

## Psalm 49

The folly of trusting riches.

Psa 49:1 Hear this, all *ye* people; give ear, all *ye* inhabitants of the world:

- Notice the absence of “all Israel” when delivering this message. God had always desired that everyone everywhere receive His messages of redemption.

1Ti 2:3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have **all** (*every*) men (*Gk.444- human being*) to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

- He didn't save only Israel even though He **did** make a **specific** covenant with them. That agreement was in force as long as they kept their part of the contract. Of course that covenant finally matured once Christ came to redeem **all** of mankind. After that, the only pact available to all people of the earth was/is the gospel of the **New Testament**.

Rom 2:13 (For **not** the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the **doers** of the law shall be justified. 14 For when the Gentiles, which have **not** the law, do by nature the things contained **in** the law, these, having not the law, are a **law unto themselves**: 15 Which shew the **work** of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

- Those who followed the “*letter*” of the law weren't always following the “*spirit*” of the law, which all boiled down to “*loving God and neighbor*” which is the fulfilling of the **Old Covenant** law and the prophets.

Mat 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On **these two commandments** hang all the law and the prophets.

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (*you sin, you die- Gen 2:16-17*). 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law (*love God, love your neighbor*) might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Gen 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

- So, in delivering this message to “all” inhabitants of the then known world, the Psalmist made it clear that the message pertained to everyone. Even to those who were “a law unto themselves”, the **Gentile nations** living around Israel.

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Psa 49:2 Both low and high, rich and poor, together.

- Covering all of humanity, the message was not to be considered one that was beyond the understanding of the common man or below those of a higher level of intelligence. All levels and classes of socio-economic status were to take note. It was to be the one thing they would all have in common.

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Psa 49:3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart *shall be* of understanding.

- The **Psalmist** then speaks of things he has meditated on. **Heart** here is the same as in the **Greek** where heart is mentioned. It represents the mind (*Heb 3820*). The things he was about to mention were things he had pondered and run through his own mind first. Wisdom is not hearing something and then immediately telling others what you've just heard. Wisdom is when we hear something, contemplate it, digest it and **then repeat** the same in our own minds **before** sharing it with others.

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Psa 49:4 I will incline mine ear to a parable (*Heb.4912- sense of superiority in mental action; properly a pithy maxim [brief saying]*): I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

- He would take an inspired thought, something given to him by the voice of **God**, and first learn its meaning and act on it before teaching it to others. A good teacher teaches himself before presenting a lesson that would teach others. He would decipher the saying in order to make it plain for all to understand, delivering it in such a way as to make it easy for his audience to listen to, as they would a harp. It was that important.

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Psa 49:5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, *when* the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?

- Having already understood what he was about to teach, he gained a level of confidence that he would have needed to pass muster in the presence of his enemies. Don't we need this level of understanding today? Don't we have those who attempt to trip us up when we try to explain certain **Biblical** passages being discussed today?

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Psa 49:6 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; 7 None *of them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

Mar 10:23 And Jesus looked around, and said to His disciples, **How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!** 24 And the disciples were **astonished** at His words. But Jesus responded, and said to them, **Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!** (*KJV, revisions mine*)

- If a man were to own everything physical on earth (*not that it would be possible since God already owns everything*), he could not keep one family member's life from experiencing death in an attempt to purchase it through his abundant wealth.

Mar 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, **if he shall gain the whole world**, and lose his own soul? 37 Or what shall a man give **in exchange** for his (*or another's*) soul?

1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

“Stated another way, all who become part of the human family eventually suffer death.” “He (*speaking of Jesus*) can and will just as easily raise all people in the future, even if they have been dead for thousands of years.” Brad Price

- You can't use for a payment, i.e. physical possessions, something the **One** requiring it already owns. That would be considered theft.

Exo 19:5 ... for **all the earth is Mine** (*God owns everything!*):

- There remains only one possible sacrifice by which a man can live forever. And **God** has since paid that payment for all who will accept it, but not to live forever on earth.

Mar 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to **give His life a ransom for many.**

Psa 49:8 (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious (*Heb.3365- valuable, rare; be [make] precious*), and it ceaseth for ever:)

- The ransom to pay for one life, let alone two (*their- concerning the lives of family mentioned in verse 7*), is very valuable, very rare because only **One** exists. And, again, not for the purpose of living eternally on earth!

1Pe 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation (*Gk.391- behavior*) received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the **precious** (*Gk.5093- Thayer: held in honor, esteemed, especially dear*) blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

- Any amount of personal wealth, they would **even have attempted**, to use as a possible ransom to save one's own life, or the life of another, would cease to exist for all eternity (*concerning their wealth and not their souls*). **Peter** mentioned such to the sorcerer.

Act 8:18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money **perish with thee** (*your money will go into eternal ruin with you*), because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

Psa 49:9 That he should still live forever, *and* not see corruption.

- As though wealth would keep him from the eternal destruction that awaits him at death.

Psa 49:10 For he seeth *that* wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.

- Whether wise, foolish or stupid, all wealthy people die as do the rest of us. The purpose of wanting their wealth to last forever on earth was evident in their acknowledgment that their possessions would end up belonging to others.

Luk 12:16 And He (*Jesus*) spake a parable unto them, saying, **The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This**

will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*

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Psa 49:11 Their inward thought *is, that* their houses *shall continue* forever, *and* their dwelling places to all generations; they call *their* lands after their own names.

- All they invested in physical wealth they envisioned would be passed from one generation to another if they themselves could not buy enough time to live forever on earth. And by identifying their lands after their own names, they thought, would preserve their memory throughout the generations to come. As though not being forgotten was what would give them eternal life, as long as they were remembered they would be conscious of their existence. How sad to understand that often, within as little as one generation, names of streets, cities, lakes and all other physical things, that have been named after someone of affluence, have been so soon forgotten or have been moved into the realm of unimportance. And once property exchanges hands, **inheritances included**, there is always a tendency to change the name that came with it.

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Psa 49:12 Nevertheless man *being* in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts *that* perish.

- No matter how honorable, either by our accumulated wealth, works or reputation, we all die. Even as the animals that roam the earth, we all die. Except for the fact that animals don't possess souls, death is the one thing we have in common with them.

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Psa 49:13 This their way *is* their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah (*Heb.5542- suspension [of music], that is, pause*). (*Remember, this is a psalm [Heb.4210- a poem set to notes].*)

- According to the **Psalmist** their pursuit of wealth in order to make a name for themselves, and to pass such on to their descendants, was ridiculous. They even taught their offspring to pursue the same vanities and to support such ideas.

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Psa 49:14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

- Interestingly, the **Psalmist** uses sheep to make a point. Sheep have a tendency to go astray. They also have a tendency to follow whoever leads them.

Jer 50:6 My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away *on* the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place.

- When referring to the wealthy as sheep, they blindly follow their predecessors. But they too end up being the center of attention at their own lavish funerals. Death, once again, comes to us all.

Gen 3:19 ... for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

- But it **rules over** those who put their trust in their wealth which in turn decides their eternal abode.

Luk 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness (*i.e., greed*) ; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

- But soon, concerning time as compared to eternity, the just will be the ultimate victors because "...weeping may endure for a night, but joy commeth in the morning" (*Ps 30:5*). Not that the oppressed will celebrate or even be in the presence of their oppressors at that time, but that in the end the righteous will be "**comforted**" whereas their oppressors will be "**tormented**" (*Lk 16:25*).
- their beauty- (*Heb.6736, the same as 6735*) This is the only time in the Old Testament where this word is used. It is "a form (of beauty; as if pressed out, i.e. carved); hence an (idolatrous) image". Going back to previous verses, this would be a repetition of where their wealth, the idol of their affections, would end up after they had died. (*Acts 8:20*) As though it too would be lost with the ages as it decayed away at the hands of their successors.

Psa 49:15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me. Selah.

- Death has such a grip that only **God** can rescue the faithful few from its power.

1Co 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? 56 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. 57 But thanks *be* to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, un-moveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

- Once the faithful are rescued from death's grip **God** reunites them back to **Himself**. He accepts them into **His** adopted family through their obedient faith in **Him**.

2Co 5:18 And all things *are* of God, Who hath **reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ**, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, **reconciling the world unto Himself**, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Eph 1:5 Having predestinated us **unto the adoption** of children **by Jesus Christ to Himself**, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us **accepted in the Beloved**.

Psa 49:16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;

Jas 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him? 6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the

judgment seats? <sup>7</sup> Do not they blaspheme that worthy Name by the which ye are called?

- The allusion here is to a wealthy man who is evil. We should never fear a good man who is rich but the idea expressed here is that it wouldn't matter even if an evil man prospered. We should never be intimidated by a rich man's expensive home, his clothing, his possessions, his power or other things he has lavished his wealth on.

Rom 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

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Psa 49:17 For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.

- Burying a man in his Rolls Royce won't make him any more comfortable in eternity than if he was buried in a pine box. His wealth will make no difference toward his status at death.

1Ti 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. <sup>7</sup> For **we brought nothing into *this* world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.** <sup>8</sup> And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

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Psa 49:18 Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and *men* will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.

- Just as the rich man in Luke 16, when a person puts on airs and in his lifetime has done things to bring attention to himself, he has received his reward.

Mat 6:2 Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Mat 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

- You can't purchase honor. Integrity comes to those who earn it, not by flaunting their charity where others would see it, but by doing good deeds that aren't noticed but by those they are done to. Success has more to do with works than it does with wealth.

1Th 4:9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. <sup>10</sup> And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; <sup>11</sup> And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; <sup>12</sup> That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing.

- Remember, success, in anything good **or** bad, goes hand in hand with sacrifice. How much we are willing to sacrifice determines how successful we are in any endeavor, spiritual or carnal. How much are we willing to sacrifice, then, for the church to be successful in the saving of the precious souls around us?

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Psa 49:19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.

*"It means that they were united again with those who had gone before them, in the regions of the dead. Death had indeed separated them, but by death they were again united."*

Albert Barnes

- never see light- Heb.216- **happiness**. In his probationary period on earth, the wealthy man who squandered his soul to experience the pleasures of this life will never again know the real happiness that he once took for granted.

Psa 49:20 Man *that is* in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts *that* perish.

- The one who is esteemed and has power over others but doesn't appreciate it is likened to the lower forms of the creation. They live, with blinders on, to survive without considering that their actions can and do have an effect on their fellow man.

Rom 14:7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

- To sum it all up; we can be successful. But our success should never be focused on the accumulation of "things", or on self-gratification. To sacrifice for a greater cause is truly what our success should focus on. Because "life is a vapor" (*Jas 4:14*) and someday "every one of us shall give account of himself (*or herself*) to God" (*Rom 14:12*).

#### #1. Have you heard?

Eph 1:13 In Whom ye also *trusted*, **after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation**: in Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

#### #2. Do you believe?

1Th 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, **when ye received** the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that **believe**.

#### #3. Have you repented?

Mar 2:17 ...**They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

Rom 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

#### #4. Have you acknowledged Christ as the Son of God, Who alone can save you?

Act 8:37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

#### #5. Have your sins been washed away?

Mar 16:16 **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.**

#### #6. If you've done all these things, have you remained faithful?

Romans 6:4 "...we also should walk in newness of life."

#### #7. Are you growing?

2Pe 3:18 But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him *be* glory both now and forever. Amen.

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