is translated “wonder” or “sign.”



*“Even when I am old and gray,
do not forsake me, O God, till
I declare your power to the
next generation, your might to
all who are to come.”*

Psalms 71:18



*“Long may he live! May gold from Sheba
be given him. May people ever pray for
him and bless him all day long. Let grain
abound throughout the land; on the tops
of the hills may it sway. Let its fruit
flourish like Lebanon; let it thrive like the
grass of the field.”*

Psalm 72:15-16

Hail to the Chief!

DAY 12

Psalms 72

Recall the best boss you ever had. What was he or she like?

1. What kind of boss was this king (vs. 1-4)?
2. How extensive was Solomon's kingdom (vs. 5-11, 15)? How can this statement be true? (a) his kingdom was large, (b) he exaggerated, (c) this psalm primarily refers to the coming Messiah.
3. What will the king do all day (v. 2)? (a) eat, drink and be merry, (b) open gifts and receive tribute, (c) help the needy and be an advocate for the poor, (d) rule the forces of nature, (e) right all wrongs.
4. How do his enemies, other rulers and the poor feel about this unusual king (vs. 9-17)? How does he inspire hope and praise directed to the Lord (vs. 18-19)?

1. How is this king different from the bosses that rule your life?
2. How does this king remind you of Jesus?
3. In prayer and praise, recognize Jesus as the supreme boss of your life. With Jesus as your king, how would your life change in the near term? In the long run?

*Though written by Solomon during the golden age of his reign over an undivided Israel, this psalm looks ahead to the **Messiah**, whose reign of righteousness and peace extends to the ends of the earth—when all kings and all nations will ultimately fall down before him (vs. 7-8, 11; compare Isa 9:6-7; Zec 9:9-10; Rev 11:15-18). “**Amen and Amen**” (v. 19; compare 41:13). Thus ends Book II, consisting of Psalms 42-72. These are said to be, collectively, the prayers of David (v. 20)—not that David personally wrote Psalm 72.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

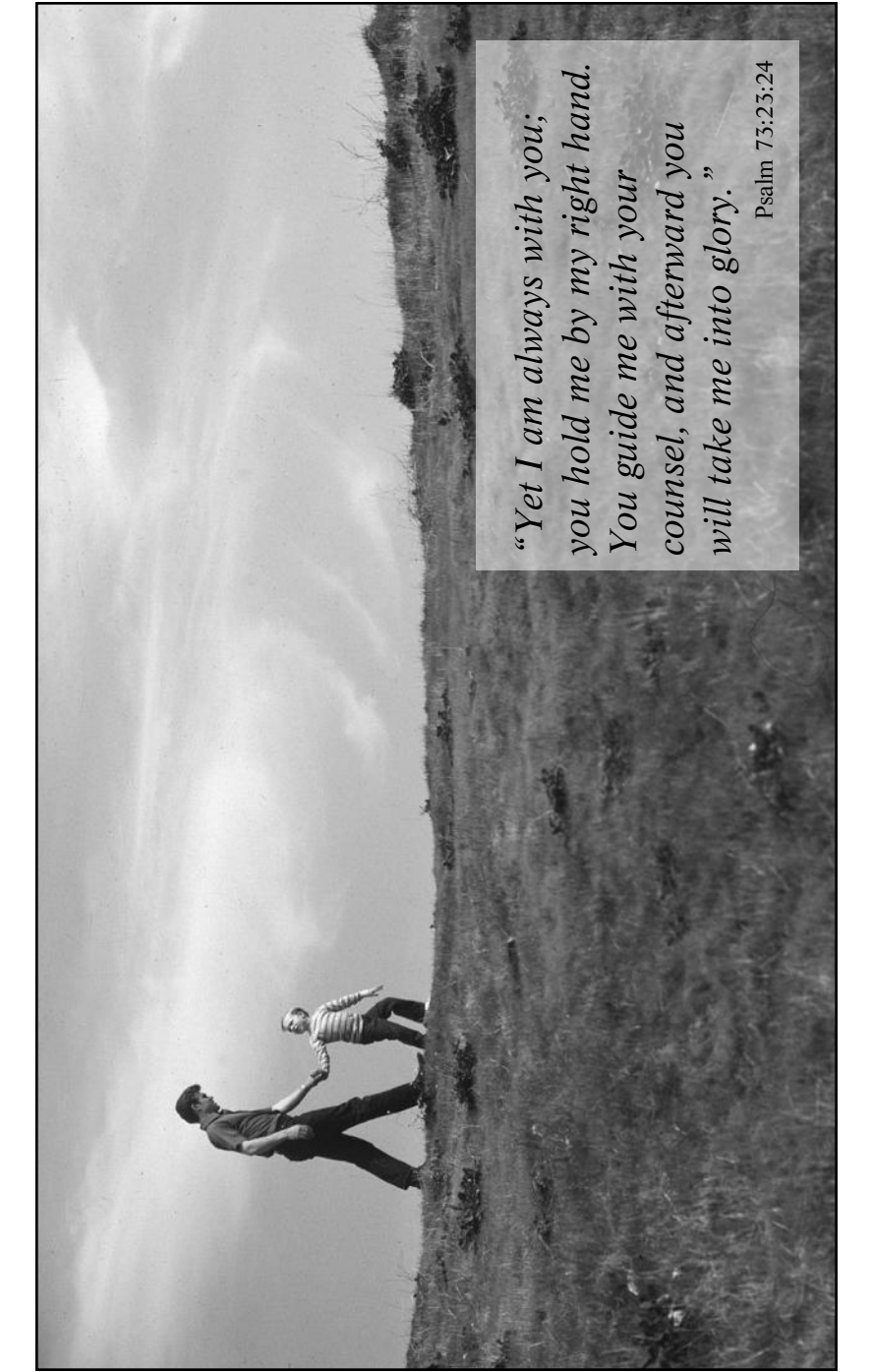
into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word



*“Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.
You guide me with your
counsel, and afterward you
will take me into glory.”*

Psalms 73:23:24

Psalms 73

Have you tried to “keep up with the Joneses” or wanted to trade places with someone else? Did you ever envy the rich and famous? The big man on campus? The cover girl look? The head honcho at work?

1. What does this psalm say about the Temple poet Asaph (vs. 3-12)? (a) he was green with envy, (b) he was sick with bitterness, (c) he was the butt of jokes, (d) he was a whiner, (e) he questioned “why be good?” (f) he became wise in the end.

2. What does he want out of life (vs. 26-27)? (a) wealth, (b) a healthy body, (c) respect, (d) a carefree life, (e) fairness and justice.

3. In what ways do the wicked appear to prosper (v. 12)? What reversal of fortune do they experience (vs. 18-20)?

4. In what ways do the righteous appear to suffer (vs. 13-14)? What reversal of fortune do they experience? What seems comparatively fair, or unjust, about those reversals?

5. What ultimately persuaded Asaph to obey God’s law (vs. 16-17)?

1. Do *you* ever sound off like Asaph? Have you ever felt, as did Asaph, that God had deserted you?

2. What do you want out of life on *earth*? Are your goals too dream-like or unreal, or are they too earth-bound?

3. What if there were no eternal reward or punishment? Would you... (a) lose your reason for being a Christian, (b) stop believing in God altogether, (c) still be a Christian, (d) do whatever feels good.

OPENING

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LIVING

out the Word

*“It was you who
split open the sea
by your power; you
broke the heads of
the monster in the
waters. It was you
who crushed the
heads of Leviathan
and gave him as
food to the
creatures of the
desert.”*

Psalm 74:13-14



Artwork by Gustav Doré

Psalm 74

Have you ever fought for a just cause, only to lose in the classroom, the workplace, the courthouse or the legislature?

1. Describe this psalmist's state of mind or crisis of faith (v. 1).
2. What events may have given rise to the psalmist's mental state (vs. 4-8)? How did his reaction change by the end of the psalm (v. 12)?
3. Why would God allow a pagan army to burn down Jerusalem? (a) you win some, you lose some; (b) the Israelites had been bad; (c) God can't stop wars; (d) God has a plan even if it doesn't seem to make sense to humans.
4. What evokes faith and causes this psalmist to suddenly praise God (vs. 12-17)?

1. At what points in your life can you identify with the psalmist? What event in your lifetime caused a crisis of faith?
2. How did you "snap out of it"—or did you?
3. Persecution against believers and violence in or against their places of worship still takes place around the world, even in our country. How have you reacted to such news?

*This psalm (also Ps 79) has much in common with the book of **Lamentations**. The events lamented here (vs. 3, 7, 9; see 2Ki 25:1-21; Jer 6:6-8) sound like the **Fall of Jerusalem** (586 B.C.) had already occurred. Accordingly, many scholars believe that this psalm was written not by Asaph, who lived in the 10th century B.C., but by his descendants centuries later. The "**monster in the waters**" and "**heads of Leviathan**" (vs. 13-14) are symbolic and legendary, representing the defeated enemies of God—either Egypt (see Eze 32:2) or the Assyro-Babylonian Empire (see Isa 27:1). What the pagan gods could do only in legend, God did in reality.*

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