

Psalm 149

“The Lord taketh pleasure in his people”

Psalm 149:

The unique aspect of praise highlighted in this psalm is that praise is related to the kingdom of the Lord.

Though the psalm begins with the normal call to praise (verses 1-3), the cause for praise (verses 4-9), is quite unexpected: it is because the Lord intends to establish His kingdom on the earth.

This kingdom involves both the glorification of the righteous (verses 4-6), and the judgment of the wicked (verses 7-9).

This aspect of judgment is apparently to be carried out by the righteous (verses 6-9).

This passage should be taken in a prophetic sense to refer to the time when God will in fact establish His kingdom on the earth with His glorified saints right behind Him (Rev. 19:11-21).

Even in this age of grace, believers are instructed to pray “Thy kingdom come” (Matt. 6:10), a petition that includes not only the glorification of the righteous but the destruction of the wicked.

Verses 1-9 (see note on Psalm 146:1-10).

The composer and occasion for this psalm are unknown.

- I. Israel’s Praise for God (149:1-5);
- II. Israel’s Punishment of the Nations (149:6-9).

Psalm 149:1 "Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, [and] his praise in the congregation of saints."

“A new song”:

A song of testimony concerning salvation (compare 149:4).

New mercies make people recognize the inadequacy of their past efforts at praising (see 33:3; 40:3; 144:9).

This “praise” song is offered in the assembly of the pious; there the desire to praise the LORD flourishes best.

“The congregation”:

The gathering of the nation for worship.

This new song that is being sung here undoubtedly is speaking of those who have experienced that new birth.

The congregation of the saints is the church.

In the last lesson, we talked of all of creation worshipping the Lord.

In this, it seems as if this is the redeemed of the Lord (Christians).

This is the song that only the redeemed can sing.

This is that glorious song of redemption.

Psalm 149:2 "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King."

The people of Israel; the Hebrew people; the people of God.

"Rejoice in him that made him":

Him, who has made the people what they are.

All that they have and are is to be traced to him, as really as the universe of matter is to be traced to his power.

Their condition is not one of development, or one which is the result of their own wisdom, grace, or power.

"It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves" (see Psalm 100:3).

"Let the children of Zion":

Those who dwell in Zion or Jerusalem.

"Be joyful in their King":

In God as their king.

(A) That they have a king, or that there is one to rule over them.

(B) That they have such a king; one so wise, so powerful, so good.

(C) That he administers his government with so much efficiency, impartiality, equity, wisdom, and goodness.

The first of this verse above is speaking of physical Israel.

They rejoice in their Creator.

In the One who made them a nation.

The children of Zion are the Christians.

Our King, Redeemer, Savior, and Lord is Jesus Christ the Righteous.

Our joy is in the fact that He saved us.

Psalm 149:3 "Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp."

“Dance”:

Either individual or group, perhaps like David when he brought the ark to Jerusalem (see 2 Samuel 6:15-16).

“Timbrel”:

A tambourine like instrument which accompanied dancing and singing (compare Exodus 15:20; 1 Sam. 18:16; see note on 2 Sam. 6:14).

This dance and music here mentioned, are the victory celebration because we are saved.

This occurs after the redemption of the people.

Miriam led the dance after the crossing of the Red sea.

This is similar to that.

This also is very similar to the fact of David dancing before the ark of the covenant, when it was brought home.

The overwhelming joy of the Spirit comes and then the dance.

Dancing for any other reason would be out of order, especially planning to dance before the Spirit moved.

This is a great time of overwhelming joy, when the entire church would currently be full of the presence of God.

Great swelling song would go forth in praise at the very same time the music was being played to the glory and praise of God.

Psalm 149:4 "For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation."

Let them rejoice on this account.

He loves them; he approves their conduct and he bestows his favors upon them.

All this should add to their joy, and fill their hearts with gladness (see notes at Psalm 35:27).

The Hebrew word here rendered "taketh pleasure" conveys the idea of complacency, satisfaction, and delight.

It is the opposite of being pained or offended.

God has complacency in his people.

He delights in their welfare; he delights in doing them good.

"He will beautify":

Hebrew: Adorn or glorify.

Make them amiable and honorable in the eyes of the world, who now hate and despise them.

"The meek":

Or humble.

Meaning, his people.

As he now said, who are often in Scripture described by that character.

Because all true Israelites are such, and all Israelites profess and ought to be such.

Or, the afflicted, as that word is often used in Scripture, which hath been observed before.

His poor afflicted and oppressed people, to whom the following salvation is most needful and acceptable.

"With salvation":

Both temporal, in delivering them from, and setting them above, all their enemies.

And afterwards, with everlasting salvation and glory.

The joy of the LORD should be overflowing.

We have so much to praise Him for.

The greatest thing being the salvation of our soul.

God enjoys sweet praise going up to His throne.

We should want to be a sweet sweet sound in His ear.

Humble yourself before Almighty God and He will save you.

Psalm 149:5 "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds."

In the glory of their condition.

In the favor of God; in the honor which he bestows upon them.

Let them rejoice in this; let them shout and triumph over this.

Other men rejoice in honor; in wealth; in houses, lands, parks, libraries, and works of art.

Let the saints rejoice in the glory of being the friends of God.

In the hope of heaven (compare Psalm 84:11).

"Let them sing aloud upon their beds" (compare and also see notes on Job 35:10; Acts 16:25; Psalm 34:1).

The idea is, that in the meditations of the night, when darkness is around them, when alone with God, they may find occasion for exultation and praise.

Their hearts may be full of joy, and alone they may give expression to their joy in signing songs of praise.

The glory of the Lord should excite us into loud songs of praise and worship.

God is not nervous, He would not be offended, if we shouted the praise.

Sometimes the praise and song cannot be shut off and continues even at time for bed.

These are the times you might as well get up and continue to praise.

Verses 6-9:

It would appear that this section is eschatological in nature and looks.

- (1) To the Millennium when all nations and peoples will acknowledge Christ as king; and
- (2) To Jerusalem as His royal capital (compare Ezek. 28:25-26; Joel 3:9-17; Micah 5:4-15).

Psalms 149:6 "[Let] the high [praises] of God [be] in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand;"

Margin, as in Hebrew, in their throat.

Literally, "Praises of God in their throat.

And a sword of two edges in their hand."

That is, in the very work of executing the purposes of God on his enemies, there should be the feeling and the language of praise.

Their hearts should be full of confidence in God.

They should feel that they are engaged in his service.

And while they defend themselves, or inflict punishment on the enemies of God, they should chant His praise.

The idea is, that even in the work of war that they might feel that they were engaged in the service of God.

And that the passions usual in war should be subdued and kept under by the consciousness that they are mere instruments in the hand of God to accomplish His purposes.

Perhaps the Hebrew word rendered "high praises" may imply more than mere praise.

It may embrace anything that is lofty and exalted.

And may mean here that they would have the consciousness that they were engaged in high and lofty aims.

That they were carrying out the great designs of God.

That they were executing purposes more momentous than their own could be.

Even the eternal purposes of the Most High.

This would give an importance, a dignity and an elevation to their conduct which could spring from no other source.

"And a two-edged sword in their hand":

Literally, a sword of edges.

That is, a sword with an edge on both sides of the blade.

Roman swords were often made in this manner.

They were made for piercing as well as for striking (see notes at Heb. 4:12).

The two-edged sword of course, is the Bible.

We should always have it with us ready to share the Scriptures with all we see.

The praises on the tongue and in the mouth originate from a heart overflowing with praise.

Psalm 149:7 "To execute vengeance upon the heathen, [and] punishments upon the people;"

To inflict punishment upon them as a recompence for their sins.

The word pagan here means nations.

The allusion is, doubtless, to those who had oppressed and injured the Hebrew people.

Perhaps referring to those who had destroyed the city and the temple at the time of the Babylonian captivity.

They were now to receive the punishment due for the wrongs which they had done to the nation.

A just recompence at the hand of God, and by the instrumentality of those whom they had wronged (compare notes at Psalm 137:7-9).

"And punishments upon the people":

The people of those lands.

Those who had waged war with the Hebrew nation.

Vengeance is mine saith the LORD.

God had Israel to fulfill punishment on the heathen nations, as they came to the Promised Land.

This perhaps though, is speaking of the time when the saints will reign with Jesus and shall execute judgement.

Psalm 149:8 "To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;"

To make them prisoners and captives.

This is but carrying out the idea in the previous verses, of inflicting punishment upon them for the wrongs which they had done to the people of God.

There is no evidence that this refers to a spiritual conquest, or to a spiritual subjection of those nations to the true religion.

The whole idea is in accordance with what is so often expressed in the Psalms, that of inflicting just punishment on the wicked.

"And their nobles with fetters of iron":

To make them prisoners.

That is, to subdue them.

The captives in war, even those of elevated rank, were often led off in chains to grace the triumph of conquerors.

We know that this rule of the Lord will be with a rod of iron.

The subordinate jobs will be given to the saints to carry out.

I believe this to be speaking of that time.

A king or a nobleman, will not hold these offices then unless they were counted among the saints.

Psalm 149:9 "To execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD."

The "judgment written" is the law (Deut. 32:40-47), the standard by which the people living in the land of Canaan were judged.

This is another way of saying "according to the Scriptures", as God has prophesied the subjecting of the nations.

"This honor":

The privilege of carrying out God's will.

These next two Scriptures leave no doubt when this reign is.

2 Timothy 2:12 "If we suffer, we shall also reign with [him]: if we deny [him], he also will deny us:"

Revelation 20:6 "Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

We will judge as his subordinates in that day, and carry out whatever orders He gives us.

Psalm 149 Questions

1. Sing unto the LORD a new _____.
2. What is the new song?
3. What is the congregation of the saints?
4. Let Israel rejoice in Him who _____.
5. Who are the children of Zion?
6. Who is the King in verse 2?
7. What is the dance and music in verse 3?
8. When did Miriam lead the dance of praise?
9. When did David dance?
10. What comes first, and then the dance?
11. The Lord taketh pleasure in whom?
12. He will beautify the _____ with salvation.
13. Humble yourself before Almighty God, and He will _____.
14. What unusual place are they singing from in verse 5?
15. What are they to have in their hand?
16. Where does the praise on the tongue originate?
17. To execute vengeance upon the _____.
18. Who are they to bind with chains?