

A Prayer of Moses

Psalm 90

A Prayer of Moses Introduction

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- Think of a significant day in the past.
 - Maybe your first day of school?
 - Your graduation?
 - Your wedding day?
 - The birth of your children?

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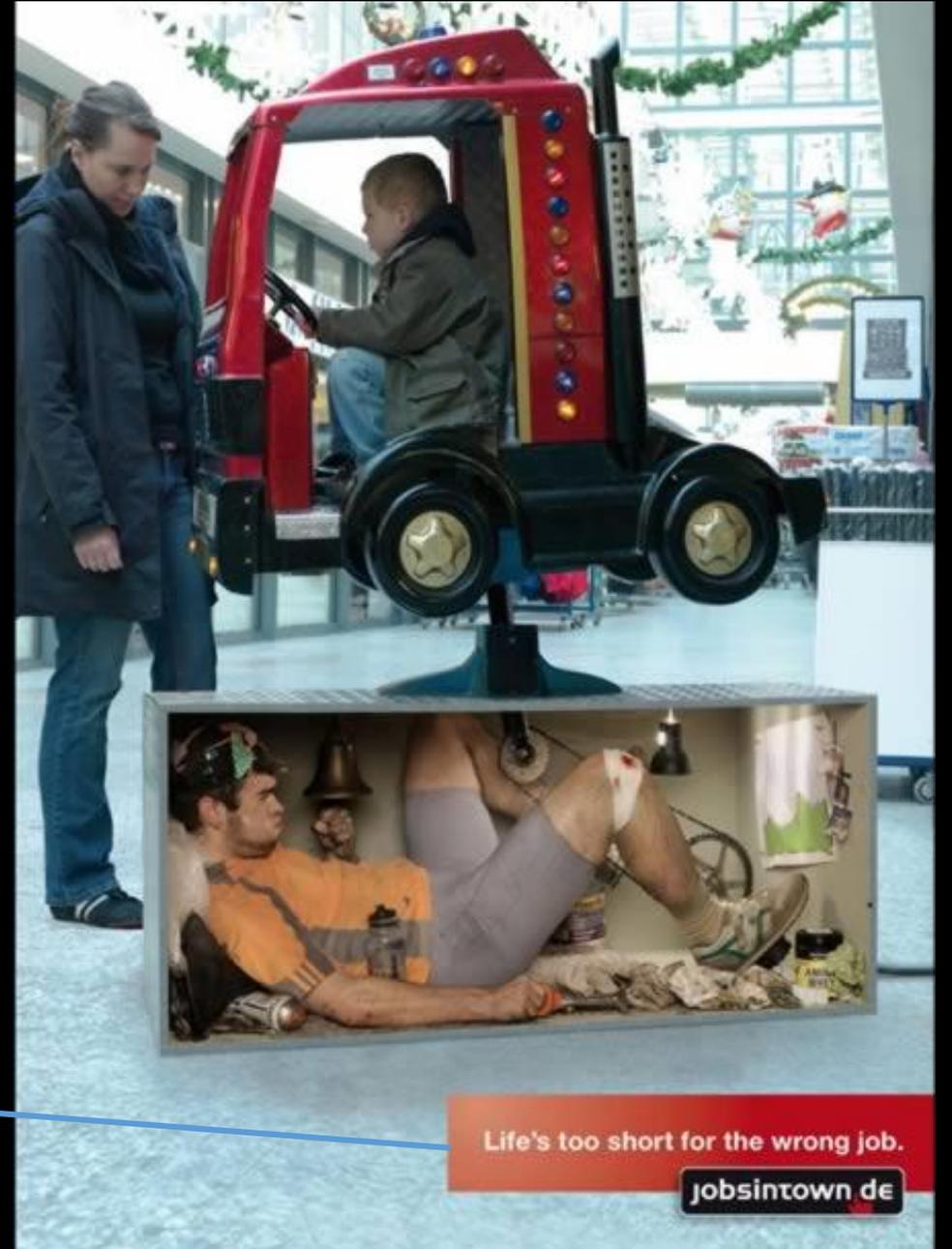
- Where did the time go?

A Prayer of Moses Introduction

- Where did the time go?
- Michael Jackson's *Thriller* came out in 1982 – well over 30 years ago.
- It will soon be 14 years since 9/11.
- The Colts last won the Super Bowl in 2007.

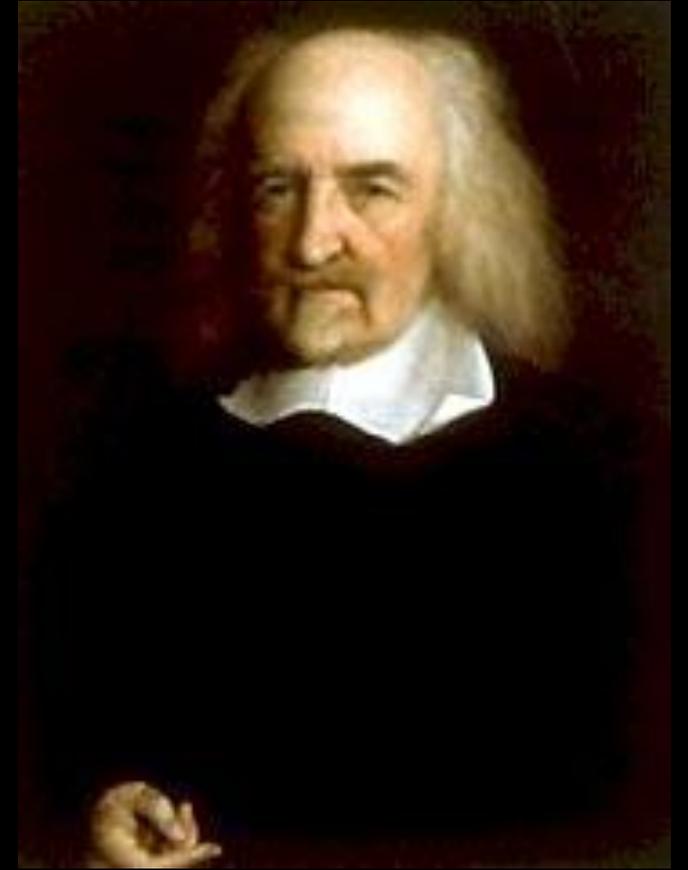
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Life's too short for
the wrong job.



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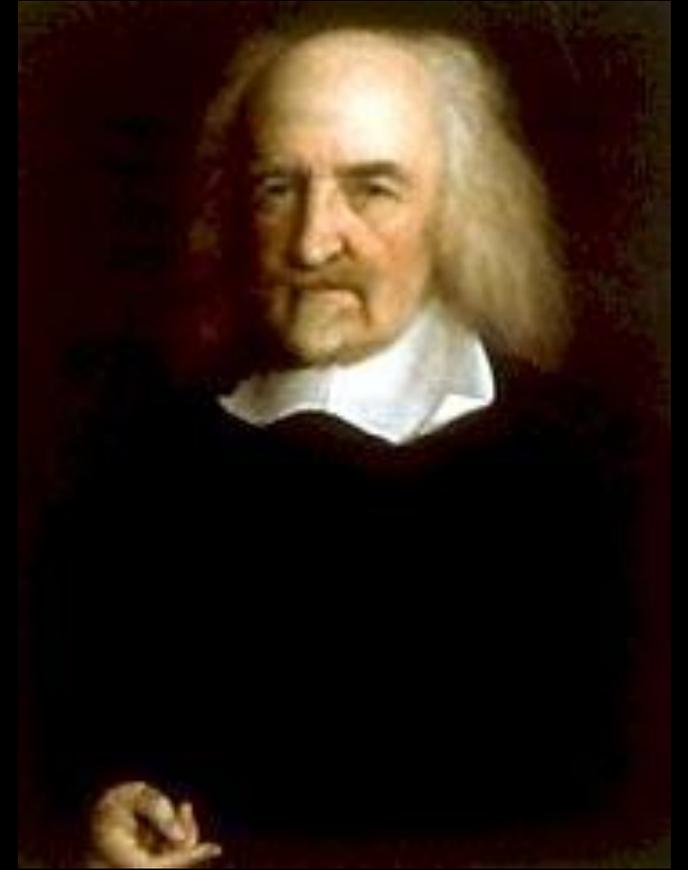
- **Thomas Hobbes** described the natural state of humanity without government as a "**warre of every man against every man**".
- In his book *Leviathan*, he describes this condition.



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[T]here is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no Culture of the Earth ... no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short."

– Thomas Hobbes, philosopher



A Prayer of Moses Introduction

- Moses watched an entire generation of Israelites die before his eyes while wandering in the wilderness.
- What did he learn from that?

A Prayer of Moses Introduction

- In **Psalm 90**, he contrasts the eternality of God with the brevity of human life.
- He sees our need for wisdom.
- And our need for the grace of God.

A Prayer of Moses Introduction

- Key verse #1:

Psalm 90:12 (ESV)

So teach us to number our days
that we may get a heart of wisdom.

A Prayer of Moses Introduction

- Key verse #2:

Psalm 90:17 (ESV)

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
and establish the work of our hands upon us;
yes, establish the work of our hands!

A Prayer of Moses *Introduction*

Moses is described as the man of God, a description that is also found in Deut 33:1, Joshua 14:6, and Ezra 3:2. Elisha is also referred to in this way (1 Kgs 4:8-9) and so is Timothy (1 Tim 6:11).

*– Zamani Kafang,
ECWA Theological Seminary, Nigeria*



A Prayer of Moses *Introduction*

But, surprisingly, the same words are used of all true believers in 2 Tim 3:16-17. Thus all of us should be able to join Moses in saying this prayer.

*– Zamani Kafang,
ECWA Theological Seminary, Nigeria*



A Prayer of Moses Introduction

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV) ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

A Prayer of Moses Introduction

- I. God's Eternality 90:1-2
- II. Human Brevity 90:3-12
- III. A Prayer for Grace 90:13-17

I. God's Eternality 90:1-2

I. God's Eternality 90:1-2

- 90:1 dwelling place – or “refuge”

See also

Psalm 71:3 (ESV) Be to me a rock of refuge,
to which I may continually come;
you have given the command to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.

I. God's Eternality 90:1-2

- 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
- God is truly other than his creation.

I. God's Eternality 90:1-2

- 90:2 from everlasting to everlasting you are God
- He is the eternal Ruler over all.

I. God's Eternality 90:1-2

Theological Tangent #1:

I. God's Eternality 90:1-2

Theological Tangent #1:

- **Atheism** – There is no God
- **Pantheism** – God is the universe = all is God
- **Panentheism** – The universe is within God = God is the universe and more
- **Biblical Theism** – The eternal God created the universe (from nothing), so the universe is not any part of God.

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

- 90:3 Remember what God said to Adam.

Genesis 3:19 (ESV) By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

- 90:4-6 Peter was probably thinking of v.4 when he said,

2 Peter 3:8-9 (ESV) ⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

Theological Tangent #2:

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

Theological Tangent #2:

- The point of both **Psalm 90** and **2 Peter 3** is the eternality of God compared with the brevity of human life.
- Neither Moses nor Peter uses the term “**1000 years**” figuratively – nor do they imply that we should.
- This matters in **Revelation 20**.

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

- 90:4-6 Peter also emphasizes the shortness of human existence when he quotes Isaiah.
- Both of them may have been thinking of this psalm.

1 Peter 1:24-25 (ESV) for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

- 90:7-11 Moses lived to the age of 120.

Deuteronomy 34:7 (ESV) Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was undimmed, and his vigor unabated.

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

- 90:7-11 The longest lifespan recorded in the Bible is that of Methuselah. He lived less than “a watch in the night.”

Genesis 5:27 (ESV) Thus all the days of Methuselah were 969 years, and he died.

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

Humans look at other humans as strong; but as far as God is concerned, they may be swept away by the waters of the flood. Each human being is but a drop in the giant stream of time.

– Willem VanGemeren



II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

- 90:7-11 Moses sounds like Thomas Hobbes.
- We could almost add, *“And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.”*

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

- Three ways to respond to the transience of life:
 1. Get depressed and view all life as meaningless.
 2. Realize life is short, so live it as selfishly as you can.
 3. Realize life is short, so make it count for Jesus.

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

- Key verse #1:

Psalm 90:12 (ESV)

So teach us to number our days
that we may get a heart of wisdom.

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

- Comparisons that illustrate the wisdom in question:
 - Work with a deadline
 - A football team in their two-minute drill
 - Any game at all with a timer

II. Human Brevity 90:3-12

- Life is not a game, but if we fail to consider its limited length, we will not live wisely.

III. A Prayer for Grace 90:13-17

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- Think of Moses during the wilderness wanderings.
- He had daily lessons on the transience of life.
- He also learned how much he needed God's grace.

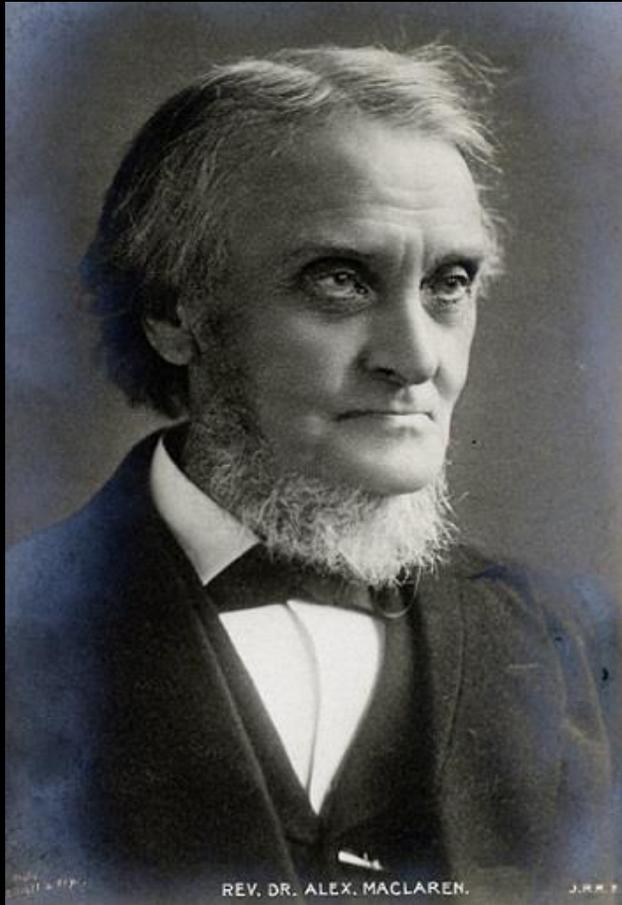
III. A Prayer for Grace 90:13-17

- Key verse #2:

Psalm 90:17 (ESV)

Let the favor [or “beauty”] of the Lord our God be upon us,
and establish the work of our hands upon us;
yes, establish the work of our hands!

III. A Prayer for Grace 90:13-17



And our work will stand if we quietly leave it in his hands. Quietly do it to him, never mind about results, but look after motives. You cannot influence results, let God look after them; you can influence motives. Be sure that they are right, and if they are the work will be eternal.

– Alexander Maclaren (1826-1910)

III. A Prayer for Grace 90:13-17

- Consider also:

Proverbs 16:3 (ESV) Commit your work to the LORD,
and your plans will be established.

Proverbs 21:31 (ESV) The horse is made ready for the day of
battle, but the victory belongs to the LORD.

A Prayer of Moses

Conclusions

A Prayer of Moses Conclusions

- Three ways to respond to the transience of life:
 1. Get depressed and view all life as meaningless.
 2. Realize life is short, so live it as selfishly as you can.
 3. Realize life is short, so make it count for Jesus.

A Prayer of Moses Conclusions

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 1. Get depressed and view all life as meaningless.
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A Prayer of Moses Conclusions

- Realize life is short, so make it count for Jesus.
- This is the most like Christ's own life – who continually did the work of his Father.
- His life was not long, but it was the most beneficial life ever.
- It was a life lived for God and others.

A Prayer of Moses Conclusions

- Two important prayers – found in our two key verses:
- Psalm 90:12
- Psalm 90:17

A Prayer of Moses Conclusions

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A Prayer of Moses Conclusions

- It is the grace of God upon our lives that will fulfil our longings for permanence.

A Prayer of Moses Conclusions

Our reflection on this psalm should move us to gratitude that God does not destroy us because of our sins and to praise of him as our compassionate creator. As such, he is our dwelling place for generations without end.

*– Zamani Kafang,
ECWA Theological Seminary, Nigeria*



A Prayer of Moses Conclusions

1 John 2:17 (ESV) And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Revelation 14:13 (ESV) And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"