

“WHAT IS YOUR DESTINY?”

Psalm 49:13-20

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INTRODUCTION

Robert Frost wrote a famous poem years ago about “the two roads that diverged in a yellow wood—and he took the one less traveled. Each of us travels a road from birth that has a certain destiny—death. We have no way of avoiding this destiny, for it is the lot of every human being born in sinful depravity and being estranged from God. However, we do have the option of leaving the well-traveled road and getting on the road that is less traveled and much narrower and that leads to eternal life.

As we saw last week, many a person lives as though he will live forever on earth—vv. 10-11. But Psalm 49 has a sad refrain that is repeated at the end of both main sections, vv. 12 and 20; the refrain has one deliberate change that expresses the heartbeat of this Psalm:

- 1) “Man in his honor—i.e. prideful pomp and ceremony—**will not endure**, he is like the beasts that perish.”
 - 2) “Man in his honor—pompous self-importance—**yet without understanding**, is like the beasts that perish.”
- If you live your life for yourself and your own gain you will lose everything! You will not endure, you will die, and you will leave everything behind.
 - If you live your life for yourself and your own gain, you lack understanding and are just as foolish as the beasts of the earth that live without God-consciousness and without God-accountability; you will perish and lose it all and leave everything behind.

Such is certainly a somber truth and would not be good news for me to share with you today. However, the psalmist does have good news for us: **Those who are upright will not share the same fate as those who are worldly minded and live for the present.** *In Christ you will have a future!*

But it is important that we remember the awesome truth we saw last Sunday in vv. 7-9:

- No man can redeem another man; and if he cannot redeem another man he cannot redeem himself.
- Redemption of the human soul is costly, and you must forever cease trying to save another or yourself!
- No man will live on earth forever, and no one through his efforts can find eternal life with God.
- The New Testament provides the answer: II Cor. 5:21—**READ**
- Our Psalm talks about a different destiny for those who are “upright” –vv. 14-15.
- **IN CHRIST YOU CAN HAVE THAT DIFFERENT DESTINY.**

YOU MUST LIVE FOR ETERNITY AND NOT FOR THE MOMENT.

- I. THE DESTINY OF THOSE WHO ARE WORLDLY AND MATERIALISTIC
 - A. Their outward circumstances—rich, prosperous glorious (v. 16)
 - B. Their inward condition
 1. Foolish (v. 13)

2. Self-congratulatory—he “blesses himself” (v. 18)
3. Self-centered—you do “good for yourself” (18b)
- C. Their honor received from others
 1. Those who come after them approve their words (13b)
 2. Other people heap praise on them for their successes (18)
- D. Their future destiny
 1. When they die they carry nothing with them (17a).
 2. They are going down and cannot take their glory and wealth with them (17b).
 3. They have the same destiny as their ancestors before them—“they sleep with their fathers” (19).
 4. They are as helpless as sheep and are herded into Sheol – hell (**14**).
 5. Death is their Shepherd who “feeds or cares for them”!
 6. Their form – including their bodies and their condition of wealth and prosperity – is consumed by Sheol. Instead of being fed and tended, they are fed upon!
 7. They have no real dwelling place – no real home.
 8. They will never see the light (19).
 9. Their condition is hopeless and empty (vv. 12, 20).

But, praise God, there is a different destiny for the righteous, and this Psalm gives us a foretaste of the amazing New Testament truths of resurrection and immortality.

II. THE DESTINY OF THOSE WHO ARE RIGHTEOUS

- A. God **redeems** them – in contrast to the hopelessness of man-made redemption in vv. 7-9 (15).
- B. Sheol—death and hell—have no “hand” (power) over them.
- C. God **receives** them (15)
 - This is the same verb used for Enoch in Genesis 5:24.
 - This is the same verb used of Elijah in II Kings 2:10.
 - The psalmist knows that he will live in the presence of God and overcome death!
- D. There is a morning for the righteous (14)
 - The night of suffering and sorrow has come to an end.
 - They experience true joy and deliverance.
 - They find salvation and drink from the streams of living water and have an abundant feast.
 - They rule over the wicked and have dominion.

Such is the future of the righteous!

CONCLUSION

Don't live for the moment, or you will die forever!

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