

# Psalm 90

The Psalmist's opening words capture the deep-rooted belief in a God who was, who is and who is to come. 'Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from beginning to end, you are God.' (v2) Not a transient God here today, gone tomorrow.



Skiddaw Range

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## Psalm 90

- <sup>1</sup> Lord, through all the generations you have been our home!
- <sup>2</sup> Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from beginning to end, you are God.
- <sup>3</sup> You turn people back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, you mortals!"
- <sup>4</sup> For you, a thousand years are as a passing day, as brief as a few night hours.
- <sup>5</sup> You sweep people away like dreams that disappear. They are like grass that springs up in the morning.
- <sup>6</sup> In the morning it blooms and flourishes, but by evening it is dry and withered.
- <sup>7</sup> We wither beneath your anger; we are overwhelmed by your fury.
- <sup>8</sup> You spread out our sins before you—our secret sins—and you see them all.
  
- <sup>12</sup> Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom. (NLT)

*Psalm reading for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Advent - Psalm 90 verses 1-8 and 12.*

However, in their songs the Psalmists were not afraid write about the harsh realities of life. Their skills and inspiration were to bring into their songs both reality and hope.

Reading through these words from Psalm 90 after our experiences of the last few years, could be depressing especially when we know of the 'brevity of life' (v12) or when we are reminded of our failings (v7-8) and in the words of verse 6:

'In the morning it blooms and flourishes, but by evening it is dry and withered'.

We have moved from words that affirm the continual presence of God (verses 1-2) to a reminder of our own frailty (verse 3 onwards). A frailty that that is held in the loving arms of Christ. Jesus uses an imagine from the natural world to point to our value.

'What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. 30 And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. 31 So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows. (Matthew 10:29-31 NLT)

It is however good to remember that when we read the Psalms, we read them in the light of our knowledge of Christ.

Returning to Psalm 90, Barbara Mosse writes in her reflection of the Psalm:

*'The canvas is vast, stretching from before the creation to the consummation of all things at the end of time: 'from everlasting to everlasting you are God' (v.2). And within this overarching scheme humanity takes its place, following the same arc from birth to death as the rest of creation.'*

she continues:

*'Despite this apparent futility, however, there is hope and meaning. . . . Despite the brevity of life, we are held by God in our living and our dying, and when we first seek his wisdom, we will know true joy and gladness' (v.12).*

Barbara Mosse, priest, and author Reflections of the Psalms CHP

In our time of prayerful reflection, we will pause with words towards the end of the psalm and not included in the reading for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Advent. While recognising the stark realities of life and not wishing to deny that life can be hard, I wish us to approach this time of reflection with a hopeful heart and with a song on our lips.

## Pause and Reflect

**Slow down, breath calmly and relax.**



We start our time of reflective prayer with Chet Valley Churches to sing Churches to sing Father, Lord of all creation.

 **YouTube** <https://youtu.be/P5fqJaLg3ug>

We continue with verses from the closing words of Psalm 90:

<sup>15</sup> Give us gladness in proportion to our former misery!

Replace the evil years with good.

<sup>16</sup> Let us, your servants, see you work again;

let our children see your glory.

<sup>17</sup> And may the Lord our God show us his approval

and make our efforts successful.

Yes, make our efforts successful!

Slowly read through the Psalm again, is there a word, a sentence that strikes a chord with you? If so, dwell on it a little while.

We join with the Barry Rose Choir of St. Alban's Cathedral to sing 'Lord of All Hopefulness'



<https://youtu.be/b8mti7VL3gg>

When asked about how to pray Jesus gave these simple but profound words, so let them be our prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name;  
Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil. Amen

### Closing Prayer

Almighty God,  
our eternal refuge,  
teach us to live with the knowledge of our death  
and to rejoice in the promise of your glory,  
revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(Prayer from Reflection on the Psalm Digital format available as an app from Aimer Media)

Fr Derek Akker

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(Derek is a retired Anglican Parish Priest and a member of the congregations of All Saints & St James. Prior to his ordination he was accredited as a Methodist Preacher in 1968 and served within the Methodist Church until returning to the Anglican Church in the mid 1980's)

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Parish of Kirklees Valley, Bury, (All Saints, Elton & St James, Woolfold) - In the Diocese of Manchester

**Candles:**

Church of the Holy Sepulchre,  
Jerusalem

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