

Psalm 9

To the chief Musician according to Muthlabben, A Psalm of David.

“Psalm 9”: Psalms 9 and 10 taken together, form the first of the acrostic psalms, though the 38 verses are a very irregular representation of the Hebrew alphabet of 22 letters. “Marvelous” (verse 1), is an adjective used in the Old Testament to describe the supernatural. David thus looks on God’s deliverance and praises Him for it (verses 1-10). After inviting the believing community to join in his praise (verses 11-18), David prays for God’s ethical rule to be established over wicked men (verses 19-20).

Verses 1-20: Psalms 9 and 10 go together, so much so that early Greek and Latin verses treat and number them as one. However, Psalms 9 and 10 evidences two different forms: the first is an individual hymn while the second is an individual lament.

In the first part (verses 1-12), praise is prominent, and in the second part (verses 13-20), prayer is prominent. Many subtle patterns weave the thoughts of its verses and lines together. Shifting back and forth between the individual and corporate perspectives is characteristic, as are introverted (i.e., style), structures. Basically, David’s hymn in Psalm 9 ebbs and flows through two respective tides of prayer and praise.

(1) First Tide: Divine Justice and Praise (9:1-12).

- A. Individual Praise and Divine Justice (9:1-4);
- B. Divine Justice and Corporate Praise 9:5-12).

(2) Second Tide: Divine Justice and Prayer (9:13-20).

- A. Individual Prayer and Divine Justice (9:13-16);
- B. Divine Justice and Corporate Prayer (9:17-20).

“Psalm 9: The new element of this title literally reads “Death to the Son”. Many conjectures have arisen about this puzzling phrase, but it is safest to regard these words as designating a particular tune.

Verses 1-2: “I will ... I will ... I will ... I will”: These 4 “I wills” launch Psalm 9 with David’s dedication to exuberant worship of the Lord.

Psalm 9:1 "I will praise [thee], O LORD, with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvelous works."

“Marvelous works”: This especially references God’s extraordinary interventions into history on behalf of His people (compare the Exodus events).

We see a determined David here. I will praise thee. He is determined to praise the Lord. We, like David, must determine in our heart to praise the Lord. Sometimes it has to be determination that causes us to praise. Circumstances make us want to mourn, when we should be praising. We must remind ourselves of all of the marvelous works of God. The following Scripture should be our attitude toward God.

Hebrews 13:15 "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name."

Psalm 9:2 "I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High."

I will rejoice, and will express my joy.

"And rejoice in thee": I will exult; I will triumph. That is, he would express his joy in God, in knowing that there was such a Being. In all that he had done for him; in all the evidences of his favor and friendship.

"I Will sing praise to thy name": To thee; the name often being put for the person.

"O thou Most High": Thou who art supreme, the God over all (see Psalm 7:17).

Songs lift the spirit of man. We should all practice praising God in song. Praise Him from whom all blessings flow.

Isaiah 51:11 "Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy [shall be] upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; [and] sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

The joy of the Lord is our strength. We must recognize the fact that there is none greater than God. He is the Most High.

Psalm 9:3 "When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence."

Are turned back": It is the result of God's power alone. He, as a righteous Judge (Psalm 7:11), vindicates His people. He rebukes by acts as well as words (Psalms 6:1; 18:15), and so effectually as to destroy the names of nations as well as persons.

When David came against Goliath, he came in the name of the Most High God. We do not have to avenge our enemies.

Romans 12:20 " Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

God fights the battles for us, if we are believers.

Psalm 9:4 "For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right."

"Thou hast maintained my right and my cause": This is exactly what God is known to do (compare Deut. 10:18; 1 Kings 8:45, 49).

Just as David gave all the praise to God for the battles he won, we must praise God in all things. God is on the side of the righteous. His judgement is holy and right.

Revelation 16:7 "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous [are] thy judgments."

Verses 5-10: Verses 5 and 6 reveal the just Judge's dealings with the godless. (Verses 7 and 8), His dealings with all men in general, and (verses 9 and 10), His gracious dealing with dependent disciples.

Psalm 9:5 "Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever."

The people of the Philistines, as the Targum and Kimchi explain it, though some Jewish writers understand it of Amalek the chief of the Heathen nations. But it rather refers to Gospel times, and to the rebukes of the Heathen, by the preaching of the Gospel, for their idolatry and superstition. And especially to the latter day, and to the rebukes of the antichristian states, the Papists (Catholics), who are called Gentiles; which will be with flames of fire, and will issue in their utter removal and total destruction. Upon which a profound peace and prosperity will succeed in the Christian churches, according to (Isa. 2:4); which is a prophecy of those times.

"Thou hast destroyed the wicked": The wicked man; for it is in the singular number, "labben", as Aben Ezra observes, or who is meant by him. Goliath, according to the Targum and Kimchi; or Esau, as other Jewish writers, that is, his posterity the Edomites. And each of these were figures of antichrist, the man of sin, the wicked one, whom Christ will slay with the breath of his lips (Isa. 11:4).

"Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever": That is, the glory and reputation of their name, a good and honorable one, which they sought to transmit to the latest posterity. For though the names of wicked men may continue, as Pharaoh, Judas, and others. Yet they continue with a scandal and reproach upon them that shall never be wiped off, their names rot and stink (see Prov. 10:7). The whole of this denotes the utter ruin and shameful end of the enemies of Christ and his church, and which is matter of joy to the saints.

God is patient and forgiving. God gives plenty of time to repent, but and if they will not repent, His judgement falls hard upon them. This reminds me so much of the flood in Noah's time. Noah preached and warned of the impending doom, but no one listened. God said, "It is enough", and

wiped them off the face of the earth. There is a time when God says, enough. Do not wait that long to repent!

Psalm 9:6 "O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them."

Literally, "As to the enemy finished are his ruins for ever. Thou [God] hast destroyed," etc. (1 Sam. 15:3, 7; 27:8-9). The wicked are utterly undone. Their ruins shall never be repaired.

Abraham pleaded for Sodom and Gomorrah, but there were not even ten righteous in the city. God rained down fire and brimstone to destroy the city and all who dwelled there, after the angels had dragged Lot, his wife, and their two daughters out. Wicked cities take heed.

Psalm 9:7 "But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment."

Though cities and people may perish, yet the Lord abides for ever. Which is sufficient for the terror of his enemies, and the comfort of his church.

"He hath prepared his throne": Or, established it by his immutable purpose and his irrevocable promise. For the administration of judgment in this world, for the particular judgment after death, and for the general judgment after the resurrection of the dead.

God is established forever. He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. There was no one before Him, and there will be no one after Him. He is forever. He is the Eternal One. He is the great I Am.

Psalm 9:8 "And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness."

The word rendered "world", a general name for all the countries of the world. And so shows that it is the universal judgment that is here spoken of; and which will be carried on and finished with the utmost righteousness, and according to the strictest rules of justice and equity. And is therefore called the righteous judgment of God (Rom. 2:5; see Psalm 96:13).

"He shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness": Which signifies the same with the former clause, unless by the "world" there, should be meant the wicked of the world. And by the "people" here, the people of God; to whom the righteous Judge will give the crown of righteousness.

1 Kings 8:32 "Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness."

Jesus Christ is the Righteous Judge. We have discussed over and over in these lessons that, He is the only One worthy to judge. He separates the righteous for heaven and eternal life with Him

from the ones who have rejected Him. Those who do not repent and accept Jesus as their Savior are condemned to hell.

2 Timothy 4:8 "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Verses 9-10: God as a "refuge" is a recurring theme in Psalms (46:1-2; 91:1-2). A refuge or stronghold, sometimes translated "fortress", is a high place of security and protection (1 Sam. 23:14, 19, 29). The Lord Himself is as secure as the best of these (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5).

Psalm 9:9 "The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble."

God will not only judge the world at the last day, and then give sentence for his people against their enemies, but even at present he will give them his protection.

Psalms 46:1 "God [is] our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

The word translated refuge (in verse 9 above), means hill front. David found safety from Saul in just such a place. Our safety is in the Lord. He builds a hedge of safety around the true believer. The blood of Jesus is our covering. The entire "Sermon on the Mount", was for those who are oppressed. In this life there are troubles and trials, but remember, Jesus is our very present help.

Psalm 9:10 "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee."

"They that know": That is, that thoroughly understand and duly consider thy name. Thy infinite power and wisdom, and faithfulness and goodness.

"Will put their trust in thee": The experience of thy faithfulness to thy people in all ages is a just ground for their confidence.

"Hast not forsaken them that seek thee": That seek help and relief from thee by fervent prayer, mixed with faith or trust in thee, as is expressed in the former clause.

Psalms 37:25 "I have been young, and [now] am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

We find in the next Scripture that, one of the promises of God is that He will not forsake those who follow Him.

Hebrews 13:5 "[Let your] conversation [be] without covetousness; [and be] content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

We find that just to call on the name of the Lord will save you.

Acts 2:21 "And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

To read of the power of authority given those who believe in that name, read the 14th chapter of John beginning with the 12th verse.

Psalm 9:11 "Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings."

"The Lord, which dwelleth in Zion": There is a both some confusion and tension running throughout the Old Testament. I.e., God is enthroned in and above the heavens, and also, He symbolically dwells locally in His tabernacle (compare 1 Kings Chapter 8; Psalm 11:4).

As the result of these views of his character, and at the remembrance of his doings. The heart of the psalmist is full of exultation and joy at the remembrance of the divine interposition, and he naturally breaks out into these strong expressions, calling on others to rejoice also.

"Which dwelleth in Zion": On the word Zion (see the notes at Psalm 2:6; compare Psalm 3:4; 5:7). As Zion was the place where at this time the tabernacle was set up, and the worship of God was celebrated, it is spoken of as his dwelling place.

"Declare among the people his doings": Make general and wide proclamation of what he has done. That is, make him known abroad, in his true character that others may be brought also to put their trust in him, and to Praise him.

We find in most churches, then and now, the praise is usually accompanied by song. Zion, throughout the Bible, symbolizes the church. The best way to begin and end a service in the church is to sing praises to God. Most all songs tell a story of happenings in the Bible. One of the most beautiful songs of praise today, in my opinion, is Adoration. This is a song of praise to God which exalts Him above all others. Nearly all the songs in the song book are songs of praise to God, written by people who were moved upon by the Spirit of God.

Verses 9 and 18: "The humble" and the needy are people who suffer oppression for the Lord's sake, bearing their affliction with a godly spirit. These are ones God has not "forgotten" (12:5; 140:12).

"The humble ... the needy ... the poor": These designations often stand for the individual psalmist and/or the corporate community of disciples he represents. The terms all point to those who are afflicted, vulnerable and therefore totally dependent upon the Lord.

Psalm 9:12 "When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble."

For blood, Hebrew; bloods: The bloodshed or murder of his innocent and holy ones. Which though he may connive at for a season, yet he will certainly call the authors of it to a very severe account, and avenge it upon them.

(He remembereth them”: Either the humble, as it follows, or the oppressed (Psalm 9:9), that trust in him, and seek to him (Psalm 9:10), whom he seemed to have forgotten. Or, the bloods last mentioned, for that noun and this pronoun are both of the masculine gender. And then remembering is put for revenging or punishing, as it is (in Deut. 25:17, 19; Neh. 6:14; Jer. 14:10; 44:21), and often elsewhere.

"The humble": Or meek, as this word, which is used also in (Zech. 9:9), is translated (Matt. 21:5). Who do not, and cannot, and will not avenge themselves, but commit their cause to me, as the God to whom vengeance belongeth. Or, afflicted or oppressed ones.

Those who shed their blood in the name of the Lord will not be forgotten. Stephen is a very good example of one who shed his blood for the gospel's sake. In death, he saw heaven open and Jesus standing to receive him.

1 Peter 5:6 "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"

Psalm 9:13 "Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble [which I suffer] of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:"

“Death” is depicted like an earthly city, surrounded by a wall, where people are held captive – hence the reference to the “gates of death”.

"Consider my trouble": To wit, compassionately and effectually, so as to bring me out of it.

"From the gates of death": From the brink or mouth of the grave, into which I was dropping, being as near death as a man is to the city that is come to the very gates of it. And so the phrase is used (Psalm 107:18; Isa. 38:10).

Psalm 9:14 "That I may show forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation."

That I may praise you in the land of the living. That I may finish the work of praise by rendering to thee all that is due. The idea is, that the dead could not praise God, that his praise could be uttered only by the living. And he calls on God, therefore, to interpose and save him that he might yet worship and praise him on the earth. In this sentiment, the psalmist utters only what man naturally feels when he looks upon the grave. That it is an end of human plans and pursuits.

"In the gates": I.e. with the utmost publicity (Psalm 116:14). For the city gates were the common place of concourse and business, corresponding to the agora or forum of Greece and Rome (compare Job 29:7; Prov. 8:3; Jer. 17:19-20). The implied contrast between “the cheerful ways of men” and the gloomy entrance to the nether world is obvious.

"I will rejoice": To wit, with spiritual joy and thanksgiving.

The cry of all mankind is, "Have mercy upon me O Lord". God hears and answers prayers of those who believe. God sees our problems, even before we pray and ask for help. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Jesus is salvation to all who will accept Him. We cannot save ourselves. The praise must all go to Jesus.

Verses 15-16: The "boomerang" principle of exact retribution returns.

Psalm 9:15 "The heathen are sunk down in the pit [that] they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken."

Fallen into that destruction which they designed to bring upon others. "Faith beholds, as already executed, that righteous judgment whereby wicked men will fall into the perdition which they had prepared for others. Either openly by persecution, or more covertly by temptation (see Psalm 7:15-16)."

"In the pit that they made": In which they designed that others should fall.

"In the net which they hid": Which they laid for others. The allusion here is to a spring-net made to capture birds or wild beasts.

"Is their own foot taken": The net here referred seems to have been particularly a net to take wild beasts by securing one of their feet, like a modern trap. The idea is, that they had been brought into the destruction which they had designed for others (see notes at (Psalm 7:15-16).

Psalm 9:16 "The LORD is known [by] the judgment [which] he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgsion. Selah."

"The LORD": Better, Jehovah hath made himself known. He hath executed judgment, snaring the wicked in the work of his own hands.

"The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands": Not Goliath, as Kimchi thinks, who was slain by David with his own sword. Though this was true of him in the letter and type. But the wicked one, the man of sin and son of perdition, the antichrist. Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all craftiness and wily stratagems, called the depths of Satan (Rev. 2:24). But his own sins shall take him, and he shall be holden with the cords of his iniquities, and be rewarded double for all his sins. What is before figuratively expressed is here literally declared. Or, "he hath snared the wicked in or by the work of his hands", that is, God.

"Higgsion. Selah": Higgsion occurs three times in the Psalms (Psalm 9:16; 19:14; 92:4). In the two latter places, it is translated (in Psalm 19:14, "meditation;" in Psalm 92:4, "solemn sound"). Both meanings are etymologically possible, but the word apparently, indicates some change in the music, or possibly, as joined with Selah, a direction to some particular part of the orchestra.

The wicked is without excuse. He is guilty as charged, because he has not accepted the forgiveness offered to him in Jesus Christ. The heathen (those who have totally rejected Jesus), made his own choice. He activated his own free will and rejected the Mercy of God. He stands before the Judge of all the earth with nothing but his own life. He is judged guilty of sin and worthy of death, because he did not accept Jesus Christ as the full payment for his sin. His righteousness is as filthy rags. The Lord is Just and must judge him lost.

Verses 17-20: Prominent theological themes (from Psalms 1 and 2), also return as the psalmist draws this great hymn to a climax.

Psalm 9:17 "The wicked shall be turned into hell, [and] all the nations that forget God."

Some render it, "shall return to the grave", to the earth, the original dust from whence they came. But this is common to all men, to the righteous as well as the wicked. Rather here signifies the place of torment, commonly called hell, where devils and damned spirits are. Here the souls of the wicked go immediately upon their departure from their bodies (Luke 16:23). And after the judgment is over, they will be remanded there in soul and body; and their damnation is called the destruction of soul and body in hell. Which will consist in an everlasting separation from God, and in a sense of his wrath and fiery indignation. And though this is true of all the wicked, yet here that wicked one, antichrist, and his wicked followers, are chiefly designed. Even the beast and false prophet, who shall be cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (Rev. 19:20).

"And all the nations that forget God": Which is not to be understood of the Pagan nations, though they may be said to forget God, since he is to be known by the light of nature, and yet they worship idols, the works of their hands. But the Papal nations, who adore the pope of Rome as God on earth, worship angels and saints departed, and images of gold and silver, and wood and stone. It may be applied to every wicked man who forgets there is a God who sees and knows all things, and to whom men are accountable (see Psalm 50:22).

Now, we see the terrible fate of all who reject Jesus as their Savior. The individual, or the nation, that turns their back on God, wind up in hell.

Psalm 9:18 "For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall [not] perish for ever."

Though God, for a time, may seem to forget or neglect them, and suffer their enemies to triumph over them.

"The expectation of the poor": Namely, of their receiving help from God.

"Shall not perish for ever": Though they may be tempted to think it shall. The vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak.

Some believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have no earthly wealth. The first few verses of John chapter 14 promise that Jesus is even now in heaven building a mansion for you and me. We may be poor in this world, but we have the greatest wealth known to man, when we have the gift of eternal life. Many very wealthy people would trade all of their wealth just to know their eternal life in heaven with Jesus was assured. We must be like Paul. He said, whatever state he found himself in, he was content.

Psalm 9:19 "Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight."

To the destruction of thine enemies, and the salvation of thy people (see Psalm 7:6).

"Let not man prevail": The man of sin, antichrist, that is, let him not always prevail. He is the little horn that was to prevail against the saints, and has prevailed (Dan. 7:21). But he shall not always prevail. This petition will be heard and answered; for though he shall cast down many thousands, he shall not be "strengthened" by it (Dan. 11:12). Where the same word is used as here. The Lamb at last shall overcome him and his ten kings, his supporters, and all that shall aid and assist him (Rev. 17:14).

"Let the Heathen be judged in thy sight. That is, the antichristian nations that adhere to the man of sin. Let them be judged and punished in the sight of God, the Judge of all the earth, whose eyes are as a flame of fire (compare with Joel 3:12).

Psalm 9:20 "Put them in fear, O LORD: [that] the nations may know themselves [to be but] men. Selah."

The dread of a nation's god was believed to precede successful armies into battle. For Israel, the splendor of God would overwhelm and defeat the enemy.

Not only will man not prevail over God, but neither did Lucifer. Men are not God. We are God's creation. He can do with us as He will. Man must realize that we are God's servants. We will never be God. We are what God allows us to be. Even kings and presidents are just men, subject to the will of God. Fear God and reverence Him. Repent, and accept Jesus as full payment for your sins and then receive the gift of eternal life.

Psalm 9 Questions

1. How does David express the way he will praise the Lord?
2. Circumstances sometimes make us want to _____, when we should be _____.
3. What is praise called in Hebrews 13:15?
4. What does Isaiah 51:11 say about the redeemed of the Lord?
5. The joy of the Lord is our _____.

6. David came against Goliath in whose name?
7. How does the 12th chapter of Romans tell us to treat our enemies?
8. Who fights the battles for the believer?
9. What 2 words describe the judgements of the Lord God Almighty?
10. How were the people warned in Noah's time of the impending doom?
11. When Abraham pleaded with God for Sodom and Gomorrah, there could not be found even ___ righteous.
12. How were Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed?
13. Who did the angels of God drag out of Sodom, before the destruction?
14. Name several names of God that show His eternal existence.
15. Who is the Righteous Judge?
16. In 2 Timothy 4:8, who is the crown of righteousness laid up for?
17. God is our _____ and our _____, a very present help.
18. What is the covering for the believer?
19. Who was the Sermon on the Mount addressed to?
20. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be _____.
21. Praise in church is usually accompanied by what?
22. What does Zion symbolize?
23. Who is a very good example of someone who shed his blood for the gospel?
24. What is the cry of all mankind?
25. The wicked is without _____.
26. Who are the heathen, really?
27. Why is the sinner judged guilty on judgement day?
28. Verse 17 says, the wicked shall be turned into where?
29. What is the greatest wealth known to man?
30. Why can God do with us as He will?

31. Who are presidents and kings subject to?