

A Selah Moment

By Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

- A. What does “selah” mean? It is used 74 times in Psalms. The answer to that question is open to debate. It is a word whose meaning has been lost to time and can only be speculated. Most translators transliterate it, because the meaning is lost to time.
1. Some believe it refers to an instrumental interlude because the psalms were often set to music.
 2. Biblical scholars also suggest other possible meanings, including “silence, pause, interruption, accentuate, exalt, or end.”
 3. The Septuagint always translates it by *diapalma diapsalma*, “a pause in the Psalm.”
 4. Aramaic translates it with *Nymlel lealmin*, “for ever.”
 5. The rest of the versions leave it un-translated or leave it out.
 6. It comes from *hlo salah*, to strew or spread out, implying that the object should be spread out, meditated on, attentively considered by the reader and hearer.
 7. This meaning seems to be confirmed by Psalm 9:16 - “The LORD is known by the judgment He executes; The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Meditation. Selah,” where the word *higgaion* is put before *selah* at the end of the verse. *Higgaion* certainly signifies meditation, or a fit subject for meditation; and so shows *selah* to be a *nota bene*, attend to or mind this. It is a note commanding a solemn pause. “Mark that, or, “Stop there, and consider a little while.”
 8. Recent Bible scholars have concluded that *selah* is a notation indicating that the reading of the Psalm is to be paused to allow the audience to respond or repeat the previous statement for purposes of emphasis and meditation. I believe this is most likely the correct meaning.
- B. Selah - “This matter is important. Take a moment to think about it.”
1. “My God and I go in the fields together; we walk and talk as good friends should and do. We clasp our hands, our voices ring with laughter. My God and I walk through the meadow’s hue.”
 2. Enoch and Noah walked with God - Gen. 5:24, 6:9
 3. Great men of God were noted for spending quiet moments with God
 - a. Isaac meditated in the fields at evening - Gen. 24:63
 - b. David prayed three times daily and meditated on his bed at night Psalm 55:17, 63:6
 - c. Daniel’s custom was to pray three times daily - Dan. 6:10
 4. Jesus sought solitary places at early morn and late night - Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12
 - a. He taught His disciples to pray in secret - Matt. 6:6
- C. We attend worship services, gospel meetings and Bible classes, but do we make time to spend alone with God each day?
1. Why have Christians abandoned the practice of setting aside time to mediate on God and His word?

I. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SPEND TIME ALONE WITH GOD?

- A. To be closer to God
 - 1. God is found by those who seek Him - 1Chron. 28:9; 2Chron. 15:2
 - 2. God draws near to those who draw near to Him - James 4:8
- B. To be spiritually nourished - Matt. 4:4
 - 1. Spiritual growth comes from the Word of God - 1Peter 1:23, 2:2
 - 2. God's Word provides spiritual strength - Psalm 119:7-11
- C. To find peace and security
 - 1. We live in a world filled with anxiety; prayer provides the release - Phil. 4:6-7
 - 2. We live in a world filled with pitfalls; God's Word keeps us from falling - Psalm 119:105, 165
- D. Not talking about just having a scheduled Bible reading and wording a memorized routine prayer.
 - 1. If the Devil cannot weaken you by distracting you from making time for God, he will make your time with God dull and ineffective by having you just go through the motions out of habit

II. HOW DO I BEGIN SPENDING TIME ALONE WITH GOD?

- A. Set aside the time and set up a place
 - 1. The time may vary for different individuals
 - a. For night owls, the best time may be late at night, after the children are in bed
 - b. For morning persons, before the children wake up or before you go to work
 - c. The key is to find a quiet time, free from distractions, including the television
 - 2. The place may also vary for different people
 - a. Some may prefer a place outside, following the example of Jesus Mark 1:35
 - b. Some may prefer a place inside, following the teaching of Jesus Matt. 6:6
 - c. The key is to find a solitary place, free from worldly distractions
 - 3. To help develop this life pattern, the time and place should be the same each and every day
- B. Pray, read, meditate, and praise
 - 1. Approach God in prayer - Col. 4:2; 1John 1:9; Phil. 4:6; 1Tim. 2:1-2
 - 2. Spend time meditating - Ps 77:12, 119:15, 23, 48, 97-99, 148; Phil. 4:8
 - 3. Praise God - James 5:13; Eph. 5:19
- C. Talk with God through prayer, praise; listen to Him by contemplating His Word

Conclusion:

- A. If David, a man after God's own heart, and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, found it important to spend time alone with God, how much more should we?!
 - 1. Psalm 119:143-148