

PRAYING
AT THE
CROSSROADS

Learning from the Prayers
of Old Testament Leaders

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Welcome to a twelve-week journey through significant prayers of Old Testament leaders. Here's how this Bible study works.

GROUP EXPERIENCE

START. Your group session will most likely begin here with a few questions designed to help you introduce the week's topic of study and encourage everyone to talk. A brief background of the Scripture passage under consideration is also provided.

WATCH. Key statements from the video session are provided so that you can follow along as you listen to the video teaching.

DISCUSS. This section should be the main component of your group time. The questions provided are designed to help facilitate the group study on a selected Old Testament prayer. Your goal during this time is to better understand and apply the teaching of Scripture to your lives.

GROUP PRAYER. Each group session ends with a prayer activity consisting of four prompts designed to facilitate group prayer. The practice of prayer is an essential component of the study, so be sure to allot an adequate amount of time to call out to the Lord in response to Scripture.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

PERSONAL STUDY. Each week provides five devotions that will guide members to examine the text of Scripture more deeply. These personal studies should help participants better understand key Old Testament prayers.

PRAYER. In addition to the devotion, each day features a corresponding prayer exercise that uses the same prompts as the group prayers. The goal of this activity is to immerse group members in the practice of daily, meaningful prayer in response to God's Word.

THE PRAY METHOD

All Christians recognize the importance of prayer, yet many would admit to being unsatisfied with their prayer lives. We've all been there. You start to pray, but then your mind wanders, and before you know it, you've lost focus and can't remember what you're praying about. Using a system for praying can help you focus as you pray and can give you a repeatable pattern to use as you talk with the Lord.

Each group session and personal study relies on the acronym PRAY, a method of prayer that employs common features found in biblical prayers. As this study will demonstrate, the Bible is filled with the prayers of the saints, and we can learn to pray by following the examples in Scripture. PRAY stands for the following components of prayer.

PRAISE

While much our prayer life involves making our requests to God, prayers in the Bible almost always start by praising God for who He is. Worship shouldn't be confined to the musical portion of a Sunday service. It should define our lives and our prayers as well.

REPENT

Recognizing who God is leads us to recognize who we aren't. Seeing God clearly always moves God's people to repentance. Confessing our sins and receiving God's forgiveness and grace builds fellowship with God and renews our spirit as our will is aligned with His will.

APPLY

When we're confronted with biblical truth, we should always seek to apply it. Application happens in prayer as we ask God to make His will effective in our lives in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

YIELD

Biblical revelation calls for a biblical response. The goal of prayer is to yield our lives to God's directions and embrace His direction for our lives.

TIPS FOR LEADING A SMALL GROUP

PRAYERFULLY PREPARE. Pray for each group session beforehand. Ask the Holy Spirit to work through you and the group discussion as you point to Jesus each week through God's Word.

A good small-group experience has the following characteristics.

EVERYONE PARTICIPATES. Encourage everyone to ask questions, share responses, or read aloud.

NO ONE DOMINATES. Be sure your time speaking as a leader takes up less than half your time together as a group. Politely guide discussion if anyone dominates.

DON'T RUSH. Don't feel that a moment of silence is a bad thing. People often need time to think about their responses to questions they've just heard or to gain courage to share what God is stirring in their hearts.

AFFIRM AND FOLLOW UP ON INPUT. Make sure you point out something true or helpful in a response. Don't just move on. Build community with follow-up questions, asking how other people have experienced similar things or how a truth has shaped their understanding of God and the Scripture you're studying.

KEEP GOD'S WORD CENTRAL. Opinions and experiences can be helpful, but God has given us the truth. Trust Scripture to be the authority and God's Spirit to work in people's lives. You can't change anyone, but God can. Continually point people to the Word and to active steps of faith.

KEEP CONNECTING. Encourage group members with thoughts, commitments, or questions from the session by connecting through emails, texts, and social media. Build deeper friendships by planning or spontaneously inviting group members to join you outside your regularly scheduled group time for meals; fun activities; and projects around your home, church, or community. The more people are comfortable with one another and involved in one another's lives, the more they'll look forward to being together.

DEDICATION

If you hadn't known Bill was sick with a serious disease, you probably wouldn't have realized the preacher that morning was suffering with cancer that would slowly take his life. He had shared with me earlier in the week that he felt normal the fourth week of each month, during which he had no chemotherapy treatments. He had scheduled me to preach that morning in December 2017, but he called and asked me to step aside and allow him to return to his pulpit. God had inspired him with a message, and he felt like preaching for the first time in recent weeks.

Bill remarked in that conversation, without complaint or rancor, "Most days following chemo treatments, I have enough energy to get out of bed and walk to the family room, where I collapse into my overstuffed recliner. And I sit there all day until bedtime. But this week I feel that I can preach. I hope you don't mind."

No one knew—not even Bill—that this would be his last message.

Dr. Bill Bowyer stood straight and tall, shoulders square, and spoke with a strong voice to the congregation of Wake Cross Roads Baptist Church, as if nothing were holding him back, as he had done almost every Sunday for two decades. "You might think it odd," he began, "that I've selected for my text during this Christmas season Jonah 2, in which we read Jonah's prayer while inside a large fish." And so he opened what I thought at the time to be the best message I had ever heard my friend preach.

As I listened, drawn into the reluctant prophet's predicament and impassioned prayer, the Holy Spirit jolted me with an idea. This message needed to be communicated beyond the walls of this congregation and community. The truth from this passage must be broadcast to a larger audience. Less than ten minutes into his message, the outline for a Bible study was implanted in my heart. Bill and his lovely wife, Deana, had invited Kathy and me to lunch that day, and over lunch I jotted down a working title and an outline on a napkin. I explained to Bill that the Holy Spirit had inspired me as he preached that morning, and I pitched the possibility that the two of us could collaborate on a Bible study.

We parted that day with a shared commitment to develop the study you hold in your hands. I prayed that this project would provide my friend with a tangible task to focus on during the grueling surgery and recovery ahead. Unfortunately, the cancer would claim his life in early spring before he finished. This study is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Bill Bowyer.

INTRODUCTION

“Are we lost?” my wife asks me as I pull to a stop at an unfamiliar intersection.

“I think we’re good,” I confidently respond as I stare at the crossroads in front of me.

We’ve been here before. What happens next is predictable. She suggests one path based solely on the advice presented by her GPS. She trusts the soft voice coming through the car speakers without reservation. I, on the other hand, am an explorer who relies on his gut to determine his next move. My sense of direction has proved dependable in the past, and I’m committed to my instincts and prior experiences. We’ll wait and see how this works out.

On a frigid night in December many years ago we were frozen at a much different crossroads. Earlier that day we had laid our second child, a stillborn little boy, to rest in a snowy grave. Painful questions filled our minds. Why had this happened? Was this someone’s fault? Would we have enough courage to try again? Answers were nowhere in sight. There was no GPS, and my instincts were paralyzed. As believers in Christ, we clung to each other and to our Savior and prayed.

Our prayers reveal much about our inner life. What aches and pains are we experiencing? What are our greatest joys and deepest sorrows? What major decisions need to be made before we can move forward? The content of our prayers tells us about the influence of success and failure in our lives and the impact of danger or insecurity. Prayers also allow us the opportunity to peer into the well of our deepest convictions. What do we celebrate about who God is, and to what extent are we willing to trust our Creator?

So it is with the moving prayers recorded in Scripture from the hearts of God’s servants in the Old Testament. The authors of this study invite you to walk the paths of some of the amazing men and women the Lord used in His plan for humankind in preparation for the coming Messiah. As you study these Old Testament passages, we hope you’ll do the following.

1. Deeply consider how each prayer connects to your ministry and your personal challenges. Make mental notes about each prayer for future applications. Perhaps God will use this study in special ways to prepare you for His glory through upcoming events in your life.
2. Elaborate your understanding as you read and meditate. That is, put the truth from God’s Word into your own words, being careful to maintain the precise meaning of the passage and prayer. As you express biblical truth in your own words, it becomes part of who you are and your everyday communication.

3. Discover the patterns of adoration and supplication that are unique to each prayer. As you learn from these powerful prayers, you can speak to God from fresh perspectives and meditate on His glory in new ways.
4. Expect the Holy Spirit to work in and through your prayer life to change you and strengthen your walk of discipleship. How does He want you to change not only the substance of your prayers but also the thoughts and actions of your daily life?
5. Look for leadership insights from each prayer and ask the Lord to strengthen your perspectives and skills for future ministry. Following some prayers in this study, the leaders moved boldly; following some, the leaders rejoiced greatly; and after some, they simply watched patiently as God acted mightily.
6. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of your church family in light of the context of each prayer. How might the Lord bring about revival and renewal in your congregation as a result of this study?

Questions related to these six challenges appear in each week's study. We hope you'll respond to these interludes in each day's study by reflecting on new ideas, recording your plans for change, and discussing points of application with other group members. In addition, we wanted to review with our readers the way each leader and each prayer blends into the larger historical narrative of the Old Testament. We hope these snapshots will increase your understanding of each scene in God's drama.

Are you lost? Perhaps you can benefit from the training U.S. Marines receive in preparation for marching through uncharted forests or jungle terrain. Marines are taught to find high ground or climb a tree in order to visualize a fixed spot in the direction of their destination. Using a compass, the marine takes a compass reading (his azimuth) that corresponds to the specific point he should travel. Once he's back on the trail, that compass heading helps him arrive at his desired destination, despite the fact that he couldn't see it during his journey.

Isn't prayer a lot like shooting an azimuth? Throughout each day, when we're uncertain about where we're headed, we talk to the Lord and read Scripture to get our bearings and make sure we're on the right path. We believe the Lord will use this study in your life to provide guidance for your spiritual journey.

WEEK 1

The Prayer of Moses

START

Welcome to group session 1 of *Praying at the Crossroads*.

Use the following questions to begin the session.

Have you ever wondered why people live in sin for decades or why people suffer for prolonged periods of time?

Does suffering make you doubt God's goodness? Does it make you wonder when God will act on behalf of the righteous?

In what circumstances have you asked questions like the previous ones?

Few people would deny that we live in a sinful world. You're not alone in asking some of the foregoing questions.

Moses also had such thoughts. God had used him to deliver a generation of Israelites from slavery in Egypt and through the wilderness until they were at the point of inheriting the promised land. Despite being witnesses to God's salvation, the wilderness generation struggled with sin and rebellion. They tested God and grumbled in spite of His goodness. They practiced sexual immorality and worshiped false idols. Seeing their sin, God was angry. Their acts were so detestable that He promised that the whole generation would die in the wilderness, never reaching their destination, never entering the land (see Num. 14:23; 26:65). Facing the prospect of death, Moses wrote the psalm we know today as Psalm 90, which acknowledged God's anger and prayed for mercy and restoration.¹ Though the first generation would perish, Moses prayed that the covenant God would permit his future offspring to see better days.

These events are no less relevant for Christians today. Paul said the wilderness tradition was recorded "for our instruction, on whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Cor. 10:11). We too are in a sinful wilderness, for we live in an age characterized by sin, oppression, and rebellion against God. Our hope, like that of Moses, is that God will deliver us to a place of permanent flourishing.

WATCH

Use these statements to follow along as you watch video session 1.

God is the eternal Creator God.

God is eternal, yet man is mortal.

Moses confessed that the Israelites had sinned against the eternal God of the universe.

Moses prayed for deliverance that comes about only by crying out to the covenant faithfulness of God.

When Moses looked at the land of blessing, he saw beyond that land to a better land that was to come.

Moses prayed for blessing, a time of flourishing for God's people.

We, like the Israelites, are also in a wilderness.

Because of faith in Christ, we have the same hope Moses had: that we will be those successive generations that will experience long life in a new creation, in a better land of blessing that's promised to God's people.

Application from Moses' Prayer

1. The same God who created us will one day deliver us.
2. We should examine ourselves as we suffer and wait.
3. Encourage others.
4. Know that we are not alone; God is with us.

DISCUSS

Use the following questions to discuss the video teaching.

Read Psalm 90.

How long had the Israelites suffered under God's wrath? How might they have felt while living under prolonged judgment?

What did Moses request God to do on behalf of His people?

In Psalm 90 Moses wrote a prayer to God while suffering in the wilderness. The Israelites had sinned against the Creator God, making Him angry and bringing His wrath on themselves. Acknowledging the brevity of human life, Moses prayed that God would deliver His people from distress. His hope, however, wasn't for salvation into a spiritual realm of bliss. In view of the biblical story line, he anticipated that God would deliver His people from the wilderness into a land of flourishing, a land that has now been expanded to include the entire re-created cosmos over which the Messiah will reign (see Ps. 2; Isa. 65–66; Dan. 7–8; Rev. 21–22).

Why should you pray, like Moses, that God will save you from your present suffering and difficulties?

Based on Moses' prayer, what confidence should you have in asking God to deliver you into a renewed world where suffering will no longer exist?

As someone who hoped in God, Moses was a child of Abraham. In Galatians 3 Paul tells us that people who have faith in Christ are also sons and daughters of Abraham and heirs of the promises. Thus, because we have the same hope as Moses, let's fix our eyes on the blessed Savior who will deliver us from the present world of sin and lead us into an eternal place of blessing. Until then we're to persevere in our faith, enduring trials, difficulties, and suffering at the hands of the unrighteous, knowing that Jesus will return to deliver us and renew His good creation. We long for this. We persevere for this.

Why should our prayers include hope for the day when we'll be in a place where we'll experience peace and comfort in the presence of Christ, our King?

PRAYING AT THE CROSSROADS

God saw Israel's suffering, and He sees yours too. Whatever you're going through, God sees your pain. He sees your trials. Night won't last forever. Morning will come soon—and permanently.

How should we pray when we don't feel that God sees our pain and hardship?

One struggle this side of heaven is the one that comes from extended suffering we feel God isn't addressing. It's one thing to know God sees our suffering; it's another to believe He will do something about it. In those moments, like Moses, let's fix our eyes on what's to come, knowing that soon all will be as it should be. When Jesus returns, we'll no longer hurt, no longer mourn, no longer suffer under oppression. Instead, His people will be blessed all of their days. This is the lasting state for which Isaiah longed when he wrote:

Those who trust in the LORD
will renew their strength;
they will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not become weary,
they will walk and not faint.

ISAIAH 40:31

Just hold on a bit longer. Your God will soon make all things right.

How does fixing our eyes on our future hope help us grasp that our trials are temporary?

Why is it important for us to realize that a renewed world of blessing awaits us that won't be corrupted by the curse of sin, pain, and death?

GROUP PRAYER

Use the following PRAY framework to pray together as a group.

In light of what we've studied today, pray together as a group, using the following prompts to guide your experience together. You'll repeat this exercise at the end of each day's personal study. Use the biblical prayer we studied to guide your own. Read each prompt aloud and encourage group members to lift up prayers based on these prompts silently or aloud, depending on their comfort level.

PRAISE *God for who He is and what He has done.*

God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the One who sustained Israel in the wilderness. Praise Him for sustaining you in the present age.

REPENT *of unconfessed sins and accept Christ's forgiveness.*

Israel egregiously sinned in the wilderness, bringing God's wrath on themselves. We must recognize that we too have sinned against God. Repent of any sin and look to Jesus, God's Son, for forgiveness.

APPLY *the truths you've learned by committing to action.*

Moses prayed for God to have mercy on His people. Perhaps you're reaping the results of unrepented sin, even secret sin (see Ps. 90:8). Commit to repent of sin and look to the cross for forgiveness. The blood of God's Son is sufficient to make your sins "as white as snow" (Isa. 1:18).

YIELD *your life to God's will and kind providence.*

Moses not only dealt with his personal sin but also confronted others with their sin. In Exodus 32, for example, he confronted Aaron for his role in enabling the children of Israel to worship a golden calf. If a Christian in your life, such as a friend, family member, or church member, is living in open, unrepented sin, prayerfully consider confronting them, knowing a little pain now may lead to their repentance and restoration (see Matt. 18; 1 Cor. 5).

Close by praying for specific requests that arose during the session.

DAY 1

CONFIDENCE IN THE ETERNAL GOD

Read Psalm 90:1-2.

Moses began the psalm by asserting that God had been the “refuge” of every Israelite (v. 1). In other words, God had been the nation’s source of protection and safety from their enemies (see Deut. 33:27; Ps. 71:3).² Though true for every generation, the assurance of God’s care would have been especially meaningful to the Israelites as they wandered in the desert. With no land of their own, no fortress or place to hide, Moses’ words would have sounded a note of hope amid suffering.

Moses’ hope for refuge was in the eternal God (see Ps. 90:2). No one created God. No one gave Him shape. No one gave Him life. God created the world—humans, plants, animals, stars, absolutely everything. We find this truth succinctly summarized in Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

In view of His eternity, it’s incredible that God chose to be Israel’s refuge. He delivered His people from slavery in Egypt and was now leading them through the wilderness. The Israelites should have had no doubts about God’s goodness and no fears about their future. Their trust should have been in the Lord, for He had promised to guide them to the land sworn to Abraham and his descendants (see Gen. 12; 15; 17).

Our hope, like that of the Israelites, is in the eternal God. Though we’re sojourners, God sent Jesus Christ to deliver us from the present sinful age (see Gal. 4:4). He created us, and He will restore us to a place of rest (see Rev. 21–22). No matter what hardship we struggle with, no matter how desperate circumstances seem, we should never lose hope. Our God made us, and He will see to it that we arrive at our eternal dwelling place.

PRAYER

*Enter this time with your Bible and your heart open.
Based on the truths of Scripture, answer the following
questions and let them lead you to a time of prayer.*

PRAISE

God saves people who've trusted in Jesus' death and resurrection in their place for their sins. If you've placed your confidence in Christ, are you praising God for delivering you from sin? Are you praising Him for promising to bring you into an eternal place of blessing?

REPENT

Israel had seen God's saving hand but still doubted His goodness. When do you also doubt God's goodness? Do you trust that your future is in the hands of the Creator God?

APPLY

How intentional are you to repent for not trusting God? Do you take time daily to confess all of the ways you haven't trusted Him? What steps are you taking to trust that the same God who created and saved you is worthy of your confidence?

YIELD

Israel was faced with a choice to trust God. Will you trust Him?

*In light of Scripture and based on your responses,
quiet yourself before the Lord and spend a few moments in prayer.*

DAY 2

GOD'S ETERNITY AND HUMANITY'S TEMPORALITY

Read Psalm 90:3-6.

In this passage Moses' prayer transitioned from affirming God's eternity to confessing humanity's temporality. Scholar and commentator Allen Ross notes the contrast between the previous and current passages: "God outlasts the most enduring things in creation (v. 2), but humans return to dust (v. 3)."³ This contrast is further evidenced in the direct link between Moses' words in verse 3 ("Return, descendants of Adam") and God's words in Genesis 3:19 ("You are dust, and you will return to dust").⁴ Indeed, humankind is nothing in comparison to the eternal God. He raised Adam from the dust, and He will return his descendants to the dust.

Psalm 90 reminds us that God won't allow humankind to continue in flagrant sin. We're on the earth for a brief time. Moses clarified this point when he said:

A thousand years
are like yesterday that passes by,
like a few hours of the night.

PSALM 90:4

Moses meant that what seems like forever "is nothing to someone who is eternal."⁵ In comparison to God, "human life is so brief that it's almost insignificant."⁶ Like Moses' wilderness generation, all flesh will perish.

Death, however, comes not just for the unrighteous. Commenting on the extended simile in verses 5-6, Ross insightfully contends that "humans may flourish for a time, a brief time, but in the end their life is ended and they wither away."⁷ We should all consider our brief lives, not just those of the wicked. One day, like the wilderness generation, our bodies will wither and die, and we'll stand before God, called to give an account for our sins. Moses addressed the implications of this prospect in the next portion of the psalm.

PRAYER

*Enter this time with your Bible and your heart open.
Based on the truths of Scripture, answer the following
questions and let them lead you to a time of prayer.*

PRAISE

Psalm 90 reminds us of our frailty. When have you thanked the eternal God that He has chosen to care for such a feeble creature as you?

REPENT

What changes about your perspective when you take time to consider that your days are numbered? Have you considered that the only reason you have breath and substance is that God has chosen to sustain you? Do you realize that if you've trusted in Christ, the same God who sustains you now will also do so in eternity?

APPLY

What will it take for you to come to grips with your frailty and thank God for His care for you? What changes when you understand that God has chosen to save weak people who realize their need for a Savior?

YIELD

Israel had the choice to depend on God for salvation in the wilderness. We also have a similar choice to make. Will you trust that your only hope in the present and in the future is the salvation that comes through the God who sent His Son to die on a cross and rise from the grave in your place for your sins?

*In light of Scripture and based on your responses,
quiet yourself before the Lord and spend a few moments in prayer.*

DAY 3

GOD'S WRATH TOWARD SINNERS

Read Psalm 90:7-12.

While wandering in the wilderness, Moses was an eyewitness to Israel's rebellion. Events such as the golden calf (see Ex. 32) and grumbling for food and water (see Ex. 16-17) were just the tip of the iceberg; there were others (see Num. 14), even events not recorded in the Pentateuch. Because of such wickedness, Moses acknowledged in Psalm 90 that God was angry with His people and that they, in turn, were "terrified" by His "wrath" (v. 7). There was nowhere to escape from God. Not even their "secret sins" went unnoticed, for all of their iniquities were evident "in the light" of God's "presence" (v. 8).

Like the wilderness generation, we all deserve God's wrath. David rightly acknowledged that "there is no one who does good" (Ps. 14:1; 53:1; see Rom. 3:12). Let's not fool ourselves. Let's stop pointing a finger at the person in the courtroom giving an account for his sins on live television. Certainly he deserves his day of reckoning, but we must understand that we'll all stand before the Judge of the universe (see Rev. 20:11-15). He knows we too are guilty, committing the same sins for which we judge others. Paul affirmed:

Every one of you who judges is without excuse.
For when you judge another, you condemn yourself,
since you, the judge, do the same things.

ROMANS 2:1

Surely we stand condemned, just like the criminal on television. God's righteous anger burns against us. What are we to do?

Our desperation is even more evident when we consider the brevity of human life. Moses claimed that even people who live long lives of seventy or eighty years "pass quickly" and "fly away" (Ps. 90:10). Simply put, human life is like a flashing light in comparison to the eternal God. Do we understand that we'll give an account—all of us, not just rapists and murderers? Do we understand that we'll soon face God, whose wrath burns because of our iniquity?

PRAYER

*Enter this time with your Bible and your heart open.
Based on the truths of Scripture, answer the following
questions and let them lead you to a time of prayer.*

PRAISE

God sees our sin. Do you praise God for not striking you down, as He did the Israelites in the wilderness for their iniquity against Him? Do you thank God because the events in the wilderness “were written for our instruction” (1 Cor. 10:11) so that we can turn to Jesus and live?

REPENT

One day you’ll stand before Jesus (see Rev. 20:11-15). How are you like the sinful Israelites who needed to repent? Do you know you’ll be able to stand before Jesus and declared righteous only if you’ve trusted that on the cross He paid the penalty for your sins (see Rom. 3; 1 Cor. 15)?

APPLY

If you’ve never come to grips with your sins, even those concealed in private, consider that God sees what you do; He knows what lies in your heart. Have you considered that you won’t be able to justify such sins before Him? Have you considered repenting and trusting in Jesus?

YIELD

The Israelites had the opportunity to repent and trust in God, but they didn’t, dying in the wilderness. What do you need to learn from their mistakes? Will you repent and live?

*In light of Scripture and based on your responses,
quiet yourself before the Lord and spend a few moments in prayer.*

DAY 4

LONGING FOR GOD'S SALVATION

Read Psalm 90:13-14.

Moses began these verses with a question: “How long” would God be angry with His people? He then prayed, “Turn and have compassion on your servants” (v. 13). The request for God to turn was a prayer to restore His compassion and mercy to the Israelites.⁸

Moses petitioned for Israel to experience a new season of mercy and compassion by appealing to God’s “faithful love” embodied in His covenant with Abraham, which promised to give His people a land where they would experience rest (v. 14; see Gen. 12; 15; 17). Though the Israelites were distressed, God’s covenant with Abraham gave them hope of living in a land of blessing. Moses’ appeal to God’s covenant faithfulness was meant to move the Lord to deliver His people from the wilderness and into the promised place of blessing, where they would dwell forever.

The Scriptures record that Moses died without leading the people into the land. Joshua eventually led them into Canaan, yet because of their sin, God later exiled them from the land (see 1 Sam.–2 Chron.). The hope for a promised land, however, wasn’t lost, for the prophets anticipated the inheritance of a re-created world (see Ezek. 36–37; Isa. 40–66), fulfilling God’s promises to Abraham.

Even though Moses never entered the promised land, he died satisfied, for God allowed him to see the land the Israelites would one day possess (see Num. 27:12). Moses, however, had a large enough vision to see beyond the land, knowing it was only a type of the renewed world in which God’s people would dwell. After all, God had promised His people, “I will give your offspring all these lands, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring” (Gen. 26:4). God’s promise always had cosmic proportions. Canaan was only a type of the better land. So when Moses saw the land, he looked beyond it, envisioning the better promised land God’s people would inherit. Then he could die a happy man.

Unless Jesus returns soon, we’ll all die in the present wilderness of sin and death. Our goal is to anticipate the renewed world God has promised to the faithful descendants of Abraham, the place where Moses’ eyes truly gazed (see Rom. 4; 8; Gal. 3; Rev. 21–22).

PRAYER

*Enter this time with your Bible and your heart open.
Based on the truths of Scripture, answer the following
questions and let them lead you to a time of prayer.*

PRAISE

God could have chosen to leave us in our present sinful wilderness. If you've trusted in the death and resurrection of Christ, why should you regularly thank Him for saving you? If you haven't trusted in Christ, why not trust Him today?

REPENT

In what or whom are you trusting to deliver you from your circumstances?

APPLY

What will it take for you to look only to Christ for salvation?

YIELD

After reading Psalm 90, do you know that you have the same hope as Moses: the hope of deliverance through Christ into a renewed creation?

*In light of Scripture and based on your responses,
quiet yourself before the Lord and spend a few moments in prayer.*

DAY 5

GOD'S SALVATION WILL COME

Read Psalm 90:15-17.

Although Moses saw the blessed land that awaits God's people, we must concede that it's hard to gaze into future blessing when you're stuck in present hardship. The Israelites had firsthand knowledge of this experience, for their adversity in the wilderness had lasted for what may have seemed like an eternity. So when Moses requested that God make His people "rejoice for as many days as you have humbled us, for as many years as we have seen adversity" (v. 15), he was asking God to grant His people rejoicing in a measure equal to their sorrow.

Adversity has a knack for slowing down time, making us think we'll perpetually suffer. For example, people who struggle with depression can describe prolonged periods of darkness, longing for the light of morning. Although I can't prove that Moses was depressed, I can affirm that he knew darkness. He knew pain. From his protracted anguish he prayed to God, longing for a time of flourishing.

Moses also prayed for "the favor of the Lord" and to see God "establish ... the work of our hands" (v. 17). Moses' petition was "an appeal to God to enable them [Israel] to have a productive life, a life that has value."⁹ Moses' appeal was firmly grounded in the promises of the Abrahamic covenant in the Genesis narrative, where God promised that His people would live in a land of permanent blessing. Isaiah called this place the new heavens and earth, where God's "chosen ones will fully enjoy the work of their hands" (Isa. 65:22), where Israel "will not labor without success or bear children destined for disaster, for they will be a people blessed by the LORD along with their descendants" (v. 23). Once again, this is the place Moses saw when he looked beyond Canaan.

If believers continue to hope in Christ, we'll see in person what Moses saw from a distance. In that place we'll be delivered from our suffering; oppressors will be crushed, and the meek will be lifted up (see Ps. 37; Matt. 5:5). Is that what your heart yearns for? Is that what your soul longs to experience? This is what awaits you as a Christian: your eternal home, where you'll find rest in the arms of Jesus.

PRAYER

*Enter this time with your Bible and your heart open.
Based on the truths of Scripture, answer the following
questions and let them lead you to a time of prayer.*

PRAISE

Are you enduring what seems like an endless period of darkness? Are you experiencing a prolonged period of pain? Praise God, who will one day deliver you from all struggles.

REPENT

Why do you focus on your struggles? Why might God want something better for you?

APPLY

Didn't Moses look forward to what awaited God's people? Why not, then, look forward to the renewed world of blessing that awaits you?

YIELD

Who are some people in your life who need to be told or reminded about the blessed creation reserved for the followers of Christ? Why not comfort them with this truth?

*In light of Scripture and based on your responses,
quiet yourself before the Lord and spend a few moments in prayer.*
