

Studies in Psalms by [John T Polk II](#)
For [The Fellowship Room](#)

Psalm 90

1/18/13

Vs. 1-6 remind us of the eternal power of God;
Vs. 7-12 remind us of the brevity of life and certainty of its end;
Vs. 13-17 point out, therefore, the lesson of life.

Moses wrote this Psalm toward the end of the 40-year Wilderness Wandering ([Exodus 16-Deuteronomy 34](#)). There is no good reason to doubt that this Psalm is "a prayer of Moses the man of God." "Moses the man of God" is used some 5 other times in the Old Testament ([Deuteronomy 33:1](#); [Joshua 14:6](#); [1 Chronicles 23:14](#); [2 Chronicles 30:16](#); [Ezra 3:2](#)). The phrase "the man of God" frequently refers to a prophet of God, except for the one time it occurs in the New Testament, when it refers to everyone who uses the completed Scriptures for "doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)). "O man of God" is used specifically of Timothy ([1 Timothy 6:11](#)) who is "an example" to believers ([1 Timothy 4:12](#)).

Verses 1-6: *Concerning Earth's existence:* without a permanent home, **verse 1** is quite poignant, for God is Moses' constant "dwelling place." Before our home was formed ("the earth and the world"), there was God (**verse 2**), existing "from everlasting to everlasting." Since "matter is not eternal," since there must be an "uncaused first cause," then only God could "create" (bring into existence from nothing, [Genesis 1:1](#)).

Therefore "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" ([Hebrews 11:3](#)). "Faith" is based upon solid, scientific fact, that confidently points into the unseen, "while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" ([2 Corinthians 4:17-18](#)). Only "God" makes sense of the world.

Concerning life on Earth: God can: bring down or build up (**verse 3**; [Daniel 4:29-37](#)); outlive everyone (**verse 4**; [2 Peter 3:8](#)); remove people suddenly "like a flood," make their lives brief as a night, or frail as grass (**verse 5-6**; [1 Thessalonians 5:3-4](#); [1 Peter 1:24](#)).



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Verses 7-12: Having come through the Wilderness ([Hebrews 3:16-19](#)), Moses had seen that God had: “anger” and “wrath” (**verse 7**); thorough knowledge of their sins (**verse 8**); life after their “sigh” (**verse 9**); limited their life-span (**verse 10**); potential for more judging (**verse 11**); taught the lesson of life (**verse 12**).

Verses 13-17: Moses’ appeal is for God to: “Return” with “compassion” (**verse 13**); give “mercy” that they may “rejoice and be glad” (**verse 14**); give them as many years of gladness as of affliction (**verse 15**); return to His “work” of fulfilling His promise to Abraham (**verse 16**; [Deuteronomy 4:23-40](#)); let His beauty show through blessings to Israelites (**verse 17**).

Some oft-heard thoughts are: “A thousand years” (which is a measure of time to humans) to God passes as fast as “yesterday” (**verse 4**). Human life is about 70 years, by strength 80, but further is accomplished by precious few (**verse 10**), and then “it is soon cut off, and we fly away.” Knowing where we are on life’s scale, we should *wise up* and live right (**verse 12**).

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