

PSALM 89



An Everlasting Covenant with David

Introducing Psalm 89

- **Psalm 89's background is the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:8–16).**
- **Davidic/Messianic psalms at the seams of the Psalter:**
 - **Psalm 2 opens Book I. Psalm 72 concludes Book II. Psalm 89 concludes Book III.**

Introducing Psalm 89

- **Psalm 89:38–51 laments the effective dismantling of “the Davidic Covenant—breached by God—and acknowledges the monarchy’s dissolution . . . Book 4, the ‘editorial center’ of the Psalter, responds to this crisis by shifting the focus from the earthly king’s reign to God’s everlasting rule.”—William P. Brown**

Introducing Psalm 89

- **Ethan may be either a Levite or a wise man of Judah.**
- **The lament in verses 38–45 could be due to several possible situations:**
 - **Division of the united kingdom in the reign of King Rehoboam.**
 - **Death of King Josiah at Megiddo.**
 - **End of the monarchy when Jehoiachin went into exile.**

Introducing Psalm 89

- **Compare Psalms 73, 74, and 88: “Book III seems to deal over and over with the bafflement of believers who are struggling with the gap between promise and reality.” — Marvin E. Tate**

Praying Psalm 89

- **Lord, You have always been faithful to me. (v. 1)**
- **O God, no one is like You in heaven or on earth. (v. 6)**
- **Thank You for blessing me with Your presence. (v. 15)**
- **Father, consider the brevity of my life and let me experience Your blessings now. (v. 47)**

Understanding Psalm 89

- I. Covenantal Praise (vv. 1–18)**
- II. Covenantal Promises (vv. 19–37)**
- III. Covenantal Problems (vv. 38–51)**
- IV. Doxology to Book 3 (v. 52)**



Understanding Psalm 89

v. 1 “lovingkindness [benignidades] . . .
faithfulness [fidelidade]”

- **See Psalm 88:11.**
- **“Deeds of loyal love” plural of *hesed*.**
- ***Hesed* occurs 7 times in Psalm 89.**
- **“Faithfulness” also occurs 7 times.**

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 1 “forever”: perpetuamente

- para sempre **in verses 2, 4, 28, 29, 36, and 37.**
- **Ethan hangs everything upon this single word in the covenant.**

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 1 “forever”: perpetuamente

- **Does “forever” mean “forever”?**
 - **Why has God seemingly forgotten to fulfill the promises He made to David?**
 - **“Forever ” takes on the flavor of permanency.**
 - ***How often must God say something to make it true?***

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 1 “forever”: perpetuamente

- “Forever” is . . .
 - “de geração em geração” (v. 4b)
 - “como os dias do céu” (v. 29b)
 - “como o sol diante de mim” (v. 36b;
cf. Jer 33:19–26)
 - “como a lua” (v. 37a)

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 2 “built up”: edificada

- **Play on the same word in the Davidic Covenant regarding David’s descendant *building* a “house” (= the Temple) for God (2 Sam 7:13).**
- **Same word is used again in verse 4.**

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 3–4 “David My servant [meu servo Davi] .
.. your seed [A tua semente]”

- **See Luke 1:31–33. Christ is the ultimate fulfillment.**
- **For David as a chosen servant, see 89:20 and 78:70.**

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 3 “sworn/swore to David”: jurei ao meu
servo Davi

- **Phrase in verses 3 and 49 acts as an inclusio framing the psalm and focusing on God’s covenant with David.**

Understanding Psalm 89

vv. 5–18 Praise

- **“The psalm . . . reaches up to heaven, exulting in the majesty (5-8), mastery (9-13) and moral grandeur (14–18) of God.”
— Derek Kidner**

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 5 “the holy ones”: dos santos

- **The angels (= “the sons of the mighty”): os filhos dos poderosos, v. 6) in heaven praise the LORD.**



Understanding Psalm 89

v. 6, 8 Rhetorical Questions

- **Triple occurrence is emphatic and each question's implied answer is "No one." God is indisputably the one and only Sovereign Lord.**
 - **"Pois quem no céu se pode igualar ao SENHOR?" (v. 6a)**
 - **"Quem entre os filhos dos poderosos pode ser semelhante ao SENHOR?" (v. 6b)**
 - **"O SENHOR Deus dos Exércitos, quem é poderoso como tu?" (v. 8a)**

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 12 “The north and the south [O norte e o sul] . . . Tabor and Hermon [Tabor e Hermom]”

- Although some commentators see all four directions (NSWE) in this verse—indicating the whole land of Israel, the order could be chiasmic:

N (north)

S (south)

S (Tabor)

N (Hermon)

Understanding Psalm 89

vv. 15–18

Subjects of the LORD's Kingdom

- **“Bem-aventurado” refers to the Israelites.**
 - **They know joy (vv. 15a, 16a).**
 - **They experience the divine presence and His favor (v. 15b).**
 - **Divine righteousness elevates them (v. 16b).**
 - **They possess strength and experience victory (v. 17).**
 - **Their king is God's king (v. 18).**

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 19 “Your godly ones”: *teu santo*

- Related to *hesed* and is the same as the word used for Hasidic Jews (*Hasidim*).
- “Godly ones” (NAU) = “faithful people” (NIV) = “loyal ones” (Holman Christian Standard Bible).

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 25 “the sea [mar] . . . the rivers [rios]”

- **In prophetic pronouncements, the Davidic kingdom will stretch from the Red Sea to the Euphrates River.**



Aleppo

Haran

Nineveh

SEA

v. 25: "mar . . . rios"

Shechem

Bethel

Hebron

Babylon

Ur

5

4

3

2

2

1

Understanding Psalm 89

- v. 25** “the sea [mar] . . . the rivers [rios]”
- **Some interpreters believe that the reference to the sea and the rivers “is a metaphorical portrayal of the same truth as given in Psalm 2, namely his dominion extends over the whole world.” — Willem A. VanGemeren**

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 27 “firstborn”: primogênito

- **“Firstborn” also describes Israel’s elevated relationship to the Most High God (Exod 4:22; Jer 31:9).**
- **New Testament writers apply this title to Christ (Heb 1:5–6; Rev 1:5).**

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 33–34 Never Unfaithful

- **The LORD is a covenant keeping God — He will never violate His own covenant.**
 - “não retirarei totalmente” (v. 33a)
 - “nem faltarei” (v. 33b)
 - “Não quebrarei” (v. 34a)
 - “não alterarei” (v. 34b)

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 35 “I will not lie to David”: não mentirei a Davi

- **God cannot lie (1 Sam 15:29; Rom 3:4; Titus 1:2).**
- ***What interpretations of this psalm might make God a liar?***
- **From a human perspective, circumstances might color a person’s view of God’s faithfulness.**

Understanding Psalm 89

vv. 38–45

The Great Contradiction

- **The psalmist describes what appears to be divine indifference to His covenant promises.**
 - “rejeitaste e aborreceste” (v. 38)
 - “Abominaste . . . profanaste” (v. 39)
- **God has not been unfaithful. He only seems to have treated His promise lightly.**

2 Timothy 2:13

Se formos infiéis,
ele permanece fiel;
não pode negar-se a si mesmo.

Understanding Psalm 89

vv. 46-48 Life Is Too Short

- **Ethan pleads for God to take immediate action to preserve the Davidic dynasty. In order for him to see God's blessing in his lifetime, God needs to act soon.**
- **Compare Psalms 39:5 and 90:5–6, 9–10.**

Understanding Psalm 89

v. 46 “Will You hide Yourself forever?”:

Acaso te esconderás para sempre?

- **Symbolic of His absence, in contrast to His glorious presence.**
- **His absence exposes His people to danger, leaving them unprotected.**

Understanding Psalm 89

vv. 49–51

What Will God's Enemies Say?

- **Compare Exodus 32:12.**
- **Like Psalm 88, this psalm ends without closure.**
- **“Closure has its liabilities. The subject matter tends to become purely historical and is no longer the living *matter* of ongoing life.” — Marvin Tate**

Preaching/Teaching Psalm 89

- **God never lies — He remains faithful even when we do not.**
- **We, too, await the coming Davidic King for the final solution.**
- **Praising God's timing is more fitting than complaining about His delays.**