

“HOW TO OVERCOME THE WICKED”

Psalm 9

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INTRODUCTION

Note how Psalm 7 ends with “I will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High” and Psalm 9 begins with the similar “I will sing praise to thy name, O Most High”; Psalm 8 coming between the two speaks about “how majestic God’s name is in all the earth”! **There is an obvious design in this order!**

The **NUMBERING** in the Psalter varies from this point onward due to a variant method of counting in the LXX and Vulgate from the Hebrew. The Hebrew considers Psalms 9 & 10 as separate; the LXX and Vulgate (followed by the Catholic Church) separate them. **There are NINE acrostic psalms: 9, 10; 25; 34; 37; 111; 112; 119; 145.** *Four claim to be from David.*

Both psalms anticipate “both the judgment and overthrow of the (heathen) nations (9:19 & 10:16. **Leupold** admits that it “cannot be denied” that the two psalms “have a kinship”, but also that “they have obvious differences” (p. 108). He notes that “*the two psalms present an unresolved literary problem.*” But, he rightly concludes that “each deserves to be considered an independent psalm” (108).

The term **muth-labben** or “death of the son” or “die for the son” can be a tune—according to or upon such a tune, to “sing the psalm according to the melody of a song or hymn by that name, or to render it after the manner of this hymn.

Psalm of David: Nothing need bring into question Davidic authorship here. What time of his life—we can have no definite idea. There is some indication here of the overthrow of some enemy nations—thus not at the very beginning of his reign. Moreover, the fact that Yahweh “dwells in Zion” (v. 11) shows that **the ark had been brought up to Jerusalem**. Perowne suggests perhaps at the conclusion of “the Syro-Ammonite war, or after one of his victories over the Philistines” (p. 158).

“The enemies” mentioned here would of course include the nations round about Israel, but can also include past nations defeated in the conquest of Canaan (see esp. vv. 5, 15—but only secondarily, and esp. when we consider the likelihood that some of these verbs are prophetic perfects. But internal foes can also be included—esp. in reference to the “afflicted” mentioned in the psalm. David likely speaks for the nation here as well as for himself. “He does indeed speak in the name of the nation, but his own experience blends so completely with that of the nation that he describes both in one” (Leupold).

This psalm is a “thanksgiving to God, the righteous Judge, who punishes the wicked and defends the cause of the oppressed” (Perowne, 158).

SO OFTEN THROUGHOUT HISTORY MAN EVIDENCES “THE MOST AUDACIOUS PRIDE.” OUR DEFENSE AGAINST SUCH WILL ALWAYS BE OUR PRAYERS AND PRAISES.

I. VISION AFTER VICTORY (vv. 1-12)

This psalm twice builds to a “climax of faith in God’s total rule” (Kidner, p. 69).

This section (1-12) is “all affirmation, the fruit of reflection on a great deliverance.” The next section (Vision in Adversity--vv. 13-20) involves “prayer arising out of suffering” (Kidner, 69).

A. Thankful Praise (vv. 1-2) Leupold notes here the “*torrent of praise*” (110).

Notice the expressions David uses here: “*give thanks*”, “*tell of*”, “*be glad*”, “*exult*”, “*sing praise*.”

1. For His Actions—“wonders—i.e. miracles (Ps. 26:7).

2. For His person—“in Thee”; “Thy Name”, “O Most High.”

3. “With all my heart”—not with mere lip service

B. Focused on the Great King (3-8)—lesser men boast of their personal success and power; David boasts in his God!

1. God as a his Rescuer (“my enemies”)(3)

a. They turn back

b. They stumble

c. They perish—“from before you”—literally “from your face”—presence, as did the Egyptians at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:24). Yahweh, the Mighty Judge, flashes the glory of His majesty upon them and they “turn back, stumble, and perish” before Him. This is quite a visual picture that David paints—as though God had visually appeared to these enemies with the described effects.

2. God as his Judge (4)

a. “My justice”—“To execute any one’s right” (as Mic. 7:9).

b. “My judgment”—is “to bring to an issue any one’s suit or lawful demand.

c. He “Sits on the throne.”

d. “Judging righteously”—or “a Righteous Judge”

3. God as Total Victor (5-6)

a. God has “rebuked all the nations” (5a). His actions evidence His “rebuke.”

b. God has “destroyed the wicked”.

c. God has “blotted out their name forever and ever.” Such actually happened to the Canaanite nations—they never revived (Leupold, 111). Note in v. 6—“perpetual ruins”, “cities uprooted”—no longer able to be identified by passersby. Such will also be the case with Israel’s other enemies one day—this is the “prophetic perfect” part of this description.

d. “The enemy has come to an end” (6a)

e. The enemy cities He has “uprooted” and they lie “in perpetual ruins” (6b).

f. “Their very memory . . . has perished” (6c). This description calls the Amalekites to our attention; the Lord said that “their remembrance would be blotted out forever” (Ex. 17:14; Dt. 25:19). They are typical of all of the Lord’s enemies.

This last statement provides a sharp contrast with Yahweh’s sitting enthroned forever in v. 7.

4. God as reigning worldwide and forever (7-8)

a. He “sits enthroned forever” (7a).

- b. He has established His throne for Justice. (7b)
- c. “He will judge the world in **righteousness**” (8a)
- d. “He will execute judgment [justice] for the peoples [the world] with **equity**” (8b)
 “Puny nations in their wicked opposition may come and go; Yahweh is perpetually enthroned, ready for any judgment that the needs of His people may require” (Leupold, 111); yet always with **righteousness** and **equity**.

C. Confident in a Compassionate Sovereign (9-12)

The “judgment” of v. 8 with which He judges the world enables Him to be such a stronghold to His people. Thus the Lord may “prove Himself to be a place of refuge and security” (Perowne, 160). By overthrowing the enemy, He makes Himself a refuge for His people.

1. The believer’s Stronghold (9-10)—he puts his trust in the Lord (10a)
 - a. When oppressed (9a)—David refers to one “who is overwhelmed to the extreme, even to being completely crushed” (Del. 954).
 - b. In time of trouble (9b)—This verse represents the believer’s security pictorially—“stronghold.” The idea is “being cut off, i.e. either restraint, especially motionlessness . . . or distress, in which the prospect of deliverance is cut off”. **God is a refuge for such times!**
 - c. According to God’s nature—His name (10a)—**When we know God for who He is we will trust in Him!**
 - d. According to God’s faithfulness—He has not forsaken them (10b). Thus what God does to the enemies of God’s people greatly increases the confidence of God’s people.
2. The Believer’s Avenger (11-12)—The Psalmist brings this section to an end by renewing a call to praise the LORD. “**Avenger**” in v. 12 is “He who avenges blood” [i.e. bloodshed; the plural always has this signification. Blood is shed violently and “unnaturally.”] What the Lord does here is the “very thing that the tyrant denies in 10:13b, using the same word”
 - a. What the believer ought do:
 - “Sing praises to Yahweh—who “dwells in Zion” (11a).
 - “Declare His deeds”—“among the peoples” (11). Note that though the “visible seat of His dominion” is in Zion, His dominion actually extends to the entire earth. Thus they must “publish” or “declare” “His deeds” or “doings” among the peoples.
 - b. What the Lord does:
 - He “avenges blood”
 - He “remembers them”.
 - He “does not forget the cry of the afflicted.” These people are: 1) The faithful part of the nation persecuted and oppressed by the ungodly and the powerful [the remnant]; and 2) the entire nation that is trodden down by their enemies. *Through their oppression they learn such meekness and submission and resignation.* Notice the beauty here; no matter how high and exalted Yahweh is

in His majesty and power, **He does not forget the poor, weak and afflicted of His people.** He is no respecter of persons.

II. Vision in Adversity (13-20)

Now David brings his psalm to a “second but quieter climax, progressing from personal entreaty to confident prophecy, and finally to a bold appeal for action” (Kidner, 70). Thus, this section *begins and ends with prayer*, just as the *first began and ended with praise*. The idea seems to be, “Consider my still remaining distress” (Leupold, 113).

A. Personal Entreaty (13-14)

Here David expresses the first sign of his **personal distress**. Thus, he had up till this point deliberately focused on God’s glory and shown in the past, in the present, and the future; **he saw God’s glory as being more important than his own personal grief**. Therefore, his praise still mingles with his prayer.

1. “Be gracious to me” (13a)

- a. See my affliction—caused by “those who hate me” (13b)
- b. Lift me from the gates of death (13c); God is called “He who lifts me up.” “Gates of death” here refers to the realm of the dead—elsewhere as in v. 17 called *Sheol*. He was still in grave danger—practically at death’s gates. **Contrast this with his upcoming praise at “the gates of the daughter of Zion”** (v. 14).

2. Let me praise you in the gates (14)—he wants a new chance at additional praise. Notice the emphasis on “ALL” thy praises—as many as there are for all that God has done!

- a. Tell of your praises (14a)
- b. Rejoice in your salvation (14b). “In the gates”, as “the most public place of concourse.” The place where the most people would be able to hear! “Your salvation” is the salvation bestowed by God.

B. Confident Prophecy (15-18)—Just as the praise of vv. 1-2 was followed by the ruin of the wicked, so his petition of this second part of the psalm is followed by the ruin of the wicked.

1. Ruin of the wicked (15-17)

- a. Reap what they sow (15, 16c)
 - Sink down in their own pit (15a).
 - Catch their own foot in the net they laid (15b).
 - Snared “in the work of his own hands.” (16c)
- b. Judged by Yahweh (16a,b)
 - He executes judgment
 - Thereby He makes Himself known. Yahweh also makes Himself known by causing the “wicked” (evil-doer) to be snared in the work of his own hands.
 - **Higgaion**: This term here is a detached musical note of some kind, along with “Selah”. Kidner suggests that the term may refer to the use of the “quieter

instruments” and concludes that “it would seem better to retain the idea of meditation or of quiet music” (p. 37). His conclusion seems reasonable.

- c. Turned to Sheol (17)—vv. 17-18 uses true future tenses, looking ahead to the final ruin of the wicked nations. **Note how David combines *personal and impersonal aspects of God’s judgment seamlessly here*.** This is not a wish, but the expression of that which is sure to come to pass.
 - They are returned to their rightful place. Kidner calls Sheol “their native element” (P. 70). Perowne agrees on p. 161. God said that man would “return to the dust” from which he came (Gen. 3:19; cf. Job 30:23). Of course this does not mean that they originally came from the realm of death.
 - The “wicked” are here identified as people from all the various nations. They have been guilty of “an inexcusable hostility against the people of God.”
 - These are people who “forget God”—defining **why** they are “wicked”. God did not leave them without a witness of Himself. They could have turned to God!
2. Reward of the Needy (18)
 - a. They will not “always be forgotten”—in the sense that action has not yet been taken to relive them.
 - b. Their hope will be rewarded—it will not “perish forever”, though it may have seemed that way by being left unfulfilled again and again. These people bear their affliction in a godly manner.
- C. Appeal For Action (19-20)—show Yourself to be what You are—“the Judge of the earth” Num. 10:35—Moses’ words from which David likely derived his pleas; Ps. 3:7; 7:6). See Perowne, p. 162. Yahweh will one day finish judging the nations. From the apparent present inactivity, it seems as though Yahweh has “retired into a state of repose” (Del. p. 958).
 1. Judge the nations.
 - a. They are judged “before” God—in the light of His nature and justice. By His very presence—His “face”
 - b. These are the wicked who forget God—v. 17
 - c. They will not be allowed to prevail—despite past appearances.
 2. Humble the nations (20): What the psalmist asks is what God Himself wants! He is strongly conformed “to the will and purpose of God”
 - a. “Put them in fear.”
 - b. Let them know their weakness—that they are “but men.”

CONCLUSION

“Men” refers to man in his weakness and frailty. Man’s dignity comes only from God—as *Psalm 8 makes abundantly clear!* Leupold says, “**The self-intoxication of man or even his self-deification is reflected upon when the purpose of this prayer is said to be that the nations may know themselves to be but men**” (p. 115). Kidner states: “*On his own, man is dust (Gn. 3:19) and a mere breath (Pss. 39:11; 144:4)—to say nothing of his moral state which is exposed in the companion psalm that follows*” (p. 70).