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Psalm 49

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Bible
at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Psalm 49.

Topics.

- Foolishness of trusting in riches.
- Why should I fear when those who cheat me surround me?
- No man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life.
- The wise, the rich, the poor, the fool and the stupid all perish alike.
- Man, in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish.
- God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, he will receive me.
- Man, in his pomp without understanding is like the beasts that perish.
- Man perishes like the beasts of the field.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION

Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

1

BOOK TWO (PSALM 42-72)

PSALM 49:1-4

To the Choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

Foolishness of trusting in Riches.

- **Psalm 49:1-4:** Hear this, all peoples! Give ear, all inhabitants of the world, ²both low and high, rich and poor together! ³My mouth shall speak wisdom; the meditation of my heart shall be understanding. ⁴I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will solve my riddle (dark saying in KJV) to the music of the lyre.

The word riddle (dark saying) comes from the Hebrew word (*chiydah*) and means a puzzle, a conundrum, a mystery, a perplexity. It refers to a sentence or a speech that contains a hard question or proverb. Korah is going to speak some wisdom and calls all the inhabitants of the earth, the noble and the lowly the rich and the poor to gather together and hear the riddle he is about to speak.

PSALM 49:5-6

Why should I Fear when those who Cheat me Surround Me.

- **Psalm 49:5-6:** Why should I fear in times of trouble, when the iniquity of those who cheat me surrounds me, ⁶those who trust in their wealth and boast of the abundance of their riches?

The first two questions of Korah's riddle are why should he fear, fret or worry:

1. When the iniquity of those who cheat him surrounds him.
2. When the wealthy and rich boast of their abundance.

This is a trap we can all fall into, it appears Korah is in a time of trouble and perhaps financially struggling, maybe because people around him have cheated him out of what is rightfully his and to make it even worse those that are living a life of ease are boasting of their abundance. Korah's question is the same question Asaph addresses in Psalm seventy-three, "Why to the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer?"

PSALM 49:7-9

No Man can Ransom another, or Give to God the Price of his Life.

- **Psalm 49:7-9:** Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life, ⁸for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice, ⁹that he should live on forever and never see the pit.

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." (Matt. 26:39). Jesus is saying, "Father if there is any other way to save mankind please let the suffering that is about to befall me pass." Throughout the Lord's compassionate ministry on earth he was fully aware of the brutal, cruel and bloody death awaiting him. The Levitical blood sacrifices were a shadow and type of it (the innocent dying for the guilty), Isaiah the prophet spoke of it in chapter fifty-three, Psalm twenty-two speaks of it and many of the Old Testament Scriptures proclaim it and Jesus himself said:

- God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16).

Who can comprehend such humbling love shown not just to the righteous and the noble, but even to the lowliest child of Adam? What does the world have to give or what amount of money can repay God not only for such amazing love, but also for our deliverance from the darkness of the grave to eternal life in everlasting happiness. Who can reward God for His forgiveness and grace that freely flows daily from His throne toward all the faithful in Christ? All of salvation comes to us as a gift from God all He requires of us is to unwrap it and receive it. It cost us nothing it cost the Father the sacrifice of His Son and the price the Son paid on the bloodstained cross of Calvary who can repay with money. There is only one thing we can offer God in repayment and only one thing He wants from all of us and that is our love, our heart and our praises arising from a heart and mind that is overflowing with thanksgiving and gratitude toward His Son our Saviour and King the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sadly because of a lack of perceiving this great love God has toward us some in the Christian faith tend to determine whether God loves them by their good or bad circumstances. They feel if life is charmed and blessed God loves them, but if it suddenly takes a turn for the worse and trouble comes, they feel God has withdrawn his love, but this is superstition and judging God according to the fickle circumstances of this world. When anyone who believes in Christ doubts God's love all we have to do is look back to the bloodstained cross and see what it cost the heart of the Father to save us and how much his Son suffered to redeem us and spiritually crown and cloth us with his royal and majestic robe of righteous so that

we could be justified and granted eternal life in everlasting glory apart from self-effort and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions. This truth should comfort every faithful brother and sister in Christ since it is certain if God was prepared to sacrifice his Son for us, while we were indifferent and apathetic toward Him and uninterested and unconcerned about what honoured Him and what didn't He will with great joy do everything to keep us for eternal life now we love His Son. (He does this by daily lavishing us with grace)

PSALM 49:10-11

The Wise, the Rich, the Poor, the Fool and the Stupid all Perish.

- **Psalm 49:10-11:** For he sees that even the wise die; the fool and the stupid alike must perish and leave their wealth to others. ¹¹Their graves are their homes forever, their dwelling places to all generations, though they called lands by their own names.

The answer to Korah's questions, "Why should he worry about the iniquity of those who cheat and the rich who boast of their abundance is that he shouldn't because no matter how rich they are their end is the same as the most poor and the darkness of death is their lot, in contrast to this Korah will be raised to eternal life and everlasting happiness. When speaking of man without God the author of Ecclesiastes wrote:

- What happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. ²⁰All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. (Eccles. 3:19-20).

Their graves are their homes forever (Psalm 49:11 v11) is the true teaching of the Bible, those who are judged unworthy of eternal life do not go to a place of fiery flames called hell where they are not only cruelly and brutally tortured by evil eternal creatures called demons, but their bodies are also burned by fiery flames so that they suffer the worst of all agonies for all eternity. This doctrine is not only a gross misunderstanding of Scripture but is also a gross misrepresentation of God's character, since it portrays Him as an extremely sadistic God, especially when it is considered that even those in the secular world would not inflict such brutal and cruel torture on a human for their entire life let alone for all eternity.

Added to this John tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8) (1 John 4:16). This horrific doctrine of hell was no-doubt perpetuated in the early years of the church by religious leaders to scare the naïve into the church and has been adopted and perpetuated by their followers from generation to generation through tradition and religious institutions and organisations. Eternal life or eternal death (i.e., utter and total extinction) is the two choices the Bible teaches from Genesis to Revelation. For further information see the titles:

- Hell or the Grave (Final destination of Humans).
- The Lake of Fire.
- Both titles are in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

PSALM 49:12-13

Man, in his Pomp will not Remain; He is like the Beasts that Perish.

- **Psalm 49:12-13:** Man in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish. ¹³This is the path of those who have foolish confidence; yet after them people approve of their boasts. *Selah*

The prideful that trust in their own righteousness and their own riches will all die in the same way that animals die, they will breathe their last breath and their life will be no more and the darkness of the grave will become their home.

David after observing human life on earth wrote:

- Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath. (Psalm 39:5).
- Surely a man goes about as a shadow! Surely for nothing they are in turmoil; man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather. (Psalm 39:6).
- When you discipline a man with rebukes for sin, you consume like a moth what is dear to him; surely all mankind is a mere breath. (Psalm 39:11).

This is why prideful boasting of one's own self-worth before God is such foolishness it matters not how powerful, famous or rich a person maybe without God they are but a breath of wind that can be snuffed out at any time and when that darkness comes they die like the beasts that perishes. Years ago in the Australian Herald Newspaper there was a cartoon caption of two very powerful CEO's standing on a cliff smoking cigars while admiring the view and boasting that tomorrow they will take control of another global billion dollar company. Behind them was a gigantic hand with its finger ready to flick them off the cliff. This is why it is foolish to deny God and boast in our own works, our life can be taken at anytime and without God only the darkness of the grave awaits. Self-flattery, self-commendation and self-applause and boasting in self are foolish and as vain as they are proud. Instead of praising or commending ourselves, we should strive to approve ourselves to God and know that the LORD'S approval will be our best praise.

PSALM 49:14-15

God will Ransom my Soul from the Power of Sheol.

- **Psalm 49:14-15:** Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd, and the upright shall rule over them in the morning. Their form shall be consumed in Sheol, with no place to dwell. ¹⁵But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. *Selah*

Sheol: is the Hebrew word for grave.

The expression, "Death shall be their shepherd," (v14) means that the shepherd of those who deny God is death and he will act as a shepherd over them to lead them downward to the grave. In contrast to this is the Lord who is the shepherd of those who believe in God who will act as their shepherd to lead them out of the grave and upward to eternal life and everlasting happiness (Psalm 23).

The upright shall rule over them in the morning: (v14) refers to the Lord Jesus Christ returning in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb

will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote:

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

God will ransom my soul from Sheol, for he will receive me: (v15) how perfect are these words of Korah, "God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol." Clearly Korah understood a price would be paid for his dead body to be raised to immortality and saved to eternal life and that Korah was fully assured God would receive him when he was raised. It also shines a spotlight on the truth that the faithful of the Old Testament were aware of the resurrection. David in his Psalms wrote the following prophetic words:

- You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. (Psalm 16:10).

Here David not only knows he will be resurrected, but is also aware the Messiah the Christ he loves will be laid in the grave and that God will not leave him there long enough for his body to decay. Peter when addressing the crowds at Jerusalem refers to David's faith saying:

- Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³²This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. (Acts 2:29-32).

The foundations of the Christian faith were not laid in the New Testament it was planned and purposed in God's eternal mind before time began and is spoken of by the prophets and Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.

Prideful Man without Understanding is Like Beasts that Perish.

- **Psalm 49:16-19:** Be not afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases. ¹⁷For when he dies he will carry nothing away; his glory will not go down after him. ¹⁸For though, while he lives, he counts himself blessed, —and though you get praise when you do well for yourself— ¹⁹his soul will go to the generation of his fathers, who will never again see light.

No one should envy another's persons success and prosperity because when they die they cannot take any of their material possessions with them. I myself have been to a number of funerals and as yet have not seen Hurst towing a trailer loaded with the valuable treasures of the deceased to the graveside. Added to this to fear or envy another person's abundance is coveting what they have and the Old Testament law states:

1. You shall not *covet* your neighbour's house; you shall not *covet* your neighbour's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's." In modern language this means, "You shall not *covet* any other person's house, their wife or husband, or anyone's successful business, their riches and wealth, their new car, their beautiful boat or anything that belongs to any other person" (Exod. 20:17).

In the New Testament the royal law and Jesus command states:

2. You shall love your neighbour as yourself (Rom. 13:9).

Jesus said all the commandments regarding mankind are summed up in the words of the royal law (James 2:8) because the spirit underpinning the royal law, desires the best for others contrasted to the spirit underlying coveting which is craving and seeking the best for self. Thou shalt not covert exposes our avariciousness toward materialism it shines a spotlight on our self-interest and exposes our degrading, resentful, bitter and jealous thoughts of others and the list goes on.

PSALM 49:20

Man Perishes like the Beasts of the Field.

- **Psalm 49:20:** Man in his pomp yet without understanding is like the beasts that perish.

Those that trust in riches have foolish confidence, because no-one can ransom another person life with money. No-one can give to God the price of his or her own life because the ransom of eternal life is costly and no amount of money can ever suffice for it, so no-one has the power to lengthen their days all without God will die as the beast of the field dies. After observing the world around him the author of Ecclesiastes concludes that the best thing for those who chose to live without God is to work, eat, drink and be joyful, all the days of their life that God has given them on earth because when they breathe their last breath there is no more, but the darkness of the grave. (Eccles. 8:14-15).

- I commend joy, for man has no good thing under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful, for this will go with him in his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun. (Eccles. 8:15).

FOOTNOTE

This does not mean it is wrong from Christians to be rich and wealthy, there are many men and woman who have been very successful in their particular line of work, they do all their business deals honestly and with

integrity and treat their staff justly, added to this they have resources that help others extend the Kingdom of God and are able to help the poor. The focus of this Psalm is on those who are, trusting in their wealth and using it for their own selfish indulgences. Money is not sinful or evil it can be used for good or for bad, to help the poor or to corrupt a king. It is the purpose it is used for that determines whether the money is good or bad, not the money itself.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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