

Psalm 89:1-4, 14-18 NIV (A Psalm of Ethan the Ezrahite)

¹I will sing of Yahweh's great love for ever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. ²I will declare that your love stands firm for ever, that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.

³You said, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, ⁴"I will establish your line for ever and make your throne firm through all generations.'"^[c]

¹⁴Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. ¹⁵Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, YAHWEH. ¹⁶They rejoice in your name all day long; they celebrate your righteousness. ¹⁷For you are their glory and strength, and by your favour you exalt our horn. ¹⁸Indeed, our shield^[e] belongs to Yahweh, our king to the Holy One of Israel.

Q.1. What inspires Ethan in vv.1-2? What might it be referring to? How does he express it?

Q.2. How does Ethan define God's love in these verses?

Q.3. How might God's love and faithfulness overlap in meaning?

Q.4. What is a covenant v.3? see Gen 6:18; 9:9-11; 15:18; Ex.2:24; 6:4 Deut 4:13; Josh 23:16; 2 Sam7:28; Jere 31:31; 1 Cor 11:23-25.

Q.5. Vv.3-4 refer to 2 Samuel 7:1-3, 11b-16, 28 (read). What is the covenant God made with king David? How is this part of what Ethan is celebrating in vv.1-2?

Q.6. Why would vv.3-4 have a big influence on how the early followers of Jesus understood who he is?

Q.7. How should we explain God's righteousness v.14? see Rom 1:16-17; 3:21-25

Q.8. In V.15 the blessed person is someone who does what?

Q.9. What does Ethan mean by 'rejoice in your name all day long' v.16?

Q.10. How should we celebrate God's righteousness v.16?

Q.11. In vv.17-18 Ethan speaks of a 'horn' 'shield' & 'king' whom God will exult, favour and be with. Who would Ethan expect this to be and who do we know it was?

Application: for reflection, prayer and action

Q.12. Have you found God's love and faithfulness to be with your family 'through all generations' c.f. v.1?

Q.13. What blessings are yours because of God's new covenant?

Q.14. Is there a 'justice' issues you are particularly concerned about that you would want God's intervention .c.f. v.14

Psalm 89:1-4, 14-18 (my suggested answers)

NB. Please answer the questions yourself. We all have different ways of answering; God may give you greater insights than mine. Put '*John thinks*' ... before each answer.

Q.1. Ethan is inspired by God's love and faithfulness. These were shown in the rescue of Israel from slavery in Egypt along with the capture of the Promised Land, the defeat of Goliath by David etc. Ethan expresses his gratitude in celebration in song and proclamation of God's attributes.

Q.2. Ethan defines God's love by adding parallels such as 'faithfulness', 'righteousness', 'justice' – i.e. how God acts in history.

Q.3. Love and faithfulness are active and relational ideas. God interacts with us in love which is ongoing and loyal = faithfulness.

Q.4. A covenant is a formal agreement or contract. Both parties commit to the stipulations of the agreement. With God, he makes covenant-promises (e.g. Abraham Gen 15:18) and expects agreement and faithfulness.

Q.5. God's covenant with David is about a his offspring being king of Israel for ever.

Q.6. Vv.3-4 were among similar verses that led early Christians to see Jesus as the king of Israel and hence, the fulfilment of OT promises and themes.

Q.7. God's righteousness is his saving faithfulness and his covenant love. As Paul says in Romans, God's righteousness is revealed in the Gospel, i.e. Jesus' death and resurrection are explained as the way God saves people who have faith.

Q.8. The blessed person is someone who publicly acclaim God and walks in the light of his presence = as if God was there walking alongside.

Q.9. We should rejoice in the Lord always (says Paul in Phil 4:4f) I.e. lives with gratitude and contentment with God's oversight of life.

Q.10. God's righteousness can be celebrated in many ways – in song, in praise, in prayer & worship, in love and adoration and best with others.

Q.11. Ethan would expect this to be one of David's offspring – probably the coming Messiah. We know it to be Messiah Jesus.

Q.12. your own answer

Q.13. All the blessings Jesus won for us – forgiveness of sins, redemption/salvation, reconciliation with God, eternal life and a firm hope.

Q.14. your own answer.