

PSALM 9 – Praise for God’s Just Deeds

To the chief Musician upon Muthlabben, A Psalm of David.

¹ I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works.

² I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.

³ When my enemies turn back, They shall fall and perish at Your presence.

⁴ For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness.

⁵ You have rebuked the nations, You have destroyed the wicked; You have blotted out their name forever and ever.

⁶ O enemy, destructions are finished forever! And you have destroyed cities; Even their memory has perished.

⁷ But the LORD shall endure forever; He has prepared His throne for judgment.

⁸ He shall judge the world in righteousness, And He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness.

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

¹⁰ And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.

¹¹ Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion! Declare His deeds among the people.

¹² When He avenges blood, He remembers them; He does not forget the cry of the humble.

¹³ Have mercy on me, O LORD! Consider my trouble from those who hate me, You who lift me up from the gates of death,

¹⁴ That I may tell of all Your praise In the gates of the daughter of Zion. I will rejoice in Your salvation.

¹⁵ The nations have sunk down in the pit which they made; In the net which they hid, their own foot is caught.

¹⁶ The LORD is known by the judgment He executes; The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Meditation. Selah

¹⁷ The wicked shall be turned into hell, And all the nations that forget God.

¹⁸ For the needy shall not always be forgotten; The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.

¹⁹ Arise, O LORD, Do not let man prevail; Let the nations be judged in Your sight.

²⁰ Put them in fear, O LORD, That the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah

(New King James Version)

I. Background

- a. Authored by David
- b. The timeframe of its composition is not specified.
- c. Based on the contents appearing to be a type of national victory song after the defeat of national enemies, it could correspond to the events in 2 Samuel 21:15-22 or other passages where victory over the Philistines was documented.
- d. Also it is most likely to date after the return of the Ark to Jerusalem based on verse 11.
- e. This psalm is one of 9 alphabetic or acrostic psalms (9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145)¹ – each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

II. Verse by Verse Analysis

- a. Introductory notes - The word “Muthlabben” means “death of the son” or of the firstborn, or even “death of the fool” as some translate “labben” as fool. Many scholars debate whether it is a reference to the death of Bathsheba’s first son, or speaks of Goliath’s death, or of Nabal – one of David’s momentary enemies, or perhaps refers to Absalom’s death, or if it is a reference to the death of the firstborn in Egypt – a judgment of God which made the way for Israel’s escape from the land of bondage. Some simply proffer that “death of a son” was a certain familiar tune to which the psalmist wanted his words sung.
- b. Verse 1 – whole hearted praise – the only true praise we can offer to God! The words “whole heart” mean “inner man, mind and will” according to the Strong’s Lexicon. Part of praising God involves telling others of His marvelous works in our lives. Psalm 107:2 confirms this – ***Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!*** Testimony is powerful and a God given tool to overcome the devil. (Rev. 12:11) Even King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:2 found out how important it

¹ Keil and Delitzsch. Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol. 5, pg. 99.

was to testify of the marvelous work in his life – and announced it to his entire kingdom!

- c. Verse 2 – I will be glad...I will sing praise...the psalmist indicates that his volition – his will – his choice is involved in his praise. Regardless of your current circumstances – choose to sing praise – it will defeat the enemy just as King Jehoshaphat discovered in 2 Chron. 20:21-22.
- d. Verse 3 – 6 – These verses speak of God’s utter defeat of the enemy – in David’s day it was a physical enemy of Israel – actual heathen armies that opposed God’s anointed. In our day it speaks of our adversary the devil. (1 Peter 5:8)
- e. Verse 7 - 8 – God’s divine justice will prevail and is perfectly just.
- f. Verse 9 – 10 – The promise of God being to us a stronghold in time of trouble is repeated throughout scripture but especially in psalms. And God’s promise of never forsaking those who seek Him is a comfort in the worst of times to which no human device can compare.
- g. Verse 11 – Another encouragement to praise God and testify of His works!
- h. Verse 12- a reminder that God is just and will avenge those whose blood was shed unjustly (Rev. 6:9-11; Rev. 20:4; Rev. 20:11-15) and He will just righteously all men.
- i. Verses 13-14 – Prayer with a purpose – that he may tell of the praises of God.
- j. Verses 15 - 17 – the eventuality of the wicked is proclaimed here: they trip themselves in their own devices while on the earth and eventually they land in hell with all the nations who “forget” God.
- k. Verse 18 – a promise that God does not forget the needy.
- l. Verses 19-20 – a prayer for the breaking of the pride of men and for a revelation of who God is and who man is not.

Illustrations for Psalm 9

LEARNING TO PRAISE GOD

John Wesley was about 21 years of age when he went to Oxford University. He came from a Christian home, and he was gifted with a keen mind and good looks. Yet in those days he was a bit snobbish and sarcastic. One night, however, something happened that set in motion a change in Wesley's heart. While speaking with a porter, he discovered that the poor fellow had only one coat and lived in such impoverished conditions that he didn't even have a bed. Yet he was an unusually happy person, filled with gratitude to God. Wesley, being immature, thoughtlessly joked about the man's misfortunes. "And what else do you thank God for?" he said with a touch of sarcasm. The porter smiled, and in the spirit of meekness replied with joy, "I thank Him that He has given me my life and being, a heart to love Him, and above all a constant desire to serve Him!" Deeply moved, Wesley recognized that this man knew the meaning of true thankfulness.

Many years later, in 1791, John Wesley lay on his deathbed at the age of 88. Those who gathered around him realized how well he had learned the lesson of praising God in every circumstance. Despite Wesley's extreme weakness, he began singing the hymn, "I'll Praise My Maker While I've Breath."

Our Daily Bread.

A body is not crippled 'til its heart has ceased to praise. Louis Albert Banks tells of an elderly Christian man, a fine singer, who learned that he had cancer of the tongue and that surgery was required. In the hospital after everything was ready for the operation, the man said to the doctor, "Are you sure I will never sing again?" The surgeon found it difficult to answer his question. He simply shook his head no. The patient then asked if he could sit up for a moment. "I've had many good times singing the praises of God," he said. "And now you tell me I can never sing again. I have one song that will be my last. It will be of gratitude and praise to God." There in the doctor's presence the man sang softly the words of Isaac Watts' hymn, "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,/ And when my voice is lost in death,/ Praise shall employ my nobler power;/ My days of praise shall ne'er be past,/ While life, and thought, and being last,/ Or immortality endures."

Our Daily Bread.

JUSTICE

A socialist once came to see Andrew Carnegie and soon was railing against the injustice of Carnegie having so much money. In his view, wealth was meant to be divided equally. Carnegie asked his secretary for an assessment of everything he owned and at the same time looked up the figures on world population. He did a little arithmetic on a pad and then said to his secretary. "Give this gentleman 16 cents. That's his share of my wealth."

The late Dr. Boice had some interesting thoughts as to why God's justice is offensive.

In human affairs we rightly value justice and the "wrath" of the judicial system, for they protect us. If by chance we ourselves run afoul of the law, there is always the chance that we can cop a plea, escape on a technicality or plead guilty to some lesser offense and be excused for it. But we cannot do that with God. With him we deal not with the imperfections of human justice but with the perfections of divine justice. We deal with the one to whom not only actions but also thoughts and intentions are visible. Who can escape such justice? Who can stand before such an unwielding judge? No one. Sensing this truth we therefore resent God's justice and deny its reality in every way we can.

A short distance from the Pentagon, inscribed with an iron stylus on blocks of granite, the walls of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington proclaim the words of our third President,

"And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice can not sleep forever."

SOWING AND REAPING

Sir Robert Watson Watt, the inventor of the radar was arrested himself for speeding. He had been caught in a radar trap. Shortly after this irony he wrote this poem:

Pity Sir Robert Watson Watt
Strange target of his radar plot,
And this, with others I could mention,
A victim of his own invention.

Brett Blair, Sermon Illustrations