

# Fulfilled Prophecies

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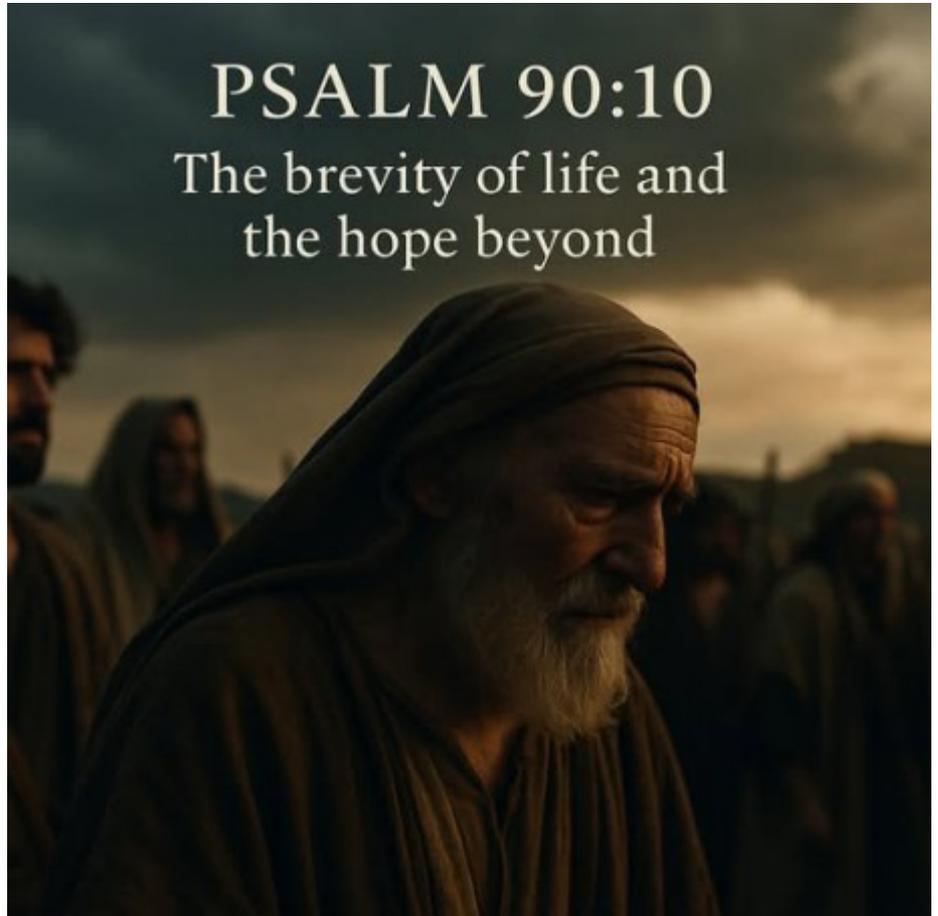
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**Psalm 90:10** The brevity of life and the hope beyond



By Dan Maines

**The Holy Spirit - Our Teacher and Guide**

**Psalm 90:10**

The brevity of life and the hope beyond

**Psalm 90:10**

The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

† Moses here speaks to the frailty of man. In the wilderness, Israel saw generation after generation cut down by time and judgment. Seventy to eighty years were the measure, yet often those years were filled with hardship. Even the strongest were not immune to sorrow. This psalm is both a lament and a sober reminder that life is fleeting and must be lived with eternity in view.

### **The measure of our days**

Seventy or eighty years may sound long, but in truth it is but a vapor. James 4:14 reminds us, What is your life? You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

† Josephus records how whole generations perished in the wilderness because of unbelief (Wars 4.8.4). What Moses wrote in the psalm was witnessed with his own eyes. An entire generation fell in the sands of the desert, never reaching the promised land, proving how swiftly life is cut off.

† Numbers 14:29-34 shows that God determined Israel's unbelieving generation would die out within forty years. The average span of seventy or eighty years Moses speaks of was being lived out before his eyes. Each funeral in the wilderness was a reminder of the certainty of God's word and the shortness of man's days.

### **The inevitability of death**

Hebrews 9:27 declares, It is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment. No strength of man can outlast the decree of God. Death is certain. Philo, the Jewish philosopher, described life as a stage play swiftly acted, where the curtain falls before one realizes it has begun (On the Life of Moses 1.2). This view echoes Moses words, soon cut off, and then we fly away.

† Early Christians also echoed this truth. Clement of Rome, writing to the Corinthians, reminded them, Our life in this world

is nothing compared with eternity, a mere breath, easily fading (1 Clement 17). They understood that this life was preparation for the age to come, not the final resting place of man.

† Chrysostom often reminded his hearers that earthly life was like grass cut down in a field, urging them to fix their eyes on eternity (Homily on Matthew 7). Augustine said, Man's life is short and full of trial, but it is in Christ that we see the promise of everlasting rest (City of God 19.10). Their words stand as witnesses that the church has always seen Psalm 90 as both a warning and a hope.

### **The hope beyond life's shortness**

We fly away. These words carry more than the image of death. They point to the release of the soul, leaving behind a frail body for the presence of God. Paul says, To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).

† In the fulfilled perspective, Christ has conquered death. Paul declared, The last enemy that will be abolished is death (1 Corinthians 15:26). With the coming of the kingdom in its fullness, the sting of death was swallowed up in victory. The early church clung to this promise even in persecution. Tertullian reminded believers facing martyrdom, To depart this life is not loss, but gain, for we depart to be with Christ (On the Resurrection of the Flesh 43).

† Paul also proclaimed that Christ Jesus abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10). For the believer, death no longer holds terror, for the hope of immortality is secure in Christ.

### **A call to wisdom**

Psalm 90:12 gives the answer: So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom. The wise man sees life's brevity and orders his days in righteousness.

† Eusebius later reflected that the church flourished under this very awareness. They knew life was fragile, but in Christ it was eternal. By numbering their days, they redeemed the time and spread the gospel in the midst of persecution.

† The call extends to us today. Paul exhorts, Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:15-16). Our years are short, but they are entrusted to us for service in Christ' kingdom. To waste them is folly. To redeem them is wisdom.

## **Conclusion**

Life is seventy or eighty years at best, and even then it is full of labor and sorrow. Soon it is cut off, and we fly away. But for the believer in Christ, this flying away is not to despair, but to eternal joy in the presence of God.

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

## **Source index**

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews 4.8.4

† Numbers 14:29-34

† Philo, On the Life of Moses 1.2

† 1 Clement 17

† Chrysostom, Homily on Matthew 7

† Augustine, City of God 19.10

† Tertullian, On the Resurrection of the Flesh 43

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 5.1

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