

## Psalms: Book Four (Part Three)

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Probably only a few of you know the sad story of Ryan Leaf. He was a big kid—6 feet 5 inches tall, 235 pounds. He was from Great Falls, Montana. And he had the opportunity and perhaps the skill to become one of the greatest quarterbacks in NFL history. But he proved a failure in both his professional and personal lives. His is a cautionary tale of a person who seemed to have all the advantages right there in his grasp, yet squandered them with selfishness and sheer stupidity.

Out of high school, Leaf was recruited to play quarterback for the Washington State Cougars where he started 24 games. In his junior year, in 1997, he averaged 330 yards of passing per game and threw for a then Pac-10 record of 33 touchdowns. He helped bring the Cougars their first Pac-10 championship in school history, though once they got to the Rose Bowl they lost the game to the eventual national champions, the Michigan Wolverines.

On the strength of those accomplishments, Leaf was the finalist for the Heisman Trophy Award that year and he finished third in the balloting behind the winner of that balloting, Charles Woodson, a defensive back from Michigan, and quarterback Peyton Manning out of Tennessee, who was second. So Leaf, despite losing that Heisman Trophy to those two very good players, ended up being named Pac-10 Offensive Player of the Year. He was named 1st Team All American by The Sporting News. He finished second in the nation in passer rating, which is a compilation of various stats (passes, interceptions, touchdowns, etc.) for quarterbacks.

On the strength of all that, he decided (this was his first act of stupidity) to skip his senior year and he entered the 1998 NFL draft. Well, Leaf and Peyton Manning were considered to be the two best offensive players in the draft, and for many scouts and coaches it was a kind of a tossup—they would go back and forth, they would look at the stats, they watched the film—and for some of them it was one or the other.

Some favored Leaf because he had a stronger arm and it seemed like he had a far greater potential than Peyton Manning. And then others looked at Peyton Manning and said, “Well, he comes from a family of quarterbacks” (Archie Manning was his dad). “He is much more mature as a quarterback. He is much more mature as a person. And he seems to be the safer pick.” So when it all came down to it, the Indianapolis Colts had the first pick in the draft and they chose Peyton Manning. They were looking long term

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and seeing that they would have a quarterback in their franchise for years to come.

Ryan Leaf went to the San Diego Chargers. The Chargers had traded significant draft picks to get at least the second pick of the draft, so they would either get Manning or Leaf. They had also traded a star player in that trade for the pick. So they had put a lot into this pick and decided to get Ryan Leaf. They signed him to a four-year contract for \$31.25 million. This was before he even took one snap in the National Football League. Out of that \$31.25 million, they gave him a guaranteed \$11.25 million. So whether he played or not, how badly he played or not, they were going to give him over \$11 million. That is the largest signing bonus that had ever been paid to a rookie at the time.

His first snap though, in his first regular season game, could be seen as an omen: He fumbled it. Despite barely winning the first two games, the Chargers ended up 5-11 that year. Leaf finished the season, having played 10 games, not all starting because he was having trouble. He passed for a little bit less than 1300 yards. He completed only 45 percent of his passes. He only had two touchdowns but 15 interceptions. He had an abysmally poor quarterback rating of 39. The League's average is 83.2. Peyton Manning, in his rookie year, had a 71.2—pretty much doubled up Ryan Leaf's passer rating.

And also, I will just mention it, Ryan Leaf was an arrogant jerk in the way he handled the press, the way he was with his coaches and teammates. He did not make any friends.

The next year he had a shoulder injury. So he missed the whole season. And in the year 2000, with Leaf partially at the helm, the Chargers finished with one win and 15 losses. The Chargers released him after the season, having thrown \$31.25 million down a rat hole.

In his first three years with San Diego, Leaf had only four wins as a starting quarterback. He spent some time with the Buccaneers, with the Cowboys, with the Seahawks—only over about a year's time with those three teams. By the summer of 2002, he retired. He started in 1998, he retired in 2002—about a four-and-a-half year career.

During his brief NFL career, Leaf appeared in 25 games and he started 21 of them. He completed 48.4 percent of his passes for 3666 yards. He had 14 touchdowns, 36 interceptions, and a career quarterback rating of 50. Peyton Manning's is 97.4 and ongoing. He is still at it.

ESPN, the great sports network of the United States, ranked Leaf first on its list of 25 biggest sports flops between 1979 and 2004. The NFL Network, in 2010, listed him as

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the number one NFL quarterback bust of all time. The man who was chosen just before him, Peyton Manning, may prove to be the best quarterback that ever played the game (that is arguable, but just to give you some comparison there).

In 2005 Leaf finished his college degree (remember, he left when he was a junior) and a year later, he joined the West Texas A&M football staff as a volunteer quarterbacks coach. But in November 2008, he was put on indefinite leave and he resigned the next day from his coaching position for allegedly asking one of the players for a pill to help him deal with some lingering wrist pain that he had from an injury in the past. This was the start of a huge tumble to rock bottom for Ryan Leaf.

In May 2009 Leaf was indicted on burglary and controlled substance charges in Texas. He was in a drug rehabilitation center in Canada at the time. That is why he was indicted. And later, he was sentenced to 10 years of probation and fined \$20,000.

In March 2012 he was again arrested on burglary, theft, and drug charges in his hometown of Great Falls, Montana. Four days later, he was arrested again on similar charges. For these crimes he was sentenced to seven years in custody of the Montana Department of Corrections, and the first nine months of that sentence he was to spend in a lockdown addiction treatment facility—he was addicted to painkillers. He currently sits in jail in Shelby, Montana—a failure at everything in life so far even though he could have had it all.

Now it is easy to shake one's head at such colossal failure, especially since he is seen to have everything going for him. I did not mention that he was good looking as a young man, but his lifestyle has not helped him in that regard either. He was tall, he was well built, he was athletic. He could do just about anything on the football field. But his personality, his character ruined everything in his life.

And even though others make much more of themselves in this world—they become famous or wealthy or powerful—they are still failures on a colossal scale, if you think of it. The reason they are colossal failures is because they have not entered into a relationship with God. Despite his awesome abilities on the football field, Peyton Manning is also a colossal failure because he does not have a relationship with God.

It could be anybody out there in the world. As successful as they may be or as down in the gutter as they may be, they are a failure if they do not have a relationship with God. But this day that we are observing today—this eighth day—looks forward to the time when God will turn all those billions of failures into glorious successes. They will be able to have salvation through Jesus Christ and eternal life in the eternal Kingdom of God.

Let us begin in the Bible in Genesis 3. This is right after the sin of Adam and Eve, and God has already given His judgments which many people call curses, but they are very much prophecies of the way things would be going forward: Satan and his place and what Jesus Christ would do to beat him over the head, crush him, and become our Savior; the words to Eve about her life and how she would be striving with her husband; and then the ground having to be cursed for his sake. So we get down then to verse 22.

**Genesis 3:22-24** Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

So from that time onward, immediately after Adam and Eve sinned, God blocked mankind’s access to the Tree of Life. And for the majority of humanity, that access has not been regained; it is still blocked. Even though we cannot go to a physical place on this earth and see cherubim standing at this portal to the Garden of Eden with a flaming sword turning every which way, it is still a fact that we cannot get to the Tree of Life without a certain thing, and that is (John 6:44 tells us) that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws him or her to Him.

There must be a summons, there must be an invitation—a calling. God has to look down from heaven and pick one here, one there, and He does something (flips a switch, turns on something) so that they suddenly see things in a slightly different way and begin to appreciate what God has given, learn the things that He has revealed, and ultimately accept them.

So eternal life is offered only to those who the Father specifically calls to salvation. Jesus tells us in Matthew 20:16 that many are called but few are chosen. The elect are an even smaller group of those who have been called. So we are getting down to a very few who actually have caught God’s eye, or He has predetermined that He wants to call into His church, and then they spend their lives in a relationship with Him.

Though the veil to the Holy of Holies was rent when Christ died, access to God is still limited, and limited to those few who are called, as we see in II Timothy 1:9, which Mark Schindler went through in his sermon speaking of God “who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and

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grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.”

So only those few who are called with the holy calling of God have the opportunity to make something of their lives right now. And this pattern will continue as we move forward in God's plan.

Let us turn to Romans 3. Paul had just been speaking about the differences between Jews and Greeks and such, and in verse 9 he says,

**Romans 3:9-12** What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all gone out of the way; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.”

So Paul tells us, as it is summarized in verse 23:

**Romans 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

He is using these absolute terms absolutely. He means it. It is not hyperbole, but he means that *everyone* has sinned. No one does good, not on the level God is looking for. There are things that they do that have a semblance of good, but it is not the true good that comes from God. None really understand. I am talking of those people who are without God's Spirit. That is just the way it is. They cannot approach God in anyway because of their sins, because they have rejected Him. So this is the state of the human race since the time of Adam. It is a state of abysmal failure in everything that really matters.

If we would go back to Romans chapter 1, it tells us that God has consigned all men to a debased mind. We can see this debased mind wherever we turn in this world. It does not matter where you look, you see the degeneracy of the mind, degeneracy of law, degeneracy of judgment—degeneracy in everything. It is the lowest common denominator syndrome, if you want to put it that way. Everybody always goes to the lowest point where they feel comfortable.

Sadly, the world will remain in this state until the return of Christ and will even be in that state in the first few years or so. Mr. Armstrong thought it would take at least an entire

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generation for things to get turned around in the thinking of people.

Even with Jesus Christ and access to the Holy Spirit opened, these lingering selfish ways of mankind—this debased mind—would have to take all that time to change, to be removed. And being fleshly beings, as long as we are in the flesh, a lot of that selfishness will not go away. The people of the earth at the time who are physical will still be fighting that selfishness—the pulls of the flesh—even though Satan will have been removed and the world will have changed. But God’s Spirit will be generally available to those who seek God at that time.

Let us go to Joel chapter 2 and we will start in verse 30 to get some idea of the time here.

**Joel 2:30-32** And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the remnant whom the Lord calls.

So once Jesus Christ returns, there is going to be an opening up, and whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will have an opportunity to be saved. And we see, if we would go a little bit further forward in the chapter, which Peter quoted in Acts 2, that it talks about that He would pour out His Spirit on all flesh. So in those days it will be available, things will change. From that point forward it will be available. It will not be cut off like it was in the Garden of Eden. Now it will be open and men will have the opportunity to turn their failure into success.

Let us go to Ezekiel 37, which is the Dry Bones chapter in which Israel rises from the grave. Ezekiel looks over this great valley of dry bones and sees just bones, and they are dry as anything, as if they had not seen a drop of rain in a thousand years. It is disheartening to him. But God says “Watch! Watch what I do. And prophesy to these bones and watch the miracle that happens.” So we will pick it up in verse 11:

**Ezekiel 37:11-14** Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’ Therefore prophesy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then

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you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it,” says the Lord.

Just tuck that declaration “Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it” in the back of your head for later in the sermon. This is an important principle that hopefully I will bring out in the psalms we will go over today.

So what happens here, in Ezekiel 37, is that God, through Ezekiel, uses Israel as an example of what is going to go on in the general resurrection—the second resurrection—that Israel (actually all of humanity at this point) will rise from their graves, and they will be clothed with flesh once again. It is very clear from verse 8 where it says: “Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.” Later the breath was given to them. So it is showing that their bodies were rebuilt.

They were given physical bodies that breathed air, not spiritual bodies that did not need to breathe and did not need a clothing of flesh. This is a *physical* resurrection. And then God tells us, as we get into this part of the chapter, what the purpose of this period is. So that is what we got to there, in basically verse 14—that He is going to resurrect them physically, He is going to teach them to know God, and He is going to give them His Spirit. And the goal is eternal life. In other words, if we can put this all in one word, He is going to convert them.

The goal of the White Throne Judgment period is to convert humanity, not just humanity that has been born in that generation, but all humanity from all time since the Garden of Eden wherever they lived, not just in Israel but all over the world. As Paul put it, “Jews and Gentiles” or “Jews and Greeks” or Jews and everybody else (people, goyim, everyone).

God wants sons and daughters and He wants billions of them. They were such horrible failures in the physical life that He gave them that He finally gives them a chance. Not a second chance but a chance, because He had Himself cut off access to Him and so they did not have all the tools that they needed. So this time He wants to give them the chance for eternal life and to live with Him forever.

So Ryan Leaf, Peyton Manning, and all those others will have the opportunity, unless they are called sometime between now and when Christ comes, to start with a clean

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slate, and with God's help turn the lemons that they made of their lives into lemonade, as Mr. Armstrong used to say.

We have been going through the psalms of Book Four that apply to this festival period and I found two psalms. They fittingly are the two psalms that conclude Book Four. I believe that these two psalms tie in with this holy day. They are Psalm 105 and Psalm 106. At first, going through them, they may not seem to be so fitting. But once we get beyond the surface content, we will see that they can be seen as looking forward to the time of the Great White Throne Judgment with the general conversion of humanity as much as they look back at ancient Israel.

Let us go to Psalm 105. We are going to read the first six verses and then the first five verses of Psalm 106, to kind of set the stage here for these two psalms.

**Psalm 105:1-6** Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord! Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore! Remember His marvelous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth, O seed of Abraham His servant, you children of Jacob, His chosen ones!

Just wanted to get you into the feel of this psalm. Now let us go the next and we will read the first five verses.

**Psalm 106:1-5** Praise the Lord [Hallelujah]! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Or can declare all His praise? Blessed are those who keep justice, and he who does righteousness at all times! Remember me, O Lord, with the favor You have toward Your people. Oh, visit me with Your salvation, that I may see the benefit of Your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation, that I may glory with Your inheritance.

So you see a plea there that the person who is offering this psalm as praise to God wants to be included among those that God has chosen, among those who are His nation, among those who are His inheritance. It does not necessarily have to be an Israelite. This could be said by anyone who wants to be a part of God's glorious Kingdom.

Both of these psalms begin with several things in common. They begin with exhortations to praise God. That is very clear. They begin with exhortations to remember His works and His judgments. It is put a little differently in each one of the psalms. In one place it is “His judgments and His works,” in another place it talks about “His justice and His righteousness.” Very similar ideas.

They begin with exhortations or encouragements to proclaim or declare or to make known these things to others. You could say this is preaching or teaching or simply just talking one to another, giving examples of what God has done in one’s life or in the past (specifically, the past) here in these two psalms. He is talking mostly about what God has done with Israel, how God has worked with Israel. So the exhortation is to spread this around, to preach this, to make it known to everyone how good God is. We will get into that shortly.

Both of them exhort us to seek the Lord toward salvation. We can look at this in terms of the Great White Throne Judgment that this seeking the Lord is not really possible for everyone now, but at that time seeking the Lord will be possible. So there is this desire that this word get out so the people that are seeking the Lord can take advantage of it.

So, in sum, these two psalms come across as teaching psalms. Not that the other psalms are not teaching psalms, but it seems that these psalms tend to be specifically to teach a couple of different ideas. They both have to do with how God deals with people, specifically His people Israel. It is these points that the psalmist wants to get across because it might be the tipping point for someone to seek the Lord, or to have confidence that seeking the Lord is the right thing to do.

So they are teaching psalms with the object, first of all, of glorifying God by pointing out His gracious acts of deliverance, and also His mercy toward them even though they sinned and they probably do not deserve mercy or forgiveness. But God extends it so graciously.

Now if we were to look quickly and survey Psalm 105, it becomes very apparent that it is a recitation of the high points (or some would consider them the low points) of Israel’s history from Abraham through the Israelites wandering through the wilderness all the way to the Promised Land. He hits certain high points going through there and he shows how God helped, or He put someone in a place in order to bring about deliverance, or He did this, He did that. It shows that He was there and He was fulfilling His part in the covenant.

As we have seen in many sermons, the wilderness journey of the children of Israel

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contains numerous spiritual lessons that we can apply to our own spiritual journey. One of the primary lessons that we learn is that the journey of the Israelites parallels a person's or a group's spiritual walk with God, following God to His Kingdom. So we have something like Hebrews 11. Let us go there just so we get reminded about this particular principle about how the journey through the wilderness parallels our spiritual walk. The writer here, whether it was the apostle Paul or someone else, wrote:

**Hebrews 11:13-16** These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

So every person who is called of God and who is given the opportunity for salvation is on this road, this pilgrimage path you might say, to the Kingdom. They seek something beyond a physical place. They seek a heavenly homeland.

So what it teaches, in Psalm 105, is that everyone who is called of God has to go through this process with God, and they have to see God as being at their side.

**Psalm 105:26-28** He sent Moses His servant, and Aaron whom He had chosen. They performed His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness, and made it dark.

And then he goes through the plagues, all the way down through verse 36.

**Psalm 105:37-41** He also brought them out with silver and gold, and there was none feeble among His tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed, for the fear of them had fallen upon them. He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light in the night. The people asked, and He brought quail, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven [the manna]. He opened the rock, and water gushed out; it ran in the dry places like a river.

So we see that as they were going through their wilderness journey, He provided them

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leadership; He provided the plagues to bring them from the land of Egypt, from the Egyptians; He also gave them wealth, gave them their wages. In verse 37, He gave them health. "None of them were feeble," it says. Everybody walked out. It is not what you see in the Ten Commandments movie, but it says it right there in Psalm 105 that none were feeble.

They were a strong people able to come out on their own two feet under the leadership of God and Moses. Verse 39: He even gave them a cloud to walk under, so they were not scorched in the sun. He gave them fire to light their way at night. They asked for quail, He gave them quail. He gave them 'bread' (angels' food, it is called) every day but the Sabbath. He opened the rock and gave them water so much that the water flooded the desert. It went down the wadis in great force.

So what we see here is that along the journey to the Kingdom of God, as parallel to along the journey to the Promised Land, God provides everything. Day after day, as the situation warrants, He gives without asking, He gives when asked. He just gives along the whole way. He provides all that is necessary. And all He asks for the people to do is walk, to go in the direction that He is going, to follow behind the cloud and the pillar of fire.

That is pretty much all He asks. Just stay on the road. Now the road, as we learned, has hedges on either side and we have got to make sure that we do not jump the hedges because if we do we are going to get in trouble. There are wild beasties and things out there beyond the hedges, and it is much better to stay behind God between the hedges (meaning His law, obviously).

So we can apply this kind of teaching, this kind of analogy to us as individuals as we go through our pilgrimage toward the Kingdom of God. But it does not end with us. This was also applied to the first century church, in their following the apostles, after Christ died and was resurrected. It applies to the whole modern church—whether here in the Church of the Great God or one of the other churches of God in the United States and Canada and all over the world, it does not matter. Every one of the called of God can apply this to their lives. This can apply to all of the firstfruits, whenever and wherever they lived.

It will apply to Israel once they return in the second exodus, once Christ returns and God opens up His Spirit to them. It can be applied, again, to all of the Israelites and Gentiles throughout the whole of the Millennium. They will be going through their own spiritual journey and God will be providing for them too.

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But today we are going to apply this principle to the Israelites and the Gentiles who will rise in the second resurrection because they will have, as the end of Isaiah 65 says, probably about a hundred years of journeying. It will not be across the Sinai desert but it will be a lifetime of walking with God, and they will have to prove themselves, like we have all had to prove ourselves, as faithful in their walk with our Savior.

So we just saw that the whole house of Israel will be raised from their graves, their physical bodies rebuilt, life will be breathed back into them, they will have access to God's Spirit, and they will begin their journey.

Let us go to Isaiah 65, which I just mentioned. We often come here on the Last Great Day.

**Isaiah 65:20** No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.

This tells us that this is a time of judgment, and it kind of indicates that the infant here and the child is someone who accepts God and then he lives a full life and he is not accursed, but he actually receives eternal life. But the sinner, being one hundred years old, shall be accursed and go into the second death. But it is telling us here, parallel to Revelation 20, about the White Throne Judgment period. So what will they do? What will happen during this time? Well, let us read on.

**Isaiah 65:21-24** They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.

It says that in this time they are going to have access to God. He will readily turn to them, hear them, give them what they need. But what we see in verses 21 and 22 is that they are just going to be living their lives like we live our lives.

Now there will be some benefits: They will not have to worry about enemies. It is going

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to be peaceful. There is going to be quite a bit of prosperity that is going on at this time. So they are going to have it pretty good compared to what we have gone through.

We have had to face Satan. They will not have to face Satan. We have had to face a very corrupt world. We have had to face and overcome our own flesh with all of these trials and temptations that make us weak in the way we respond to them. They will not have a lot of that. They certainly will not have Satan and they will not have a corrupt world.

But they will still have to overcome their flesh and prove to God that they are going to follow Him. They are going to have to overcome themselves and their own selfish tendencies. But God will be with them and help them. And this is not just Israel, this is the Gentiles as well. Everyone will have this opportunity.

We will not go to Ezekiel 44, but I just want to remind you about something that is there. In that chapter, God tells us the priests and the Levites that they are going to have to return to their jobs and do it right this time, because they so failed the first time around. And this is kind of the idea for the remainder of the sermon.

I believe that this does not stop with the priests and the Levites—that is just the example. God is going to raise these priests and Levites up and say, “Okay, I’m going to put you back in your courses. I’m going to put you back in your responsibilities. And you’re going to have to do it right this time. You’re going to have to be able to tell the difference between the holy and the profane. You’re going to have to get it right this time since you got it so wrong last time.”

So I believe, just as a general principle, that this time is a time when everybody will be given a chance for a do-over. Do we not like do-overs when we did something wrong, did something badly? This is the time of the do-over. But the do-over is for their entire lives because the entire life before was a failure. And they will be able to see that they did not have all the tools the first time, but this time they will be given the tools and they will be able to make their lives successful.

So the Israelites as a whole will be required to live before God, as they failed to do the first time, as the model nation. Of course, the priests and the Levites will have to serve God in the Temple and do all that they were supposed to do, as they failed to do the first time.

Chapters like Psalm 105 and Psalm 106 will be important teaching tools to show how they totally missed the mark in their perception of God and His intentions and His goals

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the first time around because that is what is pointed out in these psalms. In their rebelliousness and their stubbornness the first time around, they blinded themselves to all the good that God was offering them and they just simply rejected Him. But this time around, they are going to see Him with new eyes, both literally and metaphorically. These psalms look back to God's dealing with Israel.

Let us go back to Psalm 105. In this psalm, we see God faithfully and graciously providing for them and leading them through thick and thin. Let us just read some more of it.

Now this is before they went in to Egypt. But you see God working with Abraham, working with Isaac, working with Jacob, working with Joseph, getting His people to where He wants them to be which is enslavement in Egypt. So you see God, in His sovereign control of matters, bringing them along the path He wants them to go.

**Psalm 105:7-8** He is the Lord our God; His judgments are in all the earth. He has remembered His covenant forever. . .

This is an important point here that we need to understand. God is doing this because He made a covenant, and God keeps His covenant. God never fails in keeping His covenant. If He says He is going to do something, He is going to do it and He will do it in spades. He will do it big time. He just does not keep the letter of the law, He expands that out to the spirit of the law and adds more than what He was actually required under the tenets of the covenant to do. This is what we are supposed to get out of that.

**Psalm 105:8** He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations.

Do you realize how long a thousand generations are? A long time. I do not know if humanity has gone through a thousand generations yet.

**Psalm 105:9-10** The covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel for an everlasting covenant.

He mentions this long period of time. It has gone from a thousand generations, which is hyperbole to get us to understand that it is pretty much forever. And now he says

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exactly that—that it is “an everlasting covenant.”

**Psalm 105:11** Saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance.”

And if we look in the last few chapters of Ezekiel, we will see that they are given certain bits of land forever.

**Psalm 105:12** When they were but few in number, indeed very few, and strangers in it.

He made the covenant with Abraham when it was just Abraham and Sarah, and maybe Lot. But that was just a few.

**Psalm 105:13-19** When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people, He permitted no one to do them wrong; yes, He reproved kings for their sakes, saying, “Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm.” Moreover He called for a famine in the land; He destroyed all the provision of bread. He sent a man before them—Joseph—who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters, he was laid in irons. Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him.

Now ‘the word of the Lord,’ if I understand it correctly, was the dreams that He gave to Joseph. That was the test that Joseph had to pass because he had to be faithful that God would bring that about—all through that period when he was a slave and then in prison. But he faithfully soldiered through.

**Psalm 105:20-25** The king sent and released him, the ruler of the people let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his possessions, to bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his elders wisdom. Israel also came into Egypt, and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham, and He increased His people greatly, and made them stronger than their enemies. He turned their heart to hate His people, to deal craftily with His servants.

In these examples, God is shown faithfully and graciously providing for Israel and

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leading them through whatever situation they came across, through thick and through thin. He fulfilled His promise to bring Israel to the Promised Land. We obviously read that other part earlier. But that is where, if we would go ahead and read it straight through, it ends up—that He took those people all the way to the Promised Land.

Let us think of this in terms of an Israelite popping up in the second resurrection. Let us say he lived in the time of Ahab, one of the Israelite kings. He had a certain view of what had been going on through the years, and so he would look back and he would say, “You know, God worked with Abraham and through Isaac and Jacob, our forefathers, and then He left us. First, Joseph was sold into slavery and then he ended up in prison. And even though it might have worked out for Joseph, all of us ended up following Joseph down into Egypt.”

“And Jacob, he just couldn’t stay away from Joseph. He just loved him so much, he had to come down there, and the whole thing was just ruined: We became slaves in Egypt for hundreds of years and we served them. And then, you know, God brought us out through Moses. But then He made us walk in that desert for forty years, and forefathers died like crazy out there. Some of us came into the Promised Land but we had to fight every step of the way through there. God made the walls of Jericho come down, sure, but then remember what happened at Ai. Oh man, we lost, and they found the guy that was the cause of it. But, man, we lost like thirty guys out of a couple of million. It was bad.”

You can take this on and on. You could see that one living in the time of Ahab might have a slightly distorted view of what God had done for the people.

But it is a wrong perspective about what God did for them. They had a skewed perspective of God because of what they did. They went after the gods of the Zidonians. They went after the gods of the Ammonites. They went after this god and that god and rejected the true God who had done all these wonderful things for them. They forgot very quickly all the wondrous things, all the providential things that God had done for them. Remember, we are talking about this person who lived in the time of Ahab.

But he pops up in the second resurrection and somebody teaches him Psalm 105. It is like saying, “Okay, you were taught by your pagan father and mother in the time of Ahab that the God of Israel really is too hard on you and never really did any good for us, always putting us into problems with our enemies and into slavery and all these other things. But let me show you from Psalm 105 what really happened.”

So we get this listing of all the things that God did, one after another after another, to

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show that contrary to what they were taught back there in the time of Ahab, the God of their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is pretty solid. He did everything that He said He was going to do. He provided every step of the way. He never, at one point at all, contravened His promises or His covenant; He fulfilled everything. He was faithful in every minute promise, law, judgment, statute whatever. He never failed.

So then what was wrong? What was the problem?

**Psalm 105:42-45** For He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant. He brought out His people with joy, His chosen ones with gladness. He gave them the lands of the Gentiles, and they inherited the labor of the nations, that they might observe His statutes and keep His laws. Praise the Lord!.

There we get a pretty good hint of what went wrong. God had the intention of bringing them into a land and giving them all these things, and then saying “Look, I’ve given you all the best of environments to keep My laws, to observe My statutes” which means keep the holy days et cetera—all the things that He had commanded them to do. And guess what? They failed. It was *they* that failed. It was the people that failed.

We could go to Hebrews 8 where it says exactly that. The problem was in the people. It was not in God. The covenant was great, the laws were great, everything that God did was just fantastic and wonderful. But it was the people who were not up to it. They did not have the spirit that would have helped them, and so they failed.

Now the lesson that the person in the Great White Throne Judgment could get from Psalm 105 is that God can be trusted. God can be trusted to do what He says He will do. He is a faithful God. A person who is just learning about Him and His ways, then, can be confident that He will act with the same faithfulness toward him. If He was this way with His people Israel whom He loved so much and gave so much to, He will be the same with others.

In Psalm 106, we see Israel’s almost constant disobedience and faithlessness. Yet God continues to deliver them and show them mercy.

**Psalm 106:6-7** We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; they did not remember the multitude of Your mercies, but rebelled by the sea—the Red Sea.

What you see here—if you think of this in terms of someone in the second resurrection coming up and saying these words in verses 6 and 7—you see a recognition, a confession that Israel’s sins were what the problem was, that God had been faithful all along. But they admit here, whoever says this, that they participated in the same sins as their fathers, that it was not the fathers’ fault, it was their fault too—“We have sinned with our fathers.” It was just like when their fathers sinned, in these examples that he gives, they were right alongside sinning with them in the same ways.

Now the theme of this psalm, however, is what is in verse 1: “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.” This is the same idea that comes out in Psalm 136 where it is repeated as a counterpoint to every declaration that is made: “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for His mercy endures forever,” and then God did this, “For His mercy endures forever,” God did that, “For His mercy endures forever.” That is the understanding that we need to come out of this psalm with, that despite what Israel did in its sins, God was still merciful and did not give them what they deserved because He was working toward a larger goal.

We will pick up where we left off, in verse 8.

**Psalm 106:8-15** Nevertheless [even though they sinned] He saved them for His name’s sake, that He might make His mighty power known. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up; so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. He saved them from the hand of him who hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. The waters covered their enemies; there was not one of them left. Then they believed His words; they sang His praise. They soon forgot His works; they did not wait for His counsel, but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tested God in the desert. And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.

These verses bring out a pattern in the relationship between Israel and God—that God’s merciful acts toward them only had a temporary effect. This is because they did not have the Holy Spirit at the time. They had a kind of ‘What have You done for me lately, God?’ attitude. So their good behavior only lasted until the next time something lured them away, whatever it happened to be. In this case, he was talking about their desire for quail in the desert and He gave them what they lusted after, and it says some of them died with it still between their teeth.

But the psalmist then, from this point on, provides a litany of situations in which they

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provoked God through sin. But God always has mercy despite their sins, their abuse of their privilege, and everything they kept provoking Him causing Him to be angry against them because of their sin and because of their rebellion. We will not read through all of those. We have all heard them time and time again in sermons.

But the psalm winds up with the fact that God's mercy, even though it endures forever, does have its limits, and at a certain point He has to punish for sins. After they had begun sacrificing their sons and daughters to demons, as it says there in verse 37,

**Psalm 106:40-43** Therefore the wrath of the Lord was kindled against His people, so that He abhorred His own inheritance. And He gave them into the hand of the Gentiles, and those who hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. Many times He delivered them; but they rebelled against Him by their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.

Even after they had done such wicked things—in sacrificing their children—He still, after their punishment, gave them mercy and brought them back. And actually it says here that He gave them favor. What a God we serve, who is able to take so much from us and keep His eye on the goal, and allow us to make our mistakes, but then bring us to where He wants us to be! Because He had salvation in mind for His people.

So He saved them and saved them (or delivered them and delivered them) to show that that is what He wanted to do even though they did not seem to want it for themselves. But He kept showing them by His own example that He was going to save them whatever way He could, just like He wants to save everyone.

Let us read Psalm 68. This is so encouraging.

**Psalm 68:19-20** Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, the God of our salvation! Selah. Our God is the God of salvation; and to God the Lord belong escapes [or deliverances] from death.

That is what He wants. He wants, especially, to keep us from that second death. He will deliver and deliver and show mercy and show mercy until we get to that point. He wants us in His Kingdom so badly.

This is the thing that the person coming up in the second resurrection will see when

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someone teaches him Psalm 106, that God is so merciful, and even though He has to punish from time to time because of sin, He has always got His eyes on that goal. He is working, He is providing, He is helping, He is giving grace and mercy to bring us to that place, and we can trust Him. He is not like the potentates of this world who just want to amass power to themselves and will crush anything else that gets in their way. That is not our God. Our God is a God of love.

These psalms are going to teach those people that they have an altogether wrong-headed idea about God, by giving them the examples from His people Israel in the way God dealt with them. And it is going to be shown that He was far kinder than they ever thought He was or that He had the reputation of being.

So, together, these psalms paint a damning picture of Israel's intransigence and rejection of God while God comes out smelling like a rose, perfectly just, giving, merciful, and always working and intervening on their behalf. It shows they were wrong, He was right.

Man, with fallible human nature, is always wrong in the things that matter, no matter when or where he might have lived. On the other hand, God is always right and just and merciful and gracious to man at all times, if they make the covenant with Him and become His people. He is on our side. He is willing to give.

So, in the time of the second resurrection, the whole of humanity will come to realize the sovereignty, the power, but maybe even more importantly the goodness, the graciousness, the holiness, and the eternity of God. And they will turn to Him with joy and gladness at His salvation.

Let us finish then in Psalm 93, another one of these psalms from Book Four. We are going to read the whole thing—it is only five verses—but it kind of puts a capstone on what I am trying to get across here, and that is God is wonderful and, finally, humanity will recognize it.

**Psalm 93:1-5** The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength. Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved. Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, than the mighty waves of the sea. Your testimonies are very sure; holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, forever.