

The End In Sight

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn back to the chapter we read. We've got Sam in Samayah 4 and we're here at the last few verses of our Sam. We've finally come to a conclusion of our short study in Samayah 4 and tonight we're looking at verses 8 down to verse 12. We ended with verse 8 last week but verse 8 and verse 9, there's an argument to whether we go together or not, whether that sale ash should be. So we'll take verse 8 and 9 together, verses 8 down to verse 12.

There's always a few thoughts to give us, keep us going and take away a few thoughts tonight and look yourself at this passage and study for yourself together and I will look at it in a brief way but take time even this evening if you can just to study these verses and see if we'll wonder what these verses, what God is saying to us in them. It's at this point when we come near the end of the Sam in verses 9 and verses 10 and we go down to verse 12.

There's one thing we notice or perhaps we don't notice is that Samus doesn't really seem to reach where he's going. He's talking about it, he's getting his way there but at no point does he say, Lord I've reached your place, I've reached a temple, I've reached a place I'm going to. The Sam ends and we're still going along this journey as it were and of course that is true. This Sam ends and we are all still carrying on our journey. This Sam ends doesn't mean the reality of what it's talking about ends for us. We just keep carrying on, keep progressing through our walk, keep progressing through our own journey.

With that in mind we come to look at verses 8 and 9 and we've discussed a length already, the name of God given here in verse 8, Lord of hosts. We saw it before again and again for the last few weeks. This idea of God, the God of the armies, the God of the armies of heaven, the God who is over in charge of these things. But here he puts two things together again. It's Lord God, it's Yahweh God. He uses Yahweh again, the covenant personal name we saw in Micah the last few weeks. He's calling God personal Yahweh, personal God, God of hosts. Lord, God of hosts, Yahweh, God of hosts. Verse 8 is important for us to understand verse 8. He's bringing together the two aspects here of the God we worship.

But just now as we are praying to God publicly and praying to God privately, as we pray to God each and every day, as we cry out to our God, we are crying out to who? We are crying out to the God of the armies. We trust that God is able to hear us, God is able to answer us. God is able to do what God does because he is the all powerful God of the armies.

[3 : 1 1] But with that he is also Lord, he's also Yahweh. He's not just the God of the armies, he's not just power and strength and might. He is the personal God, the close God, our own God, the God who calls us his people. He is the covenant God, he is the God who takes care of us as individuals who calls us his people but also is the God of all power. Because these two things are true, then the Sammists can say, hear my prayer, give ear to God of Jacob, God of Jacob, and ever reminder as to the personal, enduring covenantal nature of God. The Sammists can pray and know that God hears them because God is God. There's a R.C. Sproul. Sproul passed away a few years ago. His famous, many famous quotes, as many famous quotes is, everyone's a Calvinist when they pray to God. In other words, when we pray for loved ones to be saved, we pray for God to intervene in our lives, we pray for

God to be present, we're trusting that God is totally sovereign, that God is a God of the armies, that God is in full control, we pray for our loved ones to be saved, we pray for our family to be saved, we pray for our own situations, whatever we are going through or to go through. We trust that prayer to the Lord of hosts, to the God of the armies, to the God of all power. For the same time, we pray as the Sammists here, to Yahweh, we're praying to the God who knows us, the God who calls us his people, the God of Jacob, the God who endures generations of sinful people but yet still never leaves them or forsakes them. That's the God we're praying to, that's the God the Sammists pray to, that's the God we pray to, every time we pray. A God who knows us and a God who is powerful and able to answer our prayers. I no wonder, there's a point of pause here at the end of our straight.

So half the commentators are split, some commentators say the Asala is at verse eight, I would say Asala is at verse nine but at the end of verse eight, what a good time to pause if you are singing this or thinking about this. God hear my prayer and who are you, you are the God of hosts, who are you, you are the God of Jacob. And we should, that should give us pause, that should stop us in our tracks as we think of it, the majesty and the glory and the wonder of our God but also our God who hears our prayers, who cares for our prayers, the God who actually cares for what his people are saying to him. So he opens up a section by praying to God, by crying out to God. And then this strange turn of phrase in verse nine, he's looking to verse nine, where the Sammists declares to God, he cries out to God, behold our shield, O God, look on the face of your anointed, behold our shield O God, look on the face of your anointed. As the people walked to the temple, as the people went together to worship God in the ceremonies they performed, who led the people, who was in front of the people, who led the way in a real physical sense, who was out first, who entered this place first, it was the king, it was the king. The king would go first and he would enter the place, he would go first and he would go through the journey as it were in front of his people and lead them to worship God. The king, of course we know in scripture, he was the political leader of Israel, he was in charge of the affairs of Israel, but we also know when we see again and again, even life of David, for example, the king was also God's representative as it were to his people. He was a reminder to his people that there is a greater king who we all serve. The king would lead his people in their worship.

And in this verse the psalmist is saying to God, look at the king, behold our king, look at our representative as he goes before us, look at him, we are all behind him, walking behind him, don't look at us, we are here, we are tired, we are faltering, we have had a long journey, we are pretty rough looking to say the least, we are knackered, we are first to ignore us, look to the king, here he is, all his finery, he goes before us, he's all decked out in all the robes, in all of the gold, in all his wonder, all his glory, look at him, look at him, ignore us behind him, focus your attention on him, he represents us as he goes before us. Behold our shield, and what a description of the king, here he is almost shielding the people, in the strength he has a shield, in the sense that here represents the power and the safety they have. There's also more here, the phrase, the strange phrase, behold our shield, the sense is, in the sense we get a wee bit here in the English, that he is doing shielding at that time, behold our shield, behold our protector, yes, but also look at him, he is shielding us, shielding us from what, from the gaze of God. When God looks at this people going up to the temple, what does he see, he sees the king, what does he not see, he doesn't see the bedraggled poor souls dragging on behind him. Even more than that, what do we see at the end of verse 9, behold the king, behold the shield, look on the face of who, this is where we all become Hebrew scholars, it's a word we all know, the word here is a word quite simply, look on the face of your Messiah, it's a word used here, look on the face of your anointed one, and that should again, there should be a silver sail laugh at us right now here, the Samus is saying, ignore us and instead look on the face of your anointed one, of the Messiah, of the one who goes before us, of our king, that is a cry of the Samus, that is a cry of those going into the temple, going to worship God, and that is our cry, is it not, this evening. Don't look at us, don't look at our sins, don't look at us in our faltering issues and all our problems and all our sadness and all our misery, don't look at us as we are examples of how we fail you again and again, but instead look at our Messiah, look at the one who is perfect in all his ways, as he is our representative before God, look at him, behold him, and that is a wonder of the Sam, that what is true for them in our real sense is true for us in even more real sense today, instead of us again and again in the Sunday services, how do we come before God just now, how do we appear before God just a second, that as we stand here and as we come before God just now, how does God see us, how does God view us, and the answer is true, the answer is sure, the answer is in scripture, we are covered in the righteousness of our Saviour. Our Messiah has gone before us, our Messiah is now before us, our Messiah is there and God looks on him and he sees in his perfection and he sees us as clothed and made perfect in all he has done and all that he is, that's a wonder of the journey of the Christian, even as we drag ourselves over the rocks and drag ourselves

last week through last time we were together looking at the Sam, through the valleys of the valley of Bacchus, through all the issues and disasters and times of sadness and crying, as we find ourselves in all these situations, our King goes on before us, our King is there with us, but also goes on before us and he covers us in his perfection, he covers us in his glory, all our imperfections, all our sin, all our waywardness, all the darkness that we have in us, covered by our glorious Saviour, our shield who goes before us, that is the one who God sees when he sees us. This should never just be dry theology for us, this is not just something we know and hear about, this should be important for us. This gives us the basis of our standing before God, why can we pray to God, why can we come before God just now, why can we care, know that God cares for us, why can we know that

[12 : 41] God hears us, why can we know anything what the Scripture says to us is true? Because when God sees us, he sees his Son, he sees us as washed and cleansed in his perfection.

There's a wonderful study we could do in John 17 in the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus and the question is how much does the Father love us? In John 17 we find the startling answer, the Father loves us as he loves his Son. Now that should just stop us in our tracks and that would be more than enough for us this evening, this week and the rest of our lives.

The Father loves us as Jesus himself says in John 17, read it tonight and study it, it's a wonderful study, a beat-o-mathetic. He loves us as he loves his Son and that is beyond our understanding, beyond our understanding, it should be, it is. We're covered in him because we're found in him when God looks us, he sees his Son. Our Messiah goes before us. It's a wonderful image in verse 9. Then we're dragged perhaps in verse 10 back to reality as it were, back to the here and now, back to the everyday lives we have. The psalmist is thinking about being in God's presence, being God's physical temple. Was he declared that verse, that phase we all know so well? For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God and dwell on the tints of wickedness.

Sometimes the Christian life is not glamour, it's not glamorous, it's not full of glory, it's not full of praise, we all know sometimes the Christian life, it's hard, it's hard work.

Sometimes it can be full of sadness, sometimes it can be a hard, hard slog. There's no great fun be a doorkeeper. And sometimes perhaps we might look over to the tints, over to the lavishly adorned tints of wickedness and seeing those who have no idea who God is, who have no care for God and seeing how great their lives look, how happy they seem to be, oblivious but happy. They seem to go through life perhaps with no problems that we have. They go through life living as it were, carefree, careless and happy getting on with things, everything going well for them. Dwelling in their tints, their lovely tints and here we are at the door perhaps, the dusty door, opening and closing it. I might still think well, should I be over there instead? Life is easier over there is it not? The psalmist comes here and he reminds us a day in the courts of God. The court of God, the presence of God is so wonderful, so glorious, a day as it were in God's presence is better than thousands, thousands elsewhere.

[16 : 26] He compounds that wonder by reminding us and by proclaiming, I would rather be stuck in the dusty door of God's temple than dwell in the lavish tints of sin. Because the thing here to notice is, I would rather be, be, that's continuous. I would rather continually be a doorkeeper in the house of my God. However, when we come to word dwell, that word is not continuous in the Hebrew, that word ends. That's a statement of now. So I will be forever a doorkeeper. Option one, option two is I will dwell for a very, very short time in the tints of wickedness. And that's the reality when we come to this verse. That's the reality of sin, the reality of our world. Although sometimes our journey is hard, sometimes our journey can be very hard, as I'm sure some here know fine well, more than I do. The reality is that journey with God is one that goes on forever. That be carries on forever and ever and ever. But that dwelling in tints of wickedness, that dwelling has its end in the verse, it has its end in the grammar, it has its end in the real world out here.

One day, those who seem to live a carefree life, their happiness, their joy will come to an end. Our reminder here should be for us always, we should be happy, serving God wherever he has placed us, even if it is as it were a doorkeeper, the lowest of the jobs in the temple, the dog's body with respect to the temple. Good, great, amazing. I'd rather be there doing the lowest job possible than be praised forever in the tents of sin.

That should be our mindset. That should be our outlook on life. God has placed us where we are. He has placed us here and currently has placed us here wherever you are, your situation in life, your family situation is your own personal situation. You are there by God. So all well and good me saying that, but you have to believe it to be true, not because I'm saying the causes and God's word, that wherever you are in life, you are there.

Even if it seems miserable and dusty and grim right now, it is better to be there by God's power than to be without God for a very, very, very short time. And then in verse 11 and so forth, he gives us an explanation of what I got. A reason as to why he would rather be living with God and God's courts for, for the Lord God, for Yahweh, God is a son and shield a son and shield God is light and protection for his people. God is light and protection for his people. That wonderful description I have of heaven, the place where God is the son of heaven revelation. There's no more need of a created son built the light, the radiance of God will light up the new creation forever and ever. God himself will be our light. God himself will go before us forever. God himself will be in front of us forever as we worship him at his throne forever. The Lord God is a son and shield. God is our protector.

Now here we have a wonderful image here of the joint imagery where we had before the king of Israel being a protector and now God is protector. The Messiah is protector and God is protector. A few more clues and this is having to hang our hat on, but a few more clues in passing as to the, the joint thinking even in the Old Testament of who God is. The Messiah and God here and we're described with the same quality. That's no mistake.

[21 : 06] There's no mistake by God here. It's important to note these wee things. I gain the gain for the Psalms. The Psalms especially we see these times where, where the Messiah or the coming king is described in one way and God later on or before described in exactly the same way. The Messiah is shield and God Yahweh is shield. God is a son and shield. God protects his people. He gives light to his people. He gives directions at work to his people.

He shows us a way to go and he promises to go along with us on that way. Again we know ourselves as not just some nice advice to get us through the rest of this week. This is God's word and we know it's been through for all generations. It's true for all here this evening.

God has shown us a way to go and God continues to light our path. God continues to protect us. The fact we're here right now is evidence of that. Despite our wandering off a path, despite our wandering back into darkness, despite our efforts and our attempts to do damage to ourselves, God remains our light and God remains our shield. Remember we said verse 11 is an explanation as to why he wants to remain in the courts of God rather than the tenths of sin. In the second half of verse 11 we see that the Lord bestows favour and honour.

In the tenths of sin there's plenty of honour we could say being given out, plenty of respect to be garnered in the world, plenty of favour to be garnered in our lives by those around us.

It's very easy actually to look a good person, to act like a good person. It's very easy to take the boxes that's required of us to look good. But just like the tenths of wickedness, the honour and the glory that's given to us by those around us, it will fade, it will go. But God bestows honour and favour. The Lord bestows honour and favour. The honour and the favour that God gives to us that God shows us will never run out, will never stop. And the wonder that is it's not based on us. Who does he give honour and favour to? It's to those who walk up rightly. And the reality is that is none of us. Now of course we do, we strive to work hard, we strive to follow our Savior and we do that. And that's something to play with and we must do that. At the same time where does our perfect righteousness come from? It comes from one who goes before us. As long as we are in him, following him, as long as we love him and call him our Lord, God will bestow on us favour and honour. Not outside of Jesus but it comes from Jesus. There's not one good thing we get from

[24 : 11] God outside of Jesus. It's in Jesus and through Jesus we have all that we are and all that we have. And then we conclude this wonderful, wonderful Psalm just as we started.

Lord of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you. After all this journeying, after coming all this way as it were on the journey to the temple, the Psalmist can conclude no other way but by reminding us once more who our God is and why he is so good and why we are blessed. We're blessed because we have Yahweh, the Lord of the armies as our God. If nothing else the last seven weeks which have just flown by for me, if nothing else the last few weeks, let us keep this phrase in our head. Let us keep this phrase in our head. Lord of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you. Because we do trust in him, we are blessed. This evening we are blessed because Jesus is our savior. We're blessed because we trust in the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies, our personal close God who knows us and who cares for us. This is our God, the one who journeys alongside us, the one who goes before us to prepare the way, the one who will one day take us home to be with himself. See like I said at the start, the Psalm doesn't end here, it carries on, but one day this journey does come to an end. One day the Psalmist is aware reaches the place he is going to. One day he can and he did appear in front of his God and that is the hope of us all this evening. As we go along this journey, as we trust in the Lord of hosts as our God, as we trust in our savior, the shield who goes before us, as we trust in him, our hope and our truthful hope and our sure hope, our eternal hope is that he goes alongside us, he goes before us and one day he will welcome us home at the end of our journey. That's better heads than that, a word of prayer. Lord God, we thank you for your word, Lord, we thank you for the glory of all that you are and of all that you have done for us.

As we come before you just now, even the short time this evening, we thank you for the gift of fellowship. We can come together as brothers and sisters to worship you, brothers and sisters to sing our praises to you, to hear your word and to offer up prayers with one another, knowing that you hear us, knowing that your word is true. We thank you for the reminder again and again, even in the Sam, that you are the Lord of hosts, you are the God who is in charge of all things and you are the God who cares about us. We thank you for the great truth that we trust this evening in the Messiah, we trust in your anointed one, the one who has gone before us, who has prepared a way for us, the one who has walked that journey perfectly, the one who has completed the journey, Jesus our Savior, the one who lived that perfect life, died that necessary death and who rose again to the infant, who ascended up to your right hand, Lord, we bless him and we we praise his glorious name to help us to walk every day trusting in that shield and in that glorious Savior, help us never to lose sight of him, help us to strive after him every day, we do ask for your assistance of his spirit in these things, Lord, we thank you for the gift that he now lives in us, transforming us every day to be more and more like Jesus, that helped these things to be real for us, to be true for us. We do pray as our brothers have played already, we would comfort those who mourn especially at this time of great sadness in our island, Lord, you comfort the families who have lost loved ones and they would come to know and come to know you as the Lord of hosts, the God who is powerful, the God who is strong but also as the God who is a covenant God, the God who promises and he keeps his promises, the God who always fulfills your promises, the God who always fulfills all you have set out to do, give us that confidence, greet you as a confidence in all you have said, help us to carry on this week, help what we've heard and read tonight to be useful for us, help us not one of us just to be hearers, help us all to be doers of a word, as we face the rest of this week, help us to do so in the strength of knowing that we worship you, the Lord of hosts. There's always things in and through the inverse, amen.