



"Those who can command themselves can command others."
—William Hazlitt

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Moses, Psalmist (Part 1)

[Moses](#) was an amazing man. From his birth, he was caught up as the central figure in some of the most momentous times in human history. Adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, he became heir to the throne of the greatest nation on earth at the time, a position he later refused ([Hebrews 11:24](#)). As crown prince, he received all the education and training Egypt had to offer ([Acts 7:22](#)): religion, art, literature, architecture, mathematics, science, history, military strategy, arms, and leadership, among many others. In his forty years as an Egyptian prince, he experienced a broad range of activities that prepared him for leading Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness.

An endeavor for which most do not give him nearly enough credit is as a psalmist. The Pentateuch contains two "Songs of Moses" (Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32), as well as other snatches of poetry that may have been sung (e.g., Numbers 10: 35-36; 21:27-30; Deuteronomy 33). In the Psalms, the title to Psalm 90 designates Moses as its author, and he is generally credited with writing Psalm 91. [God](#) Himself obviously approves of his skills as a songwriter because [Revelation 15:3](#) shows "those who have the victory over the beast, . . . standing on the sea of glass . . . sing[ing] the song of Moses, the servant of God."

If [David](#) is "the sweet psalmist of Israel" ([II Samuel 23:1](#)), Moses is the original psalmist of Israel. Not only is Moses the first recorded servant of God to write songs of praise and meditation, but all the other psalmists also generally follow his style and themes. It is no wonder that the Bible itself, as well as Jews and Christians down to today, regard Moses so highly. No man other than [Jesus Christ](#) has had such a marked impact on humanity than he.

Psalm 90 is a classic example of a biblical psalm. Right away, it is obvious that it is essentially a [prayer](#), for the first word, "LORD," addresses God directly. The first two verses praise God for always being Israel's refuge and dwelling, as well as for being the ever-living Creator God. The next several verses extol His sovereignty over mankind and compare Him to weak, sinful, and short-lived men. This section concludes in verse 12 with a principle in the form of a plea to God to "teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

The final section, verses 13-19, begins with "Return, O LORD! How long? And have compassion on Your servants." Again, this is a timeless appeal from a godly man for God to dwell again with His people, asking Him to remember that human life is short compared to God's everlasting life (see verses 4, 10), and if He removes Himself too long, it will be too late. It is very similar to David's personal request in Psalm 51: "Do not cast me away from Your presence. . . . Restore to me the [joy](#) of Your [salvation](#)" (verses 11-12).

Moses' appeal in [Psalm 90:13](#) also has prophetic implications, especially when coupled with verse 12. Here we are, we believe, at the end of the age, awaiting Christ's return, but we really have no idea "how long" we have left. Thus, his advice to learn to use our brief lifetimes wisely has its most fitting application in us. To no other people in history has it been more vital to keep their priorities straight and their eyes on the goal. As the days count down toward Christ's return, our opportunities to strengthen our [relationship with God](#) diminish steadily.

The last four verses continue Moses' requests to God: for [mercy](#), joy, fulfillment of His work, glory, the beauty of the LORD God (possibly a reference to [holiness](#); see [I Chronicles 16:29](#); [II Chronicles 20:21](#); [Psalm 29:2](#); [96:9](#)), and stability. All of these are things we also need, especially as the times worsen and the temptations to forsake our calling increase. Moses' prayer, written more than 3400 years ago, is still current and fresh for our frequent use today.

In the next few weeks, we will scrutinize the other known songs of Moses to see what gems he preserved for our admonition.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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by John W. Ritenbaugh

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by Mark Schindler

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