
Balmer Commentary Collection

The Psalms (Book 4)

John Brown

Edited by Billy Balmer

Volume Four

Psalms 90-106

John Brown (1722-1787)

John Brown was raised in extreme poverty in Abernathy, Scotland. His father was a herdsman and a godly man who led the family in worship morning and evening. His father died when John was only eleven, and his mother followed soon after, leaving John to earn his living as a shepherd-boy in the hills around Abernethy.

From an early age it was evident that John was a believer in Jesus Christ. John was a very bright young boy, and he taught himself New Testament Greek while in the fields with his flock.

John eventually became a pastor in a small Presbyterian denomination, and soon became known for his writing, especially his Self-Interpreting Bible and his devotional notes on the Psalms.

PREFACE

This commentary on the Psalms by Dr. John Brown of Haddington has been prepared by Mr. Billy Balmer of Belfast.

For many years, in his home in Belfast, Billy has been labouring for the Lord by typing notes, editing, and sending his work across the world through different organizations. It has been his intention to edit minimally; replacing older words

with newer ones and rephrasing difficult sentences so that modern readers can more easily understand, enjoy, and benefit from the text. In preparing this material for print, I have made additional edits.

To recognize the many years of service by Mr. Balmer, this present volume is part of the *Balmer Collection* and has been prepared for *The Krapf Project* for use among pastors in rural Africa.

It is my prayer that this material will find a place in the heart of the pastors of rural Africa and that the comforts, encouragement, and lessons taught in the Psalms will greatly benefit the Church.

Aaron Dunlop

Donemana, NI.

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PSALM NINETY

This Psalm was composed by Moses, the man of God, after God had sentenced the Israelites to wandering and death in the wilderness (see Numbers 14). In it, Moses:

1. Comforts himself and his people with the eternal and unchanging character of God (vss. 1–2).

2. Humbles himself and His people by thinking about human frailty (vss. 3–6).

3. Submits himself and his people to the righteous sentence of God passed on them (vss. 7–11).

4. Commits himself and his people to their gracious and merciful God in prayer. Moses asks God to teach them through the discipline they experience; to turn away his wrath; to give them true comfort and joy; to return his favour; and to continue his work of mercy among their children (vss. 12–17).

Devotional

Let me sing this song as one who has no assurance of this present life. Let me sing accepting what God has given me, no matter how afflicted I am. Let me

sing in preparation for death, and committing myself and family to the God of truth as our Redeemer, our God, and our everlasting All.

PSALM NINETY-ONE

This Psalm was perhaps penned by David after he was afflicted by disease for counting the people (see 2 Samuel 24). Although the Psalmist knows that God is his refuge and keeper (vss. 2, 9), he encourages others to believe the same truth. He reminds his readers of:

1. The dignity, extent, and continuance of their happiness and safety because they are sheltered by God (vss. 1-4).

2. Their preservation from hatred and the destructive influence of the powers of darkness, while multitudes are ruined by that (vss. 3-9).

3. Their enjoyment of angels for their guard, and their triumph over devils and other opposers (vss. 10-12).

4. Their possession of special favour from and delightful intimacy with God here and in the future (vss. 13-16).

Devotional

Let my eyes be fixed on Jesus, the man at God's right hand, in whom all these promises were fulfilled to the highest. Let me, in the name of Jesus, depend on these promises to be accomplished in myself. Let my experience of God keeping his promises encourage me to rejoice in hope of the more abundant mercies and glory of God.

PSALM NINETY-TWO

In this Psalm, or Song for the Sabbath, the Psalmist:

- 1. Earnestly recommends praise** as the business of the Sabbath (vss. 1-3).
- 2. Celebrates God's works** in their greatness and unsearchableness because they are the reason of the Sabbath and ground of praise (vss. 4-6).
- 3. Beautifully contrasts the ruin of sinners and the happiness of saints** (vss. 7-15). Although sinners shall perish, God, the portion and life of saints, shall endure forever. Sinners, despite their temporary prosperity, shall be cut off and destroyed. Saints, on the other hand, shall be exalted and comforted. Sinners shall be shaken

and ruined; but saints, through their union to and fellowship with Christ, shall prosper and flourish to demonstrate God's faithfulness and justice.

Devotional

While I keep the Sabbath of the Lord my God, let these things deeply affect my heart: Let it be my care, by a steady conduct and clear growth in grace, to prove these precious promises of the New Testament in Jesus' blood.

PSALM NINETY-THREE

This Psalm is a triumphant celebration of the sovereign rule of Jehovah and of Jesus our Redeemer. Specifically, it celebrates:

- 1. The lawfulness, strength, stability, and duration of his rule** (vss. 1-2).
- 2. His triumphant victories over all opposition** (vss. 3-4).
- 3. The faithfulness and certainty of His words as well as the holiness of His court** (vs. 5).

Devotional

Let my soul rejoice in the highness of my God and in the glories of my Redeemer.

PSALM NINETY-FOUR

This is a Psalm for the afflicted people of God, in which God's:

1. Just vengeance is implored on their haughty, active, cruel, and atheistic oppressors, whose folly is exposed from the consideration of God's works of creation, providence, and grace (vss. 1-11).

2. Gracious comforts are presented to the persecuted saints, that He will bless them in and by their afflictions and give them rest after them, while their enemies are ruined; that God will not cast them off when cast down, but will, in His due time, reduce things to their right course. The Psalmist also shares part of his experience to prove this truth (vss. 12-24).

Devotional

Let all revenge be rooted from my heart and all worry be banished from my soul. But in every plunge of adversity, let me cast my burden on the Lord so that He may sustain me and help me in the time of need. Let me rejoice in the assured hope that God is reforming the church and spreading His glory among the nations.

PSALM NINETY-FIVE

This Psalm contains:

1. Solemn calls to celebrate the praises of Jesus Christ and His Father because of who He is, what He has done, and what His people are to Him and Him to them (vss. 1-7).

2. Alarming warnings to hear His voice and to not harden our hearts like the Israelites in the desert, who, because of their hard hearts, were forbidden from entering the promised land (vss. 7-11).

Devotional

Let me behold the glories of my Redeemer and believe my New Covenant relation to Him. While it is yet called today, let me beware of being hardened through the deceitfulness of my sin. Since there is a promise left of entering into His rest, let me beware lest fail to enter through unbelief.

PSALM NINETY-SIX

This Psalm was part of the hymn sung when the Ark was moved from the house of Obed-Edom to the city of David (see 1 Chronicles 16:1, 23-33). It

relates to the calling of the Gentiles to our Redeemer. Here are:

1. Solemn calls to ascribe praises and glory to our high and great Immanuel (vss. 1-9).

2. Loud proclamations of Jesus' establishment of His Church and of His coming to judge the world, to the great joy of His friends (vss. 10-13).

Devotional

While these high praises of God are in my mouth, let my heart behold the glory, believe the promises, and burn with desire after the enjoyment of Christ and of God in Him.

PSALM NINETY-SEVEN

This Psalm is like the one before. It contains:

1. Solemn calls to the Gentile nations to rejoice at the justice and extent of Jesus' New Testament kingdom, and to rejoice at the destruction of hardened Jews and heathen idolaters, occasioned by the establishment of Jesus' kingdom (vss. 1-7).

2. Examples of the pure and holy joy of the saints on account of Jesus' highness, the glory of

God revealed in that, and of the care taken for their safety and comfort (vss. 8-12).

Devotional

Join the choir, oh my soul. Sing praises to your King. Sing praises with understanding.

PSALM NINETY-EIGHT

This Psalm insists on the same subject as the two before. It contains demands of:

1. Praise to the Redeemer for the wonders He has worked; the victories He has won; the discoveries He has made; and the promises He fulfils (vss. 1-3).

2. Universal and high rejoicing because of the establishment of Jesus' Church and for His coming in the clouds to judge the world (vss. 4-9).

Devotional

Let my soul, according to this time also, say, what has the Lord worked! What is Jesus! What is Jehovah to my heart! What has He done for mankind and what for my soul! While I confidently believe His return to judgment, let me with zeal look for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God, my Savior. Let my soul with

rapture spring forth to meet His burning chariot-wheels and long to see creation all in flames.

PSALM NINETY-NINE

This Psalm is of the same general nature with the three that came before. It calls men to reverence, worship, and praise the Messiah and His Father for the:

1. Glory, greatness, mercy, and justice of His government (vss. 1-5).

2. For the instances of His kindness to Israel, in remarkably regarding and honouring their noted deliverers and reformers (vss. 6-9).

Devotional

Let my soul stand in awe of Jehovah's greatness and excellence. Let me call on God in every time of need, that He may answer and save me. Let me hope that He will forgive and master, but never will indulge, my transgressions.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED

This Psalm:

1. Contains a solemn call to the Gentiles to praise God and rejoice in Him (vss. 1-4).

2. Supplies us with a reason to praise. Namely, that He is God and stands nearly related to us; and that His mercy and truth are everlasting (vss. 3, 5).

Devotional

Knowing the Lord to be my God, let me approach His ordinances and enter His heavenly palaces with a heart filled with His excellences and kindness and a mouth filled with His praise.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND ONE

This Psalm was probably composed when David assumed the government of his kingdom. It contains his holy resolutions to:

1. Make God's mercies and judgments the connected matter of his song and to walk carefully before his family through the assisting presence of God (vss. 1-2).

2. Cleanse his family and kingdom by discouraging and punishing persons harmful and

wicked; and by will encouraging the godly (vss. 3-8).

Devotional

Let me remember my faults and, in the strength of the grace that is in Christ Jesus, form similar holy resolutions.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND TWO

This Psalm relates to some grievous distress. In which are observable:

1. Bitter complaints of Divine hidings and wrath;

of sore bodily troubles; of inward griefs and perplexities; of slander and reproach; of sudden changes of condition; and of apparent nearness to death (vss. 1-11).

2. Seasonable comforts against these grievances, drawn from the:

- a. eternal and unchanging character of God (vss. 12, 24, 27).
- b. deliverances, spread, and establishment, which He will grant to His church in answer to the prayers, and for the comfort of His afflicted people (vss. 13-28).

Devotional

Think, my soul, if I am exercised by my troubles; if those of the inner man bear heaviest on my heart; and if I am a friendly partaker with Zion in her joys and griefs.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND THREE

Here:

1. The Psalmist Praises God for His:

- a. Favors shown to the Psalmist. In particular, for God forgiving the sins of the Psalmist, for healing his diseases, and for redeeming him from death (vss. 1-5).
- b. Mercies given to His people. In particular, for God revealing his mind to his people, for pardoning their sins, for sympathizing with their weakness, for pitying their afflictions, and for making permanent His New Covenant mercy towards them and their seed (vss. 6-18).

2. Conscious of his own insufficiency, the Psalmist requests the help of angels and of all the works of God so that he can praise Him, who is their Sovereign (vss. 19-22).

Devotional

Let all my inward powers be stirred up to praise and thank my Redeemer for all that He has done for me, for my country, and for His church on earth.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR

This Psalm was perhaps composed along with the preceding one. It contains:

1. High celebrations of God as the God of nature. Particularly for His:

- a. Appearance in the heavenly palaces (vss. 1-4).
- b. Creation of the sea and the dry land (vss. 5-9).
- c. Provision for His creatures according to their respective needs (vss. 10-28).
- d. Sovereign dominion and influence over them (vss. 29-32).

2. Holy resolutions to meditate on and praise the Lord in view of His destruction of the wicked (vss. 33-35).

Devotional

Behold, how stretched heavens, shining lights, fertile fields, towering woods, roaring seas, ranging beasts, laboring men, flaming seraphs all unite

their force to awaken my soul to tune my heart to the high praises of her Redeemer!

Let me meet my God, my Christ, in every view. In every sound, let me hear His voice. In every form, let me discern how great is His goodness and how great is His beauty! Let creation's lower plains not capture my heart. Let redemption through His blood fix all my thoughts, delight all my inward powers, that I may sing anthems, all on fire, to Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND FIVE

This Psalm was part of the hymn sung when the Ark was moved from the house of Obed-Edom to the city of David (see 1 Chronicles 16). It contains:

1. Solemn calls to meditate on, seek, magnify, and praise God, who is so great, so gracious, and so nearly connected with us (vss. 1-7).

2. A narrative of the particular mercies of God to Israel for the space of 480 years which are grounds of praise. Particularly His:

- a. Covenant with their patriarchs (vss. 8-11).
- b. Care of them while strangers and wanderers (vss. 12-15).

- c. Advancement of Joseph to be the shepherd and stone of Israel (vss. 16-22).
- d. Increasing them in Egypt and, at last, delivering them from it by inflicting many plagues on the Egyptians (vss. 23-38).
- e. Care of them in the wilderness and in bringing them to the Promised Land as His chosen people (vss. 39-45).

Devotional

Let my soul, with affecting wonder, think what God is to me and what He has done for me and His church in carrying out His covenant engagements with Jesus Christ.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND SIX

This Psalm may be considered as an addition to the previous Psalm. It reminds us of the marvellous kindness of God to Israel. It describes the fearful rebellions of Israel against their gracious God. In it, we have:

1. A preface which ascribes praise to God, displays God's comfort to His saints, and requests favours from God (vss. 1-5).

2. An alarming confession or narrative of Israel's wickedness against their God, despite His

marvellous kindness to them. The Israelites:

- a. Provoked God at the Red Sea (vss. 6-12).
- b. Lusted after sensual pleasures (vss. 13-15).
- c. Rebelled against God's servants (vss. 16-18).
- d. Worshiped the golden calf (vss. 19-23).
- e. Grumbled about the promised land (vss. 24-27).
- f. Joined with the Moabites and Midianites in the worship of the Baal of Peor (vss. 28-31).
- g. Argued with Moses at Kadesh (vss. 32-33).
- h. Mixed with the Canaanites and followed their idolatrous and cruel customs (vss. 34-39).

3. An affecting view of God's great compassion to Israel although they had provoked Him to inflict sore and almost destructive punishments on them (vss. 40-46).

4. An affectionate use of His kindness in imploring His powerful deliverance and giving of endless praises to His name (vss. 47-48).

Devotional

Let my soul be deeply affected with the dreadful nature of sin and with man's stubbornness, no, my own stubbornness. Let me, with amazement, behold the unbounded mercy of God to men, knowing that where sin abounds grace much more abounds.