

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith

XLIX: God's Consolation For The Upright Over The Oppression Of The Prosperous Wicked (Psalm 49:1-20)

I. Introduction

- A. When people become wealthy, they can often become arrogant and abusive toward the less-wealthy, a great burden for those who must face their arrogant abuse.
- B. Psalm 49:1-20, a wisdom psalm, gives insight to the oppressed on handling this problem (as follows):

II. God's Consolation For The Upright Over The Oppression of the Prosperous Wicked, Psalm 49:1-20.

- A. Verse one in the Hebrew text comprises the introductory remarks in the English Bible (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1016), so we stay with the verse numbering arrangement of the English Bible for clarity with this lesson.
- B. We translate Psalm 49:1-20 as follows:
 - 1. "Hearken to this, all of your peoples; listen, all who dwell in this world," Psalm 49:1.
 - 2. "Both the sons of the lowly man and the sons of the nobleman, both rich and poor alike;" (Psalm 49:2)
 - 3. "My mouth will speak wise words, the utterances of my heart will give understanding," Psalm 49:3.
 - 4. "I will turn my ear to a proverb; with a harp will I expound my riddle," Psalm 49:4.
 - 5. "Why should I fear when calamitous days come, when the iniquity of treacherous overreachers (B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 784) surround me" (v. 5)
 - 6. "Those who lean in trust upon their efficiency, might (*hayil*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 298-299) and their great riches make their boast?" (Psalm 49:6)
 - 7. "No one can redeem the life of another or give to Elohim a ransom for him," Psalm 49:7.
 - 8. "The ransom of a life is costly, and no payment is ever enough," Psalm 49:8.
 - 9. "That he should live on forever and not see decay!" (Psalm 49:9)
 - 10. "For he sees that the wise die; the foolish and senseless alike perish and leave their wealth to others," v. 10.
 - 11. "Their tombs will remain their houses forever, their dwellings for endless generations, though they had named lands after themselves," Psalm 49:11.
 - 12. "But mankind, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish," Psalm 49:12.
 - 13. "This is the fate of those whose confidence is in themselves and of their followers who approve of their sayings. Selah," Psalm 49:13.
 - 14. "Like sheep they are destined for Sheol, and death will feed on them. The upright will rule over them in the morning; their forms will decay in the grave, far from their princely mansions," Psalm 49:14.
 - 15. "But Elohim will redeem my life principle from Sheol; surely He will take me to Himself. Selah," v. 15.
 - 16. "Do not fear because a nobleman grows rich, because the splendor of his house increases," Psalm 49:16.
 - 17. "For he will take nothing with him when he dies; his splendor will not descend with him," Psalm 49:17.
 - 18. "Though while he lived he counted himself blessed -- and men praise you when you prosper --" (Ps. 49:18)
 - 19. "He will join the generation of his fathers, who will never see the light of life," Psalm 49:19.
 - 20. "A man who has riches but no understanding is like the beasts that perish," Psalm 49:20.
- C. We note significant observations and applications of this psalm that edify believers today (as follows):
 - 1. After the v. 1-4 introductory remarks that show this psalm is a wisdom psalm that intends to instruct (B. K. C., O. T., p. 830), the psalmist advised his listeners not to fear bad days when the sins of treacherous cheaters surrounded them (v. 5), cheaters who relied on their might to gain riches and boast over it, v. 6.
 - 2. The reason is given in verses 7-14, that the wicked will die just like mere animals, and they will lack the blessing of the Lord in the resurrection opposite the upright who will rule over them.
 - 3. In great contrast to their wealthy oppressors, the upright would see the Lord redeem them from the grave and bless them in eternity, Psalm 49:14b, 15.
 - 4. In the spirit of 1 John 2:15-17, God thus directs the upright to live righteously with eternity in mind to offset the temporary discouragement they experience due to their wicked oppressors.

Lesson: *The end of treacherous cheaters who oppress the upright to gain earthly riches and power is the same as that of mere animals: they both alike die, and in the resurrection, the wicked lack God's blessing in contrast to the upright. Thus, the upright must handle being oppressed by focusing on eternal values and keep living righteously.*

Application: *May we handle the oppression by the prosperous wicked by focusing on eternity so as to stay upright.*