

THE REDEMPTION OF MANKIND

BIBLE TEXT : Psalm 49:1-20

LESSON 471 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish" (Psalm 49:12).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Psalm 49:1-20

1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

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

2 Both low and high, rich and poor, together.

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

4 I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

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

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:

8 (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

9 That he should still live for ever, *and* not see corruption.

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

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

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

13 This their way *is* their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.

Bible References:

I The Call for All to Hear

1. The universal call goes out to all people and inhabitants, Psalm 49:1;

Psalm 34:11

11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Psalm 78:1

1 **Maschil of Asaph.** Give ear, O my people, *to* my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

2. God is not a respecter of persons, Psalm 49:2

Acts 10:34

34 Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

3. Wisdom and understanding are explained in parable form, Psalm 49:3, 4

Psalm 19:14

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Proverbs 2:2, 10, 11

2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding;

10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

Psalm 78:2

2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

Matthew 13:35

35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

II The Vanity of Trusting in Wealth

1. The love of God removes fear, Psalm 49:5

Psalm 27:1, 2

1 **A Psalm of David.** The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

Hebrews 12:1

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before *us*,

2. Wealth is powerless to redeem a soul, Psalm 49:6-8

Psalm 30:6

6 And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.

Psalm 37:16

16 A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

Ecclesiastes 4:8

8 There is one *alone*, and *there is* not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet *is there* no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither *saith he*, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This *is* also vanity, yea, it *is* a sore travail.

Job 36:18, 19

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 Because *there is* wrath, *beware* lest he take thee away with *his* stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.

19 Will he esteem thy riches? *no*, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.

I Peter 1:18, 19

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

III Death Is Appointed to the Wise and the Fool

1. The wise and the fool alike perish from the earth, Psalm 49:9, 10

Psalm 37:35, 36

35 I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.

36 Yet he passed away, and, lo, he *was* not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

Ecclesiastes 2:16

19 And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise *man* or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This *is* also vanity.

Hebrews 9:27

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Matthew 25:46.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

2. The wicked leave God out of their plans as though they would live forever, Psalm 49:11-14

Luke 12:21

21 So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

James 4:13-17

13 Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14 Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin.

IV Righteous and Wicked in Eternity

1. The hope of the Resurrection is a lively hope, Psalm 49:15

Psalm 73:24

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me *to* glory.

Job 19:25-27

25 For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth:

26 And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.

I Corinthians 15:20-22, 54-57

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept.

21 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

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

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, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

2. The end of the wicked is darkness, Psalm 49:16-20

Luke 16:19-31

19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Job 18:5.

5 Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine.

Notes:

The Call

The 49th Psalm opens with a universal call to all people of all the world. It reminds us of the call of Christ in Matthew 11:28: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will

give you rest." The subject about to be taken up is of world-wide importance and interest to all. To consider the brief and deceitful prosperity of the wicked and God's plan of redemption is of equal importance to the Hebrew and foreign nations. World, used in this instance, could mean duration, a period of time, or those of this age. God is not a respecter of persons (See Acts 10:34, 35 *34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him*) and calls the low as well as the high, the rich as well as the poor. God's invitation to the "whomsoever" stands yet today. The Psalmist's thoughts on wisdom and understanding remind us of Psalm 111:10: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom"

A parable is often a story using earthly and understandable objects or things to explain or express a heavenly or spiritual meaning. The use of music for a vehicle to carry such a message is often used. Some of King David's most profound utterances were written to be sung.

Why Fear?

The fifth verse asks the question, "Wherefore should I fear?" The writer had a confidence in the power and mercy of God that enabled him to lay aside all fear. The Apostle John said, "Perfect love casteth out fear" (I John 4:18). Evil days and trials may come; all will not be smooth sailing and quietness, but "if God be for us, who can be against us?" The crafty and cunning who would lie in wait for us will be dispatched by God, according to His wisdom.

Cost of Redemption

Those who trust in wealth and worldly power are absolutely helpless when it comes to redeeming their brother or paying the value of a soul or life that is destined for a lost eternity. The Word of God informs us that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We are also told that, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." This being the case, it would be an impossibility for one sinner to die for another man's sins or in his stead, for he must pay the penalty for his own sin.

The words "redeem" and "ransom" are two Levitical words for regaining that which has been legally forfeited. Where life had become forfeited, an equivalent, or satisfaction, was paid as in the case of the "firstborn" (Exodus 13:12,13 *12 That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD'S. 13 And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem*). This had to do with sacrifices. The redemption price of man's soul is precious, too costly for man to pay. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Only God can redeem a soul (Psalm 49:15). The writer is speaking here especially of ungodly men who trust in their earthly wealth and power. "It ceaseth for ever" indicates that man is powerless to redeem himself or his brother. The price is too costly and precious. It is forever wanting. (See Daniel 5:27. *27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.*)

When God created man, it was quite different from His creation of the animals. He "made the beast of the earth after his kind...and God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:25). When He "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7), there was a marked difference between the animal kingdom

and man, the cap-sheaf of God's creation. Only of man was it said that he "became a living soul." In regard to eternity the Scripture teaches us that man does not die as an animal. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

God's Plan of Redemption

God had a plan of salvation and redemption for mankind from the time that Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden. He covered their nakedness with skins, denoting the shedding of blood. Abel, Noah, Abraham and the patriarchs of old, on down through the Levitical priesthood, made atonement by the offering of blood sacrifices. God planned the perfect sacrifice by the sending of His only begotten Son to die on Calvary. Had it been possible for man to redeem his brother or himself, this would never have been necessary, but God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Romans 8:32). Because of man's own depraved and sinful nature with the penalty of death already abiding on him, he is helpless to provide a ransom. The pure, holy and sinless Christ left Heaven above to come down to this world to die in our stead. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). In that Jesus knew no sin, He is the only one who qualified to take our place in the bearing of the penalty of death and become our Redeemer that the death penalty might be satisfied, thus paying our ransom. The Apostle Peter wrote: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18, 19). Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Certain Death.

It is foolish to contemplate that any should offer a price for even the release of his body from death, "that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption." We know of very few who live past 100 years of age. Many with their wealth and power have sought to extend their lives, but this at best is for only a season. Enoch and Elijah are the two exceptions to the rule of death thus far. The saints of the Rapture have this to which to look forward. Those who have sought to purchase indulgences and favour in this life will never get by the great tribunal of the White Throne Judgment. They will answer for their sins, if they have not repented and been forgiven, sending their sins on before. Death is not a respecter of persons either. The pale rider calls at the homes of the wealthy and high as well as of the poor and lowly. Station has nothing to do with the eternal edict of God. Kings, rulers, the wealthy, and the men of brilliant earthly wisdom die. The dull and foolish, those given to savage tempers, living for the satisfaction of appetite and passion, also die. The wise of this earth, by man's wisdom, can be fools forever by leaving God out of their plans. Solomon said: "Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity" (Ecclesiastes 2:18, 19).

Some live as though they could live forever. Their plans are always for the future without thought that the future is in God's hands. The rich man referred to in Luke 12:16-21, "thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have

QUESTIONS

1. To whom is the Psalm addressed?
2. What are the first subjects taken up?
3. What form of presentation is announced?
4. Was the Psalmist fearful?
5. What were the rich and wealthy unable to do?
6. What is the value of a soul?
7. Which has the better chance of eternal life, the wise or the fool?
8. What is one of the main thoughts of the rich?
9. Who will have dominion in the resurrection morning?
10. Who has power to redeem a soul?
11. How much does the rich man take with him when he dies?
12. How much light will he have in eternity if he has left God out of his plans?

no room where to bestow my fruits?" "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. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take shine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 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? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." If the wise cannot save his body from temporal death, how can he save his soul, or his brother's, from death, spiritual and eternal?

The transitory nature of man is shown by "man being in honour abideth not," or remaineth not, using the simile of the beasts that perish without warning. For all of man's wisdom, he is subject to age, decline and death. God told Adam: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19). Though man in his folly has not learned to regard God's laws, his posterity has eulogized his sayings of worldly wisdom and followed the same course. Death has dominion over those who do not avail themselves of the redeeming grace of God through the new birth. The upright will have dominion on the resurrection morning. Those who have not sought their own wealth, but the Kingdom of God, will inherit all that the worldly wisdom brought to those who sold their very souls to obtain it. The power, glory, wealth and dominion come to them through having sought "first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."

Hope of Resurrection

God will redeem the souls of the righteous from the grave. The Psalmist is not saying that the righteous will not die physically even as the one who neglects his soul's salvation. What he is saying is that in the matter of redemption from death there is a vast difference. "For he shall receive me," indicates God will take him to be with Him. (See Genesis 5:24. *24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*) Be not anxious or afraid, "Fret not thyself" (Psalm 37:1), for death cuts off the dreaded wicked. When he dies, he takes nothing with him. The question is often asked, "How much did he leave?" There is only one correct answer, and that is "All." Those who depart without redeeming grace enter into the most abject darkness of all. "They shall never see light" means separation from God, a lost eternity, no spiritual joy, no hope (see Job 18:5 *5 Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine.*). They will have a resurrection, yes, but to what? Damnation (John 5:29 *29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*). On the contrary, the righteous, according to God's Word, have the hope of "the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Timothy 4:8). Moses said, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deuteronomy 32:29).

I John 1:9 tells us: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is the way to take advantage of God's plan of redemption. To give the correct judgment on things we must consider time in the light of eternity. It is not wealth or poverty that will permit us to escape the penalty of sin and God's wrath, but the redemption through the Blood of Jesus Christ that brings righteousness and grace.