

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Eighty-Nine - Finding Solace From Our **FATIGUE** Of **FAITH** Through God's Immutable **CONSTANCY** (Psalm 89:1-52)

I. Introduction

- A. Being mortal, we humans operate from a very **limited** time frame of reference and energy where we **like** to reach all the goals of history in **our** lifetimes or feel spiritually and emotionally **fatigued**!
- B. However, **GOD**, unlike us mortals, operates from an **eternal** frame of reference and is not subject to our fatigue. Thus, a tension exists between our relatively **short-term** hopes and God's **longer** eternal plan!
- C. Psalm 89:1-52 handles this discrepancy between the mortal believer and the immortal, omnipotent, eternal God in Whom the believer trusts, and teaches us how to **deal** with that difference as follows:

II. Finding Solace From Our **FATIGUE** Of **FAITH** Through God's Immutable **CONSTANCY**, Ps. 89.

- A. The psalmist writes out of a time of current military defeat of the royal descendant of David, Ps. 89: 38-45:
 1. Though alleged author of the psalm is Ethan the Ezrahite, a contemporary of David's, the events in verses 38-45 speak of a later time in history during the decline of Judah, cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, fn. to Ps. 89. The name Ethan thus refers to a descendant or to "a choir guild bearing Ethan's name," Ibid.
 2. Accordingly, a descendant of David's on David's throne, undergoing defeat and the breaching of the city's wall, has left the psalm's author in a state of shock and despair, Ps. 89:41.
 3. What adds to the suffering is the emotionally draining taunts of godless enemies at this event, v. 50-51!
- B. However, this defeat of Israel's king is so **opposite** the Davidic Covenant God had made that the **defeat** is treated almost as an act of **God's** against this king, Ps. 89:38-40, 42-45.
- C. **Since Psalm 89 is a *maskil*, or a teaching psalm (introductory notes), we take our cue from the psalm's context that the PROBLEM being addressed here is not so much any unfaithfulness on GOD'S part as it is a FATIGUE of FAITH with which the psalmist is identifying:**
 1. Verses 1-4 of the psalm focus on God's endless (Hebrew '*olam*') loyal love to the Davidic Covenant to preserve David's line on Israel's throne endlessly, cf. v. 1, 2, 4 (see '*olam*' in Robert B. Girdlestone's Synonyms of the Old Testament, p. 316-317).
 2. The Psalmist also takes time to dwell on the great character of the Lord Who made this Davidic Covenant in verses 5-18. God's faithfulness is repeatedly mentioned (v. 5, 8) along with His power to retain His covenant faithfulness to David's seed, v. 6-7, 8, 9-18.
 3. Then, taking encouragement from the fact that God had made the covenant to David, and possessed the character to fulfill it, the psalmist poetically detailed the provisions of the covenant in v. 19-37. Note the emphasis on how **endlessly** (again, '*olam*') God's loyal love would be seen in preserving this covenant according to verses 28, 36 and 37 of this section!
 4. **Thus, in making his lament, the psalmist is not really questioning the credibility of God, but is expressing his FATIGUE of FAITH as he is in shock from the defeat of the king that SEEMS to UNDERMINE God and the Davidic Covenant**, Ps. 89:46.
 - a. In an unusual switch from the word translated "endlessly" ('*olam*'), the psalmist asks if God will **constantly** (*netsach*, cf. Girdlestone, Ibid., p. 313) hide Himself and not invoke the Davidic promise!
 - b. His complaint, accompanied by the question, "How **long**, O Jahweh?" indicates that the problem here is a **fatigue** of faith on the **psalmist's** part, and **not** a reflection on **God's** having failed in any way!
- D. The solution offered by the teacher of this psalm is for an appeal for divine help over the **fatigue ITSELF**:
 1. The psalmist, admitting his mortality and weakness (v. 47-48), begs for God's former loyal love and faithfulness to be invoked to defend the Davidic Covenant and to thus counter his fatigue, v. 49.
 2. He adds a mitigating factor behind this fatigue -- the incessant taunts of the faithless enemies of Israel that further pressure against his faith in God, leading to this fatigue of faith in the Lord, v. 50-51.
- E. **Having faced up his fatigue of faith, and having taken it to the Lord, the Psalmist is encouraged to praise God "endlessly" ('*olam*), followed by a strong double affirmative of faith in two "Amen's".**

Lesson: *The mortal weaknesses we humans have, and that not only in the physical realm, but in our emotional susceptibility to the taunts of oppressors that leads to a weak faith in Him is something God UNDERSTANDS. However, IN such times of fatigue, OUR responsibility is to EXPRESS to God what is IRKING us to produce that fatigue so that HE can strengthen us to believe with some solid AMENs!*