

Psalm 88

"A Psalm of Distress and Despondency"

A Psalm of the sons of Korah.
A Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.

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A1 THE CRY TO GOD 88:1-2

B1 The Address: O Yahweh, God of my salvation, 88:1

B2 The Statement of Previous Contacts with God: I have cried out by day and in the night before You. 88:1

B3 The Request for Present Divine Audience: Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry! 88:2

A2 THE EMOTIONAL LISTING OF REASONS FOR PRESENT DISTRESS 88:3-9a

B1 Multiplied Troubles: For my soul has had enough troubles,

B2 Nearness to Death 88:3-4

C1 And my life has drawn near to Sheol. 88:3

C2 I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit; 88:4

B3 Physical Exhaustion: I have become like a man without strength, 88:4

B4 Forsaken by Humans 88:5

C1 Forsaken among the dead,

C2 Like the slain who lie in the grave,

B5 Forgotten by God! 88:5

C1 Whom You remember no more,

C2 And they are cut off from Your hand.

B6 Imprisoned in the Depths 88:6

C1 You have put me in the lowest pit,

C2 In dark places, in the depths.

B7 Suffering from God's Wrath and Afflictions 88:7

- C1 Your wrath has rested upon me,
- C2 And You have afflicted me with all Your waves. Selah.

B8 Deserted by Friends 88:8

- C1 Abandoned: You have removed my acquaintances far from me;
- C2 Abhorrent: You have made me an object of loathing to them;
- C3 Confined: I am shut up and cannot go out.

B9 Exhausted from Weeping: My eye has wasted away because of affliction; 88:9a

A3 LOGICAL ARGUMENTS TO GOD AGAINST HIS DEATH 88:9b-12

B1 His Continual Prayer to God 88:9b

- C1 I have called upon You every day, O Lord;
- C2 I have spread out my hand to You.

B2 The Impossibility of Praise Issuing from the Grave 88:10-12

- C1 The impossibility of his benefiting from miracles in the grave 88:10
 - D1 Will You perform wonders for the dead?
 - D2 Will the departed spirits rise *and* praise You? Selah.
- C2 The impossibility of God exhibiting His loyal love and faithfulness in the grave 88:11
 - D1 Will Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave,
 - D2 Your faithfulness in Abaddon?
- C3 The impossibility of God's working in the forgotten underworld 88:12
 - D1 Will Your wonders be made known in the darkness?
 - D2 And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

A4 HIS COMPLAINT TO GOD ABOUT UNFAIR AND UNBEARABLE TREATMENT 88:13-18

B1 His Constant Prayer 88:13

- C1 But I, O Lord, have cried out to You for help,
- C2 And in the morning my prayer comes before You.

B2 His Agony over God's Neglecting Him 88:14

C1 O Lord, why do You reject my soul?

C2 *Why* do You hide Your face from me?

B3 His Affliction by God All His Life 88:15

C1 I was afflicted and about to die from my youth on;

C2 I suffer Your terrors; I am overcome.

B4 His Having Been Scarred by God's Burning Anger: Your burning anger has passed over me; 88:16a

B5 His Having Been Overwhelmed by Terrors from God 88:16b-17

C1 Your terrors have destroyed me. 88:16b

C2 They have surrounded me like water all day long 88:17

C3 They have encompassed me altogether

B6 God's Having Taken Away His Friends 88:18

C1 You have removed lover and friend far from me;

C2 My acquaintances are *in* darkness.

A5 Comments on the Psalm.

B1 There is not a more plaintive psalm in the entire psalter.

B2 If ever you were down in the dumps and needed Scripture with which you could empathize, this is the psalm!

B3 Learn a good lesson: When in the deepest imaginable personal distress, and thinking that God is unfair, that He has forgotten you, and that you are in danger of dying, remember that Heman turned to the Lord in prayer. Even when you think God has forgotten and is unfair, TALK TO HIM ANYWAY!

EXPANDED ANALYSIS OF PSALM 88

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