

“A Refuge in Times of Trouble”

Psalm 9

This Psalm seems to have been placed immediately following Psalm 8 because of its content. Psalm 8 ends with the proclamation of the excellency of the “name” of the LORD, our Lord – the Messiah. This psalm picks up that note of praise in the first two verses, which serve as an introduction to the psalm.

This psalm is all about the help that the servant of God has over the enemies they face. It deals with not only the help we have but also the confidence we have that God will bring an end to their wickedness. In a day when it seems like the evil of the world has taken over all aspects of society, this psalm is crucial to our peace in the midst of the chaos.

The title of this psalm is unique, and as has been the case with earlier ones, is also vague or unknown. That it is a psalm of David is not in much dispute. What is fairly unknown is what is meant by “Muth-labben” (על-מות לִבִּי). Zodhiates sums it up this way:

It is part of the musical directions for the singing of this psalm, yet the meaning is ambiguous. Various renderings have been offered by interpreters, the most likely options being that the phrase is either a title of a tune to which the psalm was to be sung or that the phrase means "death to the son" or "to die for the son." Also possible is the combination of these two options, namely, that the phrase is a title of a tune called "Death to the Son"/ "To die for the Son" to which Psalm 9 was to be sung.

Whatever is meant by the title, the content is a wonderful declaration of who our God is and what

He will do when we need His help.

As stated, the first two verses serve as an introduction. When the enemy (or enemies) comes against us, we need to continue to praise the Lord for all His "marvelous works." Not just in times of good and plenty, when all is well with us, but in times of duress and trouble. Verse two (2) makes the case for being happy and rejoicing and praising God for what He's done – no matter the circumstances.

There are four statements made by David concerning the God he served that we should make today about the God we serve – He is the same God. Connected with the text chosen for the title of this message, we can look at these four statements with the idea of, "In Times of Trouble, I Will..."

1. "I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart;
 - a. This isn't speaking of internalizing our praise. The word for "praise" (הִלָּל) is one that carries the idea of vocally acknowledging the LORD and His goodness.
 - b. "With my whole heart" – all of our attention should be on Him when we are worshipping Him. We should avoid distractions and give Him our all.
2. "I will shew forth all thy marvelous works."

This is done in our praise – this is a type of parallel restatement of the first verset. When we praise, and how we praise ought to point to the greatness of our God.

3. "I will be glad and rejoice in thee:"

As stated already, even in times of trouble,

we are to be glad and rejoice in the greatness and goodness of God.

4. "I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High."

This is that same restatement of the first verset of this verse. Our singing is meant to be the rejoicing in Him, is our praise to Him. That's why the music we sing in church is so important.

As verse nine (9) states, the LORD is "a refuge in times of trouble," demonstrating the emphasis of the psalm – that no matter the trouble, we have help in our God.

I. DIVINE JUSTICE – VS. 3-8

A. It is right (correct, proper) – when our enemies mount an attack on us, God is there defending our "right" and our "cause" (or, our righteous cause) – vs. 3-4.

B. It is responsive – the judgment of God, the justice He demonstrates, is perfect in its response to the attack of the enemies of His people – vs. 5-6.

C. It is righteous – His justice is proper and righteous – vs. 7-8 (more on this in the next point).

Acts 17:31

³¹ Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Romans 2:5-6

⁵ But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

⁶ Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

Romans 2:16

¹⁶ In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Revelation 20:12-13

¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

II. DIVINE JOY – VS. 9-14

A. Not only does He defend us when attacks come, but He also protects us during them. This will cause us joy even in those times of trouble – vs. 9.

1. "A refuge for the oppressed"

- a) "Refuge" – a fortified place, either naturally so or done so by man. It was a high hill or cliff, a rock, walls built by man, etc. in the Bible where one was removed from danger. In relation to the LORD being our refuge, it points to a place that is impregnable by the enemy – a place, whether literally or, more

specifically, spiritually, where we are untouchable.

- b) "The oppressed" – this word is more severe than it would appear in our language. It is "one who is overwhelmed to the extreme, even to being completely crushed" (K&D). This isn't just speaking of a physical oppression, but is spoken of in Prov. 26:28 as being crushed by verbal attacks.

Proverbs 26:28

²⁸ A lying tongue hateth those that are **afflicted** by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

2. "A refuge in times of trouble"

Whether those times of trouble are coming at us from an outside, obvious force, or they are coming at us from an unseen force, or they are troubles that we have caused ourselves, He is still – and always – a refuge in those times.

Psalm 50:15

¹⁵ And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Psalm 77:1-2

¹ I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

² In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

Psalm 108:12

¹² Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.

B. Those that trust Him completely will be

completely protected and saved, and they will rejoice because of it – vs. 10-14.

This is not to say that we will never have problems, or that we will never be attacked. What it is saying is that when those attacks come (and they will), we will be kept in the center of His will if we but follow Him and His Word.

1. Vs. 10 – “They that know thy name will put their trust in thee” – what a blessing to know that we can have absolute trust in Him for who He is and what He’s done for us.

Isaiah 26:3-4

³ Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

⁴ Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

2. Vs. 11 – “Declare among the people his doings” – if we “know” His name, and we are trusting in Him as we ought, then we will be more than ready to let others know what He’s done for us, and what He can do for them.

Psalms 105:1-2

¹ O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.

² Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.

3. Vs. 12 – God will not allow the persecution

of His people to go unpunished. He may not bring judgment when we think He should, but He will “remember them” – “he forgeteth not the cry of the humble” (עָנִי – the afflicted).

Luke 18:7-8

⁷ And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

⁸ I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

4. Verses thirteen and fourteen (13-14) give us a wonderful picture of the hope and help we have in our Lord when trouble comes.

a) The word for “consider” (רָאָה) is a verb that means to see, with the basic idea of seeing with the eyes. David pleads with God to look at his trouble and have mercy upon him. He knew he had done things that put him in the position he was in, but he was pleading with God to show mercy and consider all he was going through.

b) The primary reason he wanted to be restored wasn't because he deserved it, or to boast of how good he was, but to be able to praise God for His goodness (vs. 14).

III. DIVINE JUDGEMENT (BECAUSE HE IS JUST) – vs. 15-20

A. Divine judgment will come – it is sure – vs. 15-17.

1. Verses fifteen and sixteen (15-16) simply

state, in poetic form, the principle of reaping what is sown on the part of the wicked.

Proverbs 5:22

²² His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.

Proverbs 22:8

⁸ He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

- a) The Geneva Bible notes makes this comment that is worth consideration: "The mercy of God toward his saints must be declared and the fall of the wicked must always be considered."
- b) Verse sixteen (16) ends with "Higgaion. Selah." "The music, and in fact, as the combination הגיון סלה indicates, the playing of the stringed instruments (Psalm 92:3), increases here; or the music is increased after a solo of the stringed instruments. The song here soars aloft to the climax of triumph" (K&D).

The use of "Selah," as the emphasis for contemplation of what was just said, shows the importance of this point.

Psalm 92:3

³ Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound. [The words "solemn sound" is the Hebrew word for "Higgaion."]

- 2. Verse seventeen (17) gives a universal truth of Scripture – those without Christ

will “be turned into hell” (Sheol). Although the word for “hell” can mean the grave (and is translated that way at least thirty times in the Old Testament), in its use here it is referring to the final, eternal place of the condemned – hell itself.

2 Thessalonians 1:7–9

⁷ And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

⁸ In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

⁹ Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

B. It will come because the ungodly care nothing about God or His will – vs. 18-20.

1. Verse eighteen (18) is another one of the verses in this psalm that gives the child of God great comfort – we will “not always be forgotten” – we “shall not perish for ever.” There is a time coming when the trials of this life will be over, and we will have eternal rest from it all.

Hebrews 4:9

⁹ There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

2. Verses nineteen and twenty (19-20) bring the point back to the divine judgment that is coming upon the wicked. “That the nations may know themselves to be but men.” Compared to God, those that would be the enemies of His children will find that

they are nothing more than mere mortal men and will never defeat the God of the Bible.

Isaiah 31:3

³ Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.

Conclusion: We have “a refuge in times of trouble” – so why do we seem so worrisome when the enemy rises up against us? This is a simple enough question for me to ask, but a quite different principle for me to follow – this psalm gives us the hope we need to carry on in the work of the Lord in spite of the problems we may have.