

## All Heaven Declares

### Psalms 89:1-18

Online Sermon:

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Ever have someone promise you something and doubt it would ever be fulfilled? While we would like to say that our word is 100% reliable, we often enter and subsequently break so many of our stated intentions that it makes one wonder if anyone's word means anything! Being a recipient of so many broken promises make it difficult, especially in the storms of life, to even trust that God will do what He has told us! The foundation of the Psalm 89 that we are going to examine today comes from a promise made to King David. In 2 Samuel 7 David was promised that God would "establish His throne forever."<sup>1</sup> While the exact occasion of the writing of this Psalm is unknown,<sup>2</sup> its writing indicates that it was about an epoch of time when the Davidic dynasty was either in the throws of or had already fallen.<sup>3</sup> Many scholars believe this Psalm was written

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Maclaren, "[The Psalms](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible: Psalms to Isaiah*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 3, Expositor's Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 229.

<sup>2</sup> James E. Smith, [The Wisdom Literature and Psalms](#), Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 1996), 361–362.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Maclaren, "[The Psalms](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible: Psalms to Isaiah*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 3, Expositor's Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 229.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Maclaren, "[The Psalms](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible: Psalms to Isaiah*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 3, Expositor's Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 229.

during Rehoboam's reign when the Lord abandoned him to the Egyptian king Shishak (2 Chronicles 12:5) or the time when Jehoiachin was deposed by Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 22:24-29).<sup>4</sup> With either event in mind the writer is trying to answer a



couple of questions of doubt that we often have in the storms of life. When all seems lost, and doubt comes crashing over one's mind and soul like a raging sea how does one remain filled with love, joy, peace, and that assurance that

God will always keep His promises? Can one really expect God to never leave nor forsake His own (Hebrews 13:5) and always work for their good (Romans 8:28)? The author of this Psalm, Ethan the Ezrahite, tells us that doubts are to be conquered by faith!<sup>5</sup> Unlike us God is utterly faithful to whatever He promises!<sup>6</sup> To "fortify against the whispers of doubt"<sup>7</sup> Ethan calls God's own to remember the attributes of God's character,

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Maclaren, "[The Psalms](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible: Psalms to Isaiah*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 3, Expositor's Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 229.

<sup>6</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [Psalms 42–106: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 723.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Maclaren, "[The Psalms](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible: Psalms to Isaiah*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 3, Expositor's Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 229.

specifically His faithfulness and power to control all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16).

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*Today's sermon is going see how the heavenly hosts revering God, the raging seas obeying Him, the earthly powers trembling at His presence, and creation shouting His praise points to one undeniable truth, God is for us and will never break a single promise He has made because He is the Holy one of Israel!*

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## The Father's Everlasting Love

Ethan begins his song with an outpouring of praise for God's eternal love and faithfulness as our eternal covenant partner. From the storm of what seemed like inevitable oblivion Ethan's hope and confidence in God's "unchangeable love and immutable promises"<sup>8</sup> never wavers. Even though after

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<sup>8</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 88-110*, vol. 4 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 24.

<sup>9</sup> H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Psalms*, vol. 2, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 239.

<sup>10</sup> Jamie A. Grant, "[Psalms 73-89](#)," in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 315.

Zerubbabel the descendants of the Davidic line appeared to "sink into obscurity,"<sup>9</sup> this did not stop Ethan from having a "great sense of assurance"<sup>10</sup> that God would indeed keep His covenant with David. The covenant would not be broken because it is guaranteed by the One who rules over heaven (2)!<sup>11</sup> We are to



eternally praise God because the fulfillment of the covenant was not contingent on humanity's responsiveness<sup>12</sup> but on the holiness, love, and faithfulness of the One who established it! From the seed of David came

the incarnate Christ who atoned for our sins on the cross with a title above His head that read, "The King of the Jews" (John 19:20), that would forever ring out as a testimony to His Father's love and faithfulness for all generations! This sign was written in all three languages of the known world of the time to indicate that God's covenant would be fulfilled by the Son of David, the second Adam,<sup>13</sup> and entrance into this everlasting kingdom would be given to anyone who believed in atoning sacrifice of

<sup>11</sup> Willem A. VanGemeren, "[Psalms](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 575.

<sup>12</sup> Willem A. VanGemeren, "[Psalms](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 575.

<sup>13</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 88-110*, vol. 4 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 25.

His Son Jesus! Considering His love, grace, mercy, and faithfulness Ethan implores each successive generation to praise God continuously. Even when we are in a storm, in a battle against the “spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12) or are receiving the mighty hand of His discipline (Hebrews 12:4-12), we are in faith to never stop praising His glorious name!

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*“It is Jehovah who deigns to deal out to us our daily benefits, and he is the all-sufficient and immutable God; therefore, our rejoicing in him must never suffer diminution!”<sup>14</sup>*

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Our God is truly an awesome God!

**Reflection.** Are you struggling to find joy in life? Are the storms of tribulations so difficult that violent, undesirable change and its often-associated fear and depression, never stop whirling around your head? If so, then remember that God is and forever will be the one constant in our lives. Being eternal, sovereign, and faithful to His promises ought to spark much praise of His name! Cast your anxieties on Him by prayer and

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<sup>14</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [The Treasury of David: Psalms 88-110](#), vol. 4 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 23.

<sup>15</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [Psalms 42–106: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 723.

petition, with thanksgiving, and He will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord (Philippians 4:6-7)!

## The Heavenly Hosts Revere God

God is faithful to His promises even when we can’t see how or when they will be fulfilled.<sup>15</sup> When we experience the storms of great tribulations that rock the very foundation of our



faith, we are to hear the choirs of testimonies ringing loud and clear that every single tittle of God’s promises will be fulfilled!<sup>16</sup> The author breaks out into a hymn exalting the majesty of God as testified by not

only the saints on this earth but also the angels in heaven! The “innumerable angels who worship before God, the assembly of holy ones (5), are having church right now in heaven,”<sup>17</sup> praising God for His omnipotence and faithfulness that is holy and

<sup>16</sup> Alexander Maclaren, “[The Psalms](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible: Psalms to Isaiah*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 3, Expositor’s Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 230.

<sup>17</sup> David Platt, Matt Mason, and Jim Shaddix, [Exalting Jesus in Psalms 51-100](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2020), 351.

unmatched by all!<sup>18</sup> Even the “fiery messengers” (Psalms 104:4), the holiest of people on this earth, “hit the dirt” in fear when meeting them, bowing low in reverence and awe of the holiness of their Creator who sent them!<sup>19</sup> “Isn’t it interesting to think that the angels are praising God in heaven for the very characteristic we are tempted to question Him about below? Isn’t this a rebuke to our weak faith? If we thought as the angels, we would be praising God for his great faithfulness constantly.”<sup>20</sup> Yahweh is God over all creation, there is no rivals or “competing gods”<sup>21</sup> that come even close to matching Him in perfection, knowledge, power, justice, and love. Being in control of all things seen and unseen means God does not lack the resources necessary to come good on His promises and is to be revered for despite us repeatedly breaking our word to Him, He established and remains our covenant partner!<sup>22</sup> Thou we sin and fall short of His glory the truth remains that God is full of grace and mercy and despite our unworthiness He allows us the honor of bowing low and looking up and crying out “Abba Father, hallowed be Thy name” (Matthew 6:9)!

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<sup>18</sup> Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 5 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 585.

<sup>19</sup> David Platt, Matt Mason, and Jim Shaddix, *Exalting Jesus in Psalms 51-100* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2020), 351–352.

<sup>20</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42–106: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 725.

<sup>21</sup> Jamie A. Grant, “Psalms 73–89,” in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 316–317.

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*Spurgeon is right to say, “to treat God with irreverence is rebellion”<sup>23</sup> for “sin is akin to presumptuous boldness, but holiness is sister to holy fear.”<sup>24</sup>*

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We worship God with fear of His mighty power and discipline that we have earned and bow in awe of His grace, mercy, and holiness and love for His own!

**Reflection.** Ever imagine what it will be like when you die? Imagine going to heaven and meeting God face to face for the very first time! Like others who have been in His presence we will tremble in fear and fall before Him! When His light reveals the deceitfulness of our hearts and subsequent forgiveness by the blood of His Son then we will understand what grace and mercy truly means!

<sup>22</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 88-110*, vol. 4 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 25–26.

<sup>23</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 88-110*, vol. 4 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 26.

<sup>24</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 88-110*, vol. 4 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 26.



## Raging Seas Obey Him and the Earthly Powers Tremble

God is faithful to His promises for not even the most “powerful, terrifying, chaotic, and fear-inducing”<sup>25</sup> in all of creation can rage against His sovereignty. God rules over the raging seas and with but a single word not only cause them to be still but by His strong-arm Ethan states God crushed Rahab and scattered His enemies. If the seas here are to be taken literally then it is a reference to either the “primeval force of chaos, the



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<sup>25</sup> Jamie A. Grant, “Psalms 73–89,” in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 317.

<sup>26</sup> Robert G. Bratcher and William David Rebyburn, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 775.

<sup>27</sup> John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): The Minor Prophets, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 396.

<sup>28</sup> Robert L. Jr. Hubbard and Robert K. Johnston, “Foreword,” in *Psalms*, ed. W. Ward Gasque, Robert L. Hubbard Jr., and Robert K. Johnston, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 356.

<sup>29</sup> Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 577.

watery abyss, which God subdued at creation”<sup>26</sup> or the “water chaos monsters (Job 26:12; Isa. 51:9–10)<sup>27</sup> such as the Leviathan (Psalms 74:14, 104:26, Isaiah 27:1, Job 3:8)<sup>28</sup> whom God crushed and cut to pieces. It is more likely, however, that Ethan meant “seas” to be interpreted symbolically for it is here we find deep, rich meaning in relation to God’s faithfulness. Since in Canaanite mythology the sea was under Baal’s control and in the Old Testament Rahab was a reference to Egypt,<sup>29</sup> Ethan is saying that not even the gods of the nations can thwart God’s covenant promises!<sup>30</sup> Even though the superpower at the time of the Exodus, Egypt,<sup>31</sup> foamed like a raging sea with tremendous power and might of her vast armies, the moment the foaming billows of the Red Sea heard the command from God they “stood upright in awe”<sup>32</sup> until instructed to fiercely rage once again and engulf the Lord’s enemies! From this we learn that “no amount of human intellect or military might can stop the Lord from bringing His promises to pass.”<sup>33</sup> Those “who “inflict violence on the weak”<sup>34</sup> and dare defy a sovereign God will quickly learn

<sup>30</sup> John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): The Minor Prophets, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 396.

<sup>31</sup> David Platt, Matt Mason, and Jim Shaddix, *Exalting Jesus in Psalms 51-100* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2020), 352.

<sup>32</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 88-110*, vol. 4 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 26.

<sup>33</sup> David Platt, Matt Mason, and Jim Shaddix, *Exalting Jesus in Psalms 51-100* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2020), 352.

<sup>34</sup> David Platt, Matt Mason, and Jim Shaddix, *Exalting Jesus in Psalms 51-100* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2020), 352.

of the terrifying wrath and anger of the judge (Ezekiel 7:8) who opposes the wicked and the proud!

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*Those who are His own need not fear those who can destroy the body nor fear their sin means their inevitable destruction, for God is the impenetrable shield for those who put their trust in Him and confess their sins!*

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**Reflection.** Ever have an enemy that was stronger and more powerful than you and instilled fear in your heart? In these moments ever stop, put on the armor of God, and rest in peace and assurance that not even the mightiest of foes stands a chance against the Lord of all creation? The truth is that we have not been given a spirit of fear but one that rejoices in the supremacy of God!

## Praising the Lord!

Amid hardships, violence, and uncertainty of living in a chaotic world; Ethan knows beyond a doubt that the Creator will always fulfill His promises. Since the heavens and the earth

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<sup>35</sup> Jamie A. Grant, “Psalms 73–89,” in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 317.

<sup>36</sup> John H. Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): The Minor Prophets, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 396.

were created by God, they are His and subsequently held together and ruled by Him.<sup>35</sup> In the beginning God said, “let there be light” and there was light (1:3). God said, “let there be a vault between the waters” and there was a sky (1:6). God said, “let the water under the sky gather in one place” and the land



and sea were formed (1:9-11). God said, “let there be lights in the vault of the sky” and thus formed the sun, moon, and stars (1:14-19). God said, “let the water teem with living creatures” and “let the land

produce living creatures” and it was so (1:20-25). And God said, “let us make mankind in our image” and His image bearers were thus formed (1:26)! By His word He created all things and by His word He controls all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16). Ethan states God created both Tabor and Hermon, the place associated as the home of many gods, to indicate God created these places<sup>36</sup> and the “subordination of their deities to God!”<sup>37</sup> His power and might is unmatched for by his powerful hand and mighty arm nothing is impossible for God (Matthew 19:26), nor nothing not subject to His rule. Even though the

<sup>37</sup> Jamie A. Grant, “Psalms 73–89,” in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 317.

richest, most powerful, and influential wage war against the Lamb they will not succeed but instead one day bow and acknowledge His Son Jesus Christ is Lord, for His honor and glory (Philippians 2:10-11)!

Given the lament later in verses 39-51 over the loss of the Davidic king,<sup>38</sup> Ethan finishes this section by rejoicing over other attributes of God.<sup>39</sup>



In the ancient Near East the primary obligation of the king of a nation was to implement righteousness and justice.<sup>40</sup> As “God’s might and rule over creation are unquestionable,”<sup>41</sup> so is His ability to rightly provide an

“acquittal for those who are innocent and condemn those who are guilty.”<sup>42</sup> Ethan rejoices that there is no “evil, injustice or despotism”<sup>43</sup> in God’s rule but

instead divine justice, which is flawless, righteous, and true! While “worldly men and women need outward prosperity and power to get them to lift their heads,”<sup>44</sup> saints find a mere glimpse of God to be sufficient to strengthen, encourage, comfort, and give them peace that surpasses all understanding in the most violent, turbulent storms! Those who have entered a covenant relationship with God, in Christ Jesus, see every one of His “attributes as a fountain of delight”<sup>45</sup> not due to their earthy circumstances but due to their spiritual standing as a child of God through their faith in Christ Jesus!

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*Though they may need to wait beyond a lifetime to realize His promises (Hebrews 11), believers rejoice in the unshakeable truth that God as their portion alone satisfies and redeems their souls.*

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In response to God’s unshakeable blessings Ethan says we are to be like the Israelites at their festivals and break out in praise and worship of God day and night! Even with contrite and broken hearts we are to praise God for His mercies and love endures

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<sup>38</sup> Jamie A. Grant, “Psalms 73–89,” in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 318.

<sup>39</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42–106: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 726.

<sup>40</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ps 89:14.

<sup>41</sup> Jamie A. Grant, “Psalms 73–89,” in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 318.

<sup>42</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42–106: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 726.

<sup>43</sup> Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 578.

<sup>44</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 88–110*, vol. 4 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 28.

<sup>45</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 88–110*, vol. 4 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 28.

forever! We rejoice the earthly authorities (Romans 13:1-6) are mere “vicegerents of Yahweh’s ultimate kingship.”<sup>46</sup> But ultimately, we rejoice that God alone is our glory and strength, our impenetrable shield that we have received by grace! So, despite our circumstances, no matter how bleak they might be, we gladly bow our knee to You Lord for You always keep Your promises and work for the good of those who love You and call You by Your holy, precious, sovereign name!

## Conclusion

We all have made someone make a promise to us only later to out it would never be fulfilled. Being the giver and recipient of so many broken promises in life makes it rather difficult to believe that anyone is good for their word. And yet in today’s passage we find that the covenant promises God has made to humanity are a 100% guarantee! In the storms of life when the waves of anxiety, despair, and excruciating pain occur we are to rejoice that God who alone is sovereign over all things seen and unseen works for the good of those who love Him! His unchangeable love and immutable promises never waver. While God’s covenantal promises are not contingent on our faithfulness but His, we are still required to bow low and submit to His right to rule over our lives, as He does in all of creation. All of creation testifies to God’s existence! Even the angels in heaven praise that God’s

omnipotence and faithfulness is holy and unmatched by all. Thankfully there are no rival powers or gods that come even close to matching His perfection, knowledge, power, justice, and love! Even the powerful, terrifying, chaotic, and fear inducing seas and rulers of this world cannot rage against God’s sovereignty beyond what they are permitted. So, even amidst the hardships, violence, and uncertainty of living in a chaotic world we too bow very low and praise our Creator. We rejoice that by His mighty arm and hand He is not only our shield but also the source of our eternal life, joy, and strength. And though life might become very difficult from time to time and threaten our temporal positions and earthly possessions, we rejoice that as those who are atoned for and purchased by the Lamb who was slain, we will one day receive the only crown by which true unspeakable happiness might be obtained, God as our portion forever! Amen!

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<sup>46</sup> Jamie A. Grant, “[Psalms 73–89](#),” in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 319.