

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

PSALMS 83-89

PSALM EIGHTY-THREE is the last of the psalms of Asaph. The sons of Asaph were a guild of worship leaders who assisted in the spiritual life of the nation Israel for many, many generations.

Psalm 83 was probably written in the days of King Jehoshaphat.

2 Chronicles 20 tells us Judah was threatened by a coalition of foreign armies - the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites. Jehoshaphat ordered a national day of prayer and fasting. After the king led in prayer, the Spirit of God came upon a man named Jahaziel who prophesied victory for Israel.

Remember his famous words, "Do not be afraid nor dismayed... for the battle is not your's, but God's..." Jehoshaphat then employed a strange battle strategy. He placed the musicians on the frontline - praising God.

No offense intended, but this would be sending Josh with his guitar into the teeth of the battle, while keeping Reid Ingle in the rear.

Yet the strategy so confused the enemy, they turned on each other and slaughtered themselves. God did win the victory and danger was diverted.

But here's an intriguing detail. Verse 14 gives us the pedigree of the man who prophesied. "Jahaziel the son of Zechariah... son of Benaiah... son of Jeiel... son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph."

Could Jahaziel be the Asaph who wrote Psalm 83?
Perhaps!

Verse 1 “Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, and do not be still, O God! For behold, Your enemies make a tumult...” Literally, there’s a hum, a buzz. “Those who hate You have lifted up their head.

They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones.” Notice, as a child of God we’re one of His “sheltered ones.” Every Christian has a **Father-filter**.

Nothing can get to us that doesn’t first pass through Him. Whatever comes your way, rest assured God has attached to it His purpose.

“They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.”

This has been Satan’s goal from the beginning. He’s the ultimate Anti-Semite. In fact, Satan is the ultimate source of the world’s anti-Jewish sentiment. All prejudice is evil, but Jewish hatred is especially satanic.

Down through the centuries Satan has tried many times to destroy the Jews. Babylon, Rome, the Turks, Hitler, Syria and Egypt, Hezbollah and Hamas – the goal is the same - the extermination of the Jewish nation.

In 2006 Iranian president, Ahmadinejad, stated Iran’s goal was “to wipe Israel off the map.” Today’s radical Muslim nations share his desire.

This was the goal of the confederacy that attacked King Jehoshaphat.

This will also be the desire of Satan and the Antichrist in the last days.

Verse 5 “For they have consulted together with one consent; they form a confederacy against You: the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab and the Hagrites; Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek; Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assyria also has joined with them; they have helped the children of Lot. Selah Moab and Ammon were leaders in the conspiracy. Apparently, many other nations were onboard.

“Deal with them as with Midian, as with Sisera, as with Jabin at the Brook Kishon, who perished at En Dor, who became as refuse on the earth.” Asaph is recalling the past victories of Deborah and Barak.

He also mentions Gideon’s triumph over the four kings of Midian. “Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb, yes, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, who said, “Let us take for ourselves the pastures of God for a possession.” He’s praying, “God, You did it once, please, do it again!”

“O my God, make them like the whirling dust, like the chaff before the wind!” Drive out the enemy like a stiff breeze drives the tumbleweeds.

“As the fire burns the woods, and as the flame sets the mountains on fire, so pursue them with Your tempest, and frighten them with Your storm.” The psalmist asks God to chase them with lightning bolts.

Judges recounts how the battles won by Barak and Gideon were aided by supernatural fireworks. He's asking God for a similar intervention here.

Sometimes we underestimate God's power over nature. Did you know a single summer thunderstorm releases the same amount of energy that's generated by a megaton hydrogen bomb?

And there are 50,000 thunderstorms everyday on planet earth.

In the Great Tribulation God is going to aim the power of nature at the Earth in an unprecedented way. The sun will scorch – meteorites will fall – 100 pound hailstones will pelt the planet. Mother Nature will go bizerk.

Verse 16 “Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Your name, O LORD. Let them be confounded and dismayed forever; yes, let them be put to shame and perish, that they may know that You, whose name alone is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth.”

PSALM EIGHTY-FOUR is one of my favorite psalms – it's a song of pilgrimage. Three times a year Jews journeyed to Jerusalem to worship God at the Temple. Twice in the spring, in early April at Passover, in late May at Pentecost – and once in October at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Psalm 84 consists of three stanzas. Stanza One depicts the psalmist's *passion for God's presence*. The second stanza recounts his *pilgrimage*. And the third stanza describes the *peace he finds in God's presence*.

Think of the psalm this way... His **thirst** for God. His **trip** to God. And the **treats** of God. Psalm 84 applies to every heart that's thirsty for God.

The first stanza, "How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts!"

Understand the Temple was the happening place in the Old Testament. Sacrifices were made on its altar. Praises were sung in its courts.

"My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." In between trips the psalmist longed for the presence of God he felt in its halls and porticos.

He marked off the days on his calendar until his next visit.

"Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young - even Your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God." The psalmist envies the birds that nest in the Temple's rafters. They spent all their time in His courts.

"Blessed (or supremely happy) are those who dwell in Your house..."

The psalmist could only come up to Jerusalem for the major feasts, but he knows when he arrives, "they will still be praising (God). Selah"

Stanza Two, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca..." The word "Baca" means "weeping." A pilgrimage to Jerusalem was tough and tricky. The holy city

was a difficult destination. Roads led through deserts, and over mountains. They were tight and windy, and laced with danger.

The psalmist longs for God, but longing was not enough, he had to come – a spiritual pilgrimage required great determination.

The same is true for us. All kinds of distractions can get in our way of seeking God. Your heart has to be "**set on pilgrimage.**" Desire is a must.

Yet as they journey, the pilgrims turn the Valley of Baca (or weeping), into "**a spring; the rain also covers it with pools.**" Jerusalem is an uphill climb through arid climates - *and better fill up your canteen* – even alongside today's modern freeway, there're not a lot of pit stops.

Yet the pilgrims' love and willingness to share with each other, as they traveled together, made the barren desert seem like a spring of water.

God also helped out. He sent the rain and created roadside pools.

Verse 7 "**They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.**" Normally a trip to Jerusalem exhausted a traveler. But the pilgrims on the path to worship grew stronger with each mile.

Every one who began the journey ended up appearing before God.

This is a huge encouragement – every person who truly *seeks God finds Him*. All of us who set out to be a worshipper will make it to God.

“O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah” The third stanza extols the blessings found in God’s presence.

Verse 9 “O God, behold our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed. For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand.”

The psalmist would swap a thousand Bulldog football games, for 24 hours in the presence of God. A trip to Tahiti would not be as welcomed.

The joys, the delights - the peace, the contentment – there’s no place he’d rather be, there’s nothing he’d rather do - than hang out with God.

He says, “I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.” The psalmist would rather be an usher – a doorkeeper in the Temple – *and get a mere glimpse of glory when the door cracked opened* – than have front row seats in wicked places.

An *sneak peek* at God is better than box seats for the sin games.

“For the LORD God is a sun and shield...” If the sun was a basketball the earth would be a pinhead. If it were hollow you’d be able to fit a million earths inside. The sun is huge. It’s larger than Obama’s stimulus package.

And did you know, at the core of the sun, the temperature is 10 million degrees? The sun’s surface is 5800 degrees – about 16 times hotter than boiling water. The pressure is also 340 billion times what it is on Earth.

But you don't need to know any of that to get a tan.

Likewise, you don't need to know all there is to know about God to love Him, experience Him, and have fellowship with Him. Just expose yourself to His influence.

“The LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.” This is a verse we all should memorize and teach to our kids. At some point, Satan tempts us all along these very same lines... **“Look at the good times you're missing serving the Lord... Give in, go with the flow, and you'll get in on all the fun.”**

Don't believe the enemy for a single second. Psalm 84 tells us we'll never miss out on anything truly good if we stay in pursuit of God.

This is the truth our children desperately need to learn.

Finally, verse 12, **“O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You!”** O, how the psalmist would envy us! He longed for God's presence. He traveled miles on foot - across rugged terrain – just to be there. Yet, you and I have access to God's throne of grace 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Incredibly, we have the presence of God within us.

PSALM EIGHTY-FIVE was written during the days of Zerubbabel - the man who led exiled Jews back to Judah from Babylonian captivity.

The Jews returned to rebuild their homeland, but it wasn't easy. The Temple, walls, city were in ruins. He encountered a lot of opposition.

Psalm 85 is a song of new beginnings - a mixture of

gratitude and grief, agony and ecstasy. Psalm 85 attests that starting over is never easy.

“Lord, You have been favorable to Your land; You have brought back the captivity of Jacob.” Notice, God’s people were often called “Judah” which means “praise” - or “Israel” which means “prince” - but the psalmist calls the flock of God, “Jacob,” or “scoundrel.”

God wounded Jacob. He walked with a limp. And God’s people limped back to Jerusalem. They were weak. They had to lean on God’s grace.

Verse 2 “You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sin. Selah You have taken away all Your wrath, You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger.” It’s a fresh start!

“Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your anger toward us to cease. Will You be angry with us forever? Will You prolong Your anger to all generations? Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your mercy, LORD, and grant us Your salvation.

I will hear what God the LORD will speak, for He will speak peace to His people and to His saints; but let them not turn back to folly.” Notice, fresh starts begin when God speaks. The psalmist has a hunger to hear...

Do you have a hunger to hear from God? He created the universe with the power of His Word. His creative works *today* begin when He speaks.

“Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that

glory may dwell in our land.” When Zerubbabel returned to the land everything was in ruins, but his goal was clear “that glory may dwell in our land.”

Verse 10, “Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.” Here's the snag in man's salvation...

God said the penalty for sin is death. Thus, for God to be true to His word - and righteous in His works - man must die. Yet He wants to show mercy, and establish peace with man - so how can God do so without violating His truth and running roughshod over His righteousness?

Is there a common ground where mercy and truth can meet? Where is the mistletoe under which righteousness and peace can kiss? *The answer is Jesus!* The cross looked both toward heaven and toward earth.

On the cross Jesus bowed to heaven – to pay the penalty for sin, and satisfied the demands of God’s righteousness. And in the same act, He reached out to man - showing mercy and establishing peace.

The Judge declared the boy guilty - sentenced him to a fine – far more than He could pay. But when the verdict was rendered and the gavel fell, the judge took off His robe, and came down from the bench. He stood by the boy, his son - reached into his wallet and paid the fine.

This is what our heavenly Father has done for us. He’s Judge, but He’s also our Dad. And He satisfies both *law* and *love* at the same time.

Psalm 85 closes, “Yes, the LORD will give what is good; and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before Him, and shall make His footsteps our pathway.” For followers, God’s footsteps are our path.

PSALM EIGHTY-SIX is “a prayer of David.”

It begins, “Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me; for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am holy; You are my God; save Your servant who trusts in You! Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I cry to You all day long.

Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.” Forgiveness isn’t pried out of God as if He’s reluctant to pardon. God is “ready to forgive.” It’s His nature.

God is abundant in mercy - we just need to ask.

Verse 6 “Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me. Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord; nor are there any works like Your works.” Compare the true God with the false gods of other religions... Who among the gods dares to forgive as God does...

Islam crushes its opponents. Allah doesn’t look to show mercy...

Buddhism locks a sinner in the prison of countless reincarnations where they have to return as slugs and snails

as punishment for past mistakes. The best the Buddha offers us is eternal nothingness... *What an offer?*

The *Hindu pantheon* is full of vicious gods who feed on man's blood.

Only Jesus bleeds for His people. He alone delights to forgive.

“All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name. For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God.” There is only one God, the God of the Bible. All other gods are figments of the imagination or demons in disguise.

“Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth...” The Israelis knew His *works*, but Moses knew His *ways*. He knew God's heart.

And I love the next line, **“unite my heart to fear Your name.”** So often we're a boiling cauldron of churning and mixed-up emotions. Chemicals dance in our brains and glands squirt hormones – and it creates a cavalcade of feelings – thoughts ricochet off cranium walls.

At times my wife says to me, **“Honey, get a grip!”** If I'm not careful I can get worked up into a real emotional lather. David also had this capacity.

Thus, David asks God to help him get a grip. He prays, **“Lord, pull me together. Rally all my thoughts around You - and the fear of You.”**

Here's another way to say it, 2Corinthians 10:5, **“Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”** It's our responsibility to find inner handles on our thought life. It's up

to us to only think thoughts that please Jesus. The spiritual battle is waged in the theater of our minds.

Verse 12 “I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Your name forevermore. For great is Your mercy toward me, and You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.”

O God, the proud have risen against me, and a mob of violent men have sought my life, and have not set You before them. But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth. Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me! Give Your strength to Your servant, and save the son of Your maidservant.

Show me a sign for good, that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed, because You, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.”

PSALM EIGHTY-SEVEN sings praise to “the city of God.” The greatest city in the world is not Washington, or London, or Beijing – it’s Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is God’s city. It’s God’s earthly headquarters. Jerusalem was the sacred site of His Temple – *showcase for His glory*. From Melchizedek to the Millennium Jerusalem has and will play a pivotal role in God’s plan.

Ezekiel 5:5 tells us, “This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations and the countries all around her.”

Jerusalem is the epicenter. It’s the center of the earth geographically and politically. Not a day goes by that you don’t pick up a newspaper and read a story about Jerusalem.

And unlike most cities, there's no strategic reason for its prominence.

John Phillips writes, "It stands where no city has any business standing. It has no river... no strategic highway, its roads lead straight out into the desert, its topography is most unusual." It has few natural advantages.

Yet 34 times in its history Jerusalem has been besieged and fought over. Today the city is under Hebrew control. The modern Israelis have made it their capitol once more. They vow to never let go of Jerusalem.

Verse 1, "His foundation is in the holy mountains." Jerusalem is built on five mountains – Zion to the west, Ophel to the south, Olivet on the east, Scopus to the north, and Moriah in the middle. It sits 2,500' ASL.

About 25 miles away, the Dead Sea sits 1,290' BSL – the lowest point on the earth. Thus, Jerusalem is 4,000' above the Jordan River Valley.

Leave a hot, tropical valley, travel 25 miles and you can be in the snow.

"The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God! Selah"

Here's what makes Jerusalem such a special place - the Lord loves the city. The word "spoken" can be translated "betrothed" or "engaged."

And Jerusalem's grandest days are still ahead. When Jesus returns and rules the world a 1000 years, His throne will be on Zion's hilltops.

"I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know Me; behold, O Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia: 'This one was born there.'"

And of Zion it will be said, "This one and that one were born in her; and the Most High Himself shall establish her." The LORD will record, when He registers the peoples: "This one was born there." Selah"

People were proud to be citizens of Babylon, or Philistia, or Tyre, or Ethiopia – but no birthplace was more prestigious than Jerusalem.

"Both the singers and the players on instruments say, "All my springs are in you." Jerusalem was inspiration for the artist and musician.

PSALM EIGHTY-EIGHT is "A Contemplation of Heman the Ezrahite." This is the only psalm attributed to Heman, a Temple worship leader.

Notice, also the phrase "Mahalath Leannoth." It's translated "dancing and shouting" yet there's nothing in Psalm 88 to dance or shout about.

Psalm 88 is the saddest psalm. It's full of despair. Rather than praise, it's a funeral dirge. The last word sums up the entire psalm, "darkness."

Phillips writes, "We thank God that, if there has to be such a psalm in the Bible, there is only one of them." Here the psalmist *sings the blues!*

Verse 1 “O LORD, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You. Let my prayer come before You; incline Your ear to my cry.

For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to the grave.

Apparently, Heman suffers a terminal disease... possibly leprosy. He's got one foot in the grave. His friends forsake him. There's no hope.

“I am counted with those who go down to the pit; I am like a man who has no strength, adrift among the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom You remember no more, and who are cut off from Your hand.

You have laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the depths.

Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and You have afflicted me with all Your waves. Selah You have put away my acquaintances far from me; You have made me an abomination to them; I am shut up, and I cannot get out; my eye wastes away because of affliction. LORD, I have called daily upon You; I have stretched out my hands to You.”

Can I suggest the psalmist is having a bad day? It gets worse in verse 10, “Will You work wonders for the dead?” In other words, when I'm dead it's too late for me to be healed. “Shall the dead arise and praise You? Selah Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction? Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? But to You I have cried out, O LORD, and in

the morning my prayer comes before You.

LORD, why do You cast off my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me? I have been afflicted and ready to die from my youth; I suffer Your terrors; I am distraught.” Apparently, the psalmist has suffered with his chronic condition for some time – since earlier in life – from his youth.

“Your fierce wrath has gone over me; Your terrors have cut me off.

They came around me all day long like water; they engulfed me altogether. Loved one and friend You have put far from me, and my acquaintances into darkness.” Wow, and that’s where it ends...

Not one ray of sunshine lights up the agony of Psalm 88.

Yet maybe that's the point - God is teaching us that no matter how depressing our situation gets, we can always cry to Him for help.

With God we *can* “let it all hang out”. When the poison of pain fills our cup it's better to pour it out, than it is to let it eat through the bottom.

One more point, in 1Kings 4:31 the author of Psalm 88, this same Heman, is noted for his wisdom. And there’s probably a connection.

Wisdom grows out of suffering when you learn its lessons. Heman was a graduate of the School of hard-knocks. Pain had been his teacher.

PSALM EIGHTY-NINE is by “Ethan the Ezrahite.”
1Chronicles 16 lists a Jeduthan as one of David’s singers...

Ethan may be short for Jeduthan.

One day David looks out his window, and sees the tent that occupies the Ark of God. It upsets him. He's living in a beautiful palace, while the presence of God rests in a tent – the equivalent of a pop-up camper.

David wants to build God a house, but God tells David it would be for his son Solomon to complete the project. Instead God will build David a house, or dynasty. He promises King David **an enduring successor, an everlasting throne, an eternal kingdom.** Ethan sings of it in Psalm 89.

“I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever; with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.

For I have said, "Mercy shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens." "I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: 'Your seed I will establish forever, and build up your throne to all generations.' "Selah

The immediate seed and fulfillment of God's promises was Solomon, but the ultimate fulfillment was a future son of David named *Jesus*.

Verse 5 “And the heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the saints.

For who in the heavens can be compared to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the LORD? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him.”
Those who *know God best - revere Him most.*

This is why the angels are His most ardent admirers.

“O LORD God of hosts, Who is mighty like You, O LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them.” When Jesus calmed the Sea of Galilee He did what only God could do. It was proof of His deity.

Verse 10, “You have broken Rahab in pieces, as one who is slain; You have scattered Your enemies with Your mighty arm.”

He’s referencing the exodus and God’s victory over the Egyptians.

"Rahab" means "proud one" – some scholars associate it with Egypt, while others link it to “Leviathan,” the twisting serpent of Psalm 74. When Satan tried to thwart the crossing, God chopped the serpent into pieces.

“The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; the world and all its fullness, You have founded them. The north and the south, You have created them; Tabor and Hermon rejoice in Your name.”

"Tabor and Hermon" are mountain peaks in northern Israel.

“You have a mighty arm; strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face. Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance.

In Your name they rejoice all day long, and in Your

righteousness they are exalted. For You are the glory of their strength, and in Your favor our horn is exalted.” *Horn* is a symbol for strength. Our greatest assets were not our muscles, or intellect, or courage - but God’s favor, His grace.

“For our shield belongs to the LORD, and our king to the Holy One of Israel. Then You spoke in a vision to Your holy one and said: "I have given help to one who is mighty; I have exalted one chosen from the people. I have found My servant David; with My holy oil I have anointed him...”

David was anointed three times: by Samuel at Bethlehem - in Hebron as king over Judah - and ultimately as king over both Israel and Judah.

Jesus is also anointed three times: as king over our hearts, as king over the Church, and as King of kings – King of all the earth. “**Messiah**” means “**Anointed One.**” The next verses speak of the coming Jewish Messiah...

Verse 21 “**With whom My hand shall be established; also My arm shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not outwit him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him. I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague those who hate him. "But My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with him, and in My name his horn shall be exalted. Also I will set his hand over the sea, and his right hand over the rivers. He shall cry to Me, 'You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.'** No one in the OT ever referred to Yahweh as “**Father.**” It was considered by the Jews as blasphemous.

To call someone father was to imply you had the same nature.

Yet this was Jesus' favorite title for God. At 12 he was in the Temple "about His Father's business." Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father..."

And when the Holy Spirit indwells our hearts He cries out from within, "Abba, Father..." The Spirit places us on intimate terms with God.

"Also I will make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth."

Recall "firstborn" was not a reference to birth order, but prominence. The firstborn might not be the first to be born, but he had the birthright.

In Colossians 1:15 Jesus is labeled "the firstborn over all creation."

"My mercy I will keep for him forever, and My covenant shall stand firm with him. His seed also I will make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven." The psalmist is speaking of God's covenant with David.

"If his sons forsake My law And do not walk in My judgments, if they break My statutes And do not keep My commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, nor allow My faithfulness to fail." God's covenant with David is not dependent on the obedience of his descendents. "My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips." The word "alter" means "to double." God will never double-cross us or violate His promises.

“Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: his seed shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before Me; it shall be established forever like the moon, even like the faithful witness in the sky.” Selah

But this promise was tested. David’s successors were evil and judged by God. King Jeconiah was taken to Babylon and Israel’s throne lacked a Davidic successor. God cursed King Jeconiah and his royal line.

Jeremiah 22:30 pronounced a curse on Jeconiah. “Write this man down as childless... none of his descendants shall (sit) on the throne of David...”

This puzzled the rabbis. How will the seed of David rule when the lineage of Jeconiah, the royal descendent of David was cursed?

The psalmist also mourns this predicament. “But You have cast off and abhorred, You have been furious with Your anointed. You have renounced the covenant of Your servant; You have profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. You have broken down all his hedges; You have brought his strongholds to ruin.” ...all in contrast to God’s promises of faithfulness.

“All who pass by the way plunder him; He is a reproach to his neighbors. You have exalted the right hand of his adversaries; You have made all his enemies rejoice. You have also turned back the edge of his sword, and have not sustained him in the battle. You have made his glory cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth You have shortened; You have covered him with shame. Selah

How long, LORD? Will You hide Yourself forever? Will Your wrath burn like fire? Remember how short my time is; for what futility have You created all the children of men? What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his life from the power of the grave? Selah

Lord, where are Your former lovingkindnesses, which You swore to David in Your truth? Remember, Lord, the reproach of Your servants - how I bear in my bosom the reproach of all the many peoples, with which Your enemies have reproached, O LORD, with which they have reproached the footsteps of Your anointed.” The royal line passed through Jeconiah - but his descendents were cursed. How did God intend to keep the covenant?

The genealogies of Jesus provide the answer. Joseph was heir to the royal line, thus as Joseph’s heir, Jesus had a rightful claim to the throne. But though Jesus was Joseph’s heir, He was not Joseph’s son. He was born of the Spirit. Thus He bypassed the curse on Jeconiah’s family.

Of course, Messiah had to be a blood relative of David. This is why Mary was his mom. She was a relative of David, but not Jeconiah.

Thus, Jesus was the royal heir through Joseph – but the natural heir through Mary – and in doing so fulfilled the promises of God to David.

Psalm 89 ends, “**Blessed be the LORD forevermore! Amen and Amen.**”