

YOUR WORD STANDS FIRM IN HEAVEN

Psalm 119:89-96

I. WHY DO A SERIES ON HOW TO PRAY?

A. TO SERVE GOD MORE EFFECTIVELY

1. FIVE GOALS

- Outreach/evangelize
- Disciple young persons
- City-wide ministry
- Training lab for ministry
- Global church

2. EFFECTIVENESS

- **Ph 4:13**—*I can accomplish all things through Him who strengthens me.*
- **Jas 5:16**—*The effectively powerful praying of a righteous person can accomplish much*

B. FOR OUR BENEFIT

1. To know God better
2. To meet our own needs
3. To help others

C. BEING CHRIST-FOLLOWERS

1. Obeying His command—**Lk 18:1**—we should **always pray**—and never lose heart
2. Becoming like their Master—Christ-like
3. Following His example—He prayed continually

II. WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT PRAYER

- ❖ **DRAW CLOSE TO GOD—SPECIAL ACCESS—TO “OUR FATHER”**
- ❖ **INTERCEDE URGENTLY FOR AND WITH EVERYONE WE KNOW**
- ❖ **PRAY FOR GOD’S PEACE UPON OUR COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORS**
- ❖ **THAT WE WILL BE INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE AMIDST TURMOIL**
- ❖ **THAT OUR WITNESS WILL BE GODLY AND DIGNIFIED**
- ❖ **THAT WE WILL FAITHFULLY PROCLAIM CHRIST AS THE TRUTH**
- ❖ **THAT WE WILL EFFECTIVELY RECLAIM THE LOST**
- ❖ **THAT THE FATHER WILL SHOW HIMSELF IN A MIGHTY WAY**
- ❖ **FOR HUMILITY—NOT TO US, O LORD—THAT WE GLORIFY HIM ABOVE ALL**

- ❖ THAT WE WILL STAND **BOLDLY** FOR HIS SUPERNATURALITY
- ❖ **TESTIFY** TO HIS HOLINESS—**BE HOLY LIKE HIM**—HELP HIM **CLOSE THE GAP**
- ❖ **URGE OTHERS TO CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD**—FOR PROVISION—PROTECTION—AND SALVATION
- ❖ PRAY FOR **URGENCY** ABOUT CHRIST’S RETURN—BEING **READY AND WORKING**
- ❖ PRAY FOR **BIG VISION** OF HIS UNIVERSAL KINGDOM—NOT PETTY FIEFDOMS
- ❖ THAT GOD WILL SHOW US HIS **PERFECT WILL**—EACH STEP ALONG THE **WAY**
- ❖ THAT WE WILL **DO WHAT HE WANTS** AND BECOME WHO HE **MADE US TO BE**

III. BACKGROUND OF LORD’S PRAYER

A. TEXT: “**Thy will be done on earth—as it is in heaven**”

B. REVIEW OF ‘GOD’S WILL

1. God’s **will** = His purpose—intent—pleasure
 - Consistent with His **Word**—His expressed will
 - Consistent with His **character**—His person/nature
 - Person—word—will—all thoroughly consistent
2. Everything is created—for God
 - To accomplish His purpose
 - To glorify Him
 - To please Him
3. Everything is created with a specific purpose in mind
 - We live to fulfill that purpose—to please Him
4. His ultimate will on earth
 - To bring all creation back in line with His purpose
 - To redeem all creation
 - To save everyone
5. His ultimate will—is secure
 - His word—character—purpose—have never been thwarted
 - They stand firm in the heavens

IV. TEXT

89 *Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. 90 Your faithfulness continues throughout all generations; You established the earth, and it stands. 91 They stand this day according to Your ordinances, for all things are Your servants. 92 If Your law had not been my delight, then I would have perished in my affliction. 93 I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have revived me. 94 I am Yours, save me; For I have sought Your precepts. 95 The wicked wait for me to destroy*

me; I shall diligently consider Your testimonies. 96 I have seen a limit to all perfection; Your commandment is exceedingly broad.

V. CONTEXT—PSALMIST'S CONNECTIONS WITH SERMON ON MOUNT

1. Your word is settled in heaven—v89
 - a. Beginning point for—“Thy will be done on earth—as it is in heaven”
 - b. Psalmist shows how God’s heavenly will-word works in earthly/practical ways
2. Your law *has* been my delight—v92
 - a. Psalmist shows heavenly perspective
 - o He is storing up treasures in heaven—not on earth
 - b. Psalmist sees limitations of earthly things
 - o I have seen a limit to all perfection—[here on earth]—v96
3. I will not forget Your precepts—v93
 - a. Not one jot or tittle will pass away from the Law
 - b. Whoever practices and teaches these commandments will be great in Kingdom of Heaven
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4. I have sought Your precepts—v94
 - o Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness
5. For all things are Your servants—v91
 - a. No one can serve two masters—serve God and not mammon
 - b. We are created to serve Him and His kingdom purposes

VI. PSALMIST APPLIES GOD’S WORD-WILL IN EARTHLY WAYS

A. THE SOURCE—FIRM IN HEAVEN

- WORD—v89 = ‘dabar’—λογος
- God expressed His will—in Word
- His identity—as λογος = source of everything

B. APPLICATION ON EARTH—IN FIVE WAYS

1. ORDINANCES—v91 = ‘mishpat’—dogma
 - o Justice—system of fairness—doctrinally sound/in line with God’s nature
2. LAW—v92 = ‘torah’—legal instructions

- Establishing legal boundaries of behavior
3. PRECEPTS—**v93** = ‘piquwd’—right things
 - Principles—guidelines leading to righteousness
 - Not just rules—but how to respect others’ rights
 - Relational—being right with God
 4. TESTIMONIES—**v94**—‘edah’—witness-martyr
 - Personal evidence confirming that God’s Word is trustworthy
 5. COMMANDMENT—**v95** = ‘mitzvah’—[*bar mitzvah* = *son of the law*]
 - Over-arching system—supreme and sovereign command—obliging obedience

VII. FOUR ASPECTS OF GOD’S HEAVENLY WILL AND WORD

Permanent	verse 89
Eternal	verses 90a-91
Foundational	verse 90b
Supreme	verse 96

A. **PERMANENT**—your word is settled in heaven—v 89

1. LOGOS/DABAR = God’s essential nature
 - His Person-Word-Will = ground of all being
 - Supernatural—heavenly—Holy
 - Firmly established—unchanging in nature and character
 - Separate—untainted by human relativism and uncertainty
2. EARTHLY CONTRAST—OUR VARIABLENESS AND IMPERFECTION
 - a. **Micro-Example: quantum mechanics**
 - Uncertainty principle—Heisenberg—the more precise the location of a particle, the less precise the measurement of its momentum
 - Random movement of electrons—cannot be predictably measured with certainty
 - b. **Macro-Example: stars not absolutely accurate measurements**
 - True North = Polaris
 - Circular sweep of axis every 26,000—changes earthly perspective
 - 5000 years ago—it was Thuban
 - 13,000 years from now—it will be Vega
3. GOD IS THE FIXED POINT OF REFERENCE—BY WHICH TO NAVIGATE
 - **Father of Lights—in whom there is no shadow of turning—Jas 1:17**

- **Bright and morning star—Rev 22:16**

4. EARTHLY THINGS ARE JUST A PALE COPY OF HIS ETERNAL PATTERN

- Plato was not so wrong!
- 'Shadow'—'copy'— passages
 - **Col 2:17—Rituals** shadow—food/drink/festivals/new moon/Sabbaths—**Christ** substance
 - **Heb 8:5—Priests** copy—**Christ** the great High Priest
 - **Heb 9:23—Holy Place** copy—made with hands—**Christ** entered heaven itself
 - **Heb 10:1— Law** shadow—ceremonial sacrifices—**Christ's** body sanctified once for all

B. **ETERNAL**—your faithfulness continues . . . they stand this day—vv90a, 91

1. BOTH GOD'S WORD AND FAITHFULNESS ENDURE

- His person (Word) and character (faithfulness) are consistent with each other
- "They" stand—both are permanently reliable

2. BIBLICAL WITNESS

- Word—Grass withers, flower fades—but word endures forever—Is 40:8—I Pe 1:24-25**
- Character—loving-kindness/mercy—**
 - **Kindness endures to 1000 generations—to those who obey His word—Dt 5:10; 7:9**
 - **His mercy endures forever—Ps 136—26 times**

3. EARTHLY CONTRAST: TRANSITORINESS OF HUMAN ENDEAVORS

- Example: 100 year Gambrell history—18 pastors—not a long history—36,525 days**
 - Compare the scope of human history
 - **Recorded history** is 55 times that long = 5500 years—from the Sumerians
 - But even human history is very short
 - **Only 1 part of 250,000—in 14 billion years of universe**
 - Like one **blink of an eye**—during a 24 hour day [1/3 second out of 86,400 seconds]
 - You will blink 3-400 times during this sermon—15,000 during waking 16 hours
- Example: transitory nature of human kingdoms**
 - **Dan 2—Daniel's interpretation** of Nebuchadnezzar's dream
 - **4 empires** crash over 1000 years—Babylonian—Persian—Greek—Roman

4. ETERNAL NATURE OF GOD AND HIS KINGDOM

- **Ancient of days—Daniel 7**
- **Alpha and Omega—Rev 1—21—22**
- **Your throne O God is forever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom Ps 45—Heb 1**

C. **FOUNDATIONAL**—you established the earth—v90b

1. BIBLICAL WITNESS

- He spoke—and everything came into existence—**Gen 1 and 2**
- **In the beginning was the Word . . . Jn 1**
- **He has become the Chief Cornerstone—Ps 118—Mk 12—I Pe 2**
- **Job 38**—Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone? . . . Or who enclosed the sea with doors when, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; when I made a cloud its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, and I placed boundaries on it and set a bolt on doors. And I said, “Thus far you shall come, but no farther; and here shall your proud waves stop?” Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place . . .?

2. CONTRAST—FALSE ASSUMPTION WE HAVE GREAT POWER

a. **Apparent massiveness of earth**

1. **Mass** = 6.6 sextillion (trillion billion) tons—66 with 20 zeroes
2. **Circumference** = 26,000 miles—takes 40 hours flying top speed on 747

b. **But fragile**

- o **Crust 6-40 miles thick—between .15% and 1% of 8000 mile diameter**
- o **About like thickness of egg shell**

c. **Smallness of earth**

1. **Earth fits into sun**—1 million times
2. Vast size of **solar system**
 - o **Voyager** launched 1977—38 years—just entered interstellar space—11 billion miles
 - o Solar system is 22 billion miles across
3. Vast size of **galaxy**
 - o But there are a **billion solar systems** in Milky Way—**900 trillion miles** across
 - o 100,000 years to traverse—at speed of light
 - o We are about one-quarter away from center—26,000 light years
4. Vast size of **universe**

- o **100 billion galaxies** in the universe
- o **92 billion light years** across = 800 sextillion miles (800 plus 21 zeroes)
- o 10 quintillion stars/solar systems—10 plus 21 zeroes

5. Illustration—earth’s smallness

- a. If Gambrell sanctuary represents the universe
- b. One grape (1 cubic inch) would hold **217 galaxies**
 - o *Not* 217 earths—not 217 solar systems
 - o *But* 217 Milky Ways—each 100,000 light years across!

C. THREE AMAZING THINGS

1. **First—that anyone denies God’s existence**

- o **Miracle is not that God exists—such a complicated universe begs a creator!**

2. **Second—that we exist—we are the miracle!**

3. **Third—that God even bothers with us!**

- a. Carl Sagan—our insignificance should evoke humility—points to evolution and not God!
- b. Biblical view—we *should* be humble—but *grateful* to almighty God

Ps 8—When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that you think of him and the son of man that you care for him. Yet You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings, and You crown him with glory and majesty!

D. **SUPREME**—your commandment is exceedingly large—v96

1. GOD’S WORD IS SOVEREIGN

- a. All ‘**perfections**’—ends—operate within its boundaries
- b. His supernatural Word-Will establishes boundaries of all human justice and natural law
- c. His Word-Will governs all human agency—knowledge—and power

o **Dan 2:20-21**—Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding.

2. CONTRAST—HUMAN EFFORTS TO FRUSTRATE GOD’S WILL—DANIEL’S TESTIMONY

a. **Nebuchadnezzar’s 90 foot golden idol**

- o Defiance and victory—Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego—**Dan 3**

b. **Belshazzar’s pretended glory—defiance of Jehovah—and sacrilege with Temple utensils**

- o Fulfilment of Daniel’s prophecy—king defeated and killed—5 Oct 539—**Dan 5**

c. **Satrap's efforts to undermine Daniel and force him not to pray to God**

- o Daniel's survival in lion's den—**Dan 6**

3. TESTIMONY BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR—GOD'S HEAVENLY WILL IS SUPREME

Dan 4:34-35—I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever. For His dominion is an everlasting dominion. And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will I the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth

VIII. HOW GOD BRINGS EARTH IN LINE WITH HIS HEAVENLY WILL

1. His **λογος** became man—dwelled among us—and we beheld His glory
2. Christ fulfilled His word
 - Obeyed it all
 - Explained it fully
 - Fulfilled its prophecy
 - Accomplished God's full will—Redeemed creation and humankind
3. Christ enthroned in heaven
 - Stands firmly at God's right hand!
 - Makes intercession for us
4. Governs the universe—as sovereign administrator of New Covenant
 - a. Not just laws—precepts—ordinances—and old commandments
 - b. But the 'laws' of the New Covenant
 - o Saves us by the law of the *spirit* in Christ—**Rom 8**
 - o Two great commandments—Love God and Love our neighbor—**Mk 12**
 - o A new commandment—Love one another—**Jn 13—15—I Jn 2**
 - o His *commandment* is eternal life—**Jn 12**
 - o The law of Christ—bear one another's burdens—**Gal 5**
 - o By this we know that we are in Christ—that we keep His commandments—**I Jn 2**

VI. INVITATION

GOD HAS SPOKEN BY THE PROPHETS

God has spoken by the prophets, spoken the unchanging Word
Each from age to age proclaiming God, the One, the righteous Lord
Mid the world's despair and turmoil one firm anchor holding fast
God eternal reigns forever, God the first and God the last

God has spoken by Christ Jesus, Christ, the everlasting Son

Brightness of the Father's glory, with the Father ever one
Spoken by the Word incarnate, God of God ere time was born
Light of light, to earth descending, Christ, as God in human form

God is speaking by the Spirit, speaking in our hearts again
In the age-long Word declaring God's own message, now as then
Through the rise and fall of nations one sure faith is standing fast
God abides, the Word unchanging, God the first and God the last.

HEAVEN CAME DOWN

**Heaven came down and glory filled my soul
When at the cross my Savior made me whole,
My sins were washed away
And my night was turned to day,
When heaven came down and glory filled my soul.**

RESCUE THE PERISHING

**Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.
Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.**