

The Victory Psalm

Text: Psalm 9:1-20

Introduction:

1. Theme: The Psalm focuses on God's righteous dealings with the wicked. There is a note of victory throughout the Psalm as it focuses on the triumph of God's justice over evil men. There is both prayer and praise interlaced throughout the Psalm as the Psalmist both praises God for His faithful and righteous dealings and also pleads for God's fresh intervention on his behalf.
2. The message of the Psalm may be worded as follows: "Because God has demonstrated that he is the righteous judge of the world, believers may trust in him now for protection from the wicked and confidently pray for final vindication in the judgment to come." (Allen P. Ross)
3. The Typology: Christ can be seen as the Mighty Conqueror over sin and evil.
4. Structure & Overview: The structure of the Psalm is somewhat of a challenge to discern. As Spurgeon notes, "The strain so continually changes, that it is difficult to give an outline of it methodically arranged." That said, we can discern a general pattern which is reflected in the outline.
5. We will divide the Psalm under six headings for our expository study.

I. THE PRAISE FOR THE GOD OF JUSTICE (VS. 1-2)

These verses contain the expression of David's resolution to praise God. He resolved to praise God:

A. Exclusively (Vs. 1a)

David's praise is God focused:

1. "I will praise **thee**, O LORD" (Vs. 1a)
2. "**thy** marvellous works" (Vs. 1b)
3. "I will be glad and rejoice in **thee**" (Vs. 2a)
4. I will sing praise to **thy name**" (Vs. 2b)
5. Note: A lot of what goes under the banner of "praise and worship" is not praise at all as it is man focused rather than God focused.

B. Fervently (Vs. 1b)

1. "with my whole heart" = this is whole hearted praise of God. So often our praise of God is half hearted or a mechanical routine rather than something that comes from the heart.
2. Is your heart involved in your praise of God? How do you approach sacred songs? Do you think about the words and make them your own expressions of praise to your God?

C. Specifically (Vs. 1c)

1. "shew forth" = David would be a bold testimony for what God had done.
2. "all thy marvellous works" = the grand themes for the believers praise is all the wondrous works of God.

D. Joyfully (Vs. 2a)

1. David's joy is centred in the Person of God – "in thee". His joy is not in the unchangeable circumstances of life but in the Unchangeable Person of God.
2. The Psalm goes on to deal with the very sobering theme of God's righteous judgment upon the wicked but it is within the context of praise

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and joy. The believer rejoices in the Perfection of God's ways in His dealings with both sinners and saints.

E. Reverently (Vs. 2b)

1. A high view of God's Person – "thy name".
2. A high view of God's Position – "O thou most High".

II. THE PAST REVIEW OF GOD'S JUSTICE (VS. 3-6)

The Psalmist now bears testimony to God's just dealings with the wicked in the past. This will form a basis for his assurance and prayers for the future. He makes reference of:

A. The Presence of God (Vs. 3)

1. The presence of God had been a shield to David from the advances of the enemy.
2. The presence of God with His people turns back and foils the attacks of the evil one. The greatest protection for an individual, family and church is the presence of Almighty God.

B. The Throne of God (Vs. 4)

1. God is said to have maintained David's right and his cause. God is always on the side of truth and right!
2. God had accomplished this by dispensing righteous judgment from His throne. God is pictured as seated on the throne as King and Sovereign.
3. Let's remind ourselves that God is still seated on His throne. His throne is:
 - a. Everlasting – God is the Eternal King. He will never be unseated from His throne. You can't vote God out of office as His sovereign Rulership is His by Divine right from eternity past to eternity future.
 - b. Elevated – God is the King of kings. His throne is elevated far above all men and angels. Take hells most evil and powerful devil and God sits far above in victory. Take the world's greatest and most famous and God reigns unspeakably higher. Take heaven's most exalted angel and God is exalted higher still.

C. The Judgment of God (Vs. 5-6)

1. God had rebuked the wicked (Vs. 5a). Spurgeon writes, "God rebukes before he destroys but when he once comes to blows with the wicked he ceases not until he has dashed them in pieces so small that their very name is forgotten."
2. God had destroyed the wicked (Vs. 5b-6)
God had brought about an end to the wicked's:
 - a. Reputation (Vs. 5b). Their name was blotted out for ever. The phrase "put out" is the same word used of God's judgment on the pre-flood world (Gen. 6:7). What a sobering reminder of the future of the wicked whose names will be forever blotted out of the Book of Life.
 - b. Action (Vs. 6). This verse contains a word of direct address to the enemy, turning its attention to their state as a result of Divine judgment. God had put an end to the destructive activity of the wicked. The picture is that God had destroyed the Destroyer.
 - i. The phrase "destructions are come to a perpetual end" is explained by Albert Barnes to mean "thy destructions are finished, completed, accomplished. There are to be no more of them."

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- ii. "thou hast destroyed cities" = "That is, in thy desolating career. This, considered as an address to the enemy, would seem to refer to the career of some victor who had Carried fire and sword through the land, and whose course had been marked by smoking ruins. This was, however, now at an end, for God had interposed, and had given the author of the psalm a victory ever his foe." (Barnes)

III. THE PROSPECTIVE VIEW OF GOD'S JUSTICE (VS. 7-12)

Reviewing God's faithful and just dealings in the past gives the Psalmist confidence and assurance for the future. The record of God's just acts in the past are a guarantee for His just acts in the future. The Psalm draws our attention to five aspects of God's judgment:

A. The Reality of God's Judgment (Vs. 7)

Two facts make the future judgment of the unrepentant an absolute certainty.

1. The Eternality of God (Vs. 7a). The fact that God is eternal guarantees that His Divine Judgment will continue to be dispensed in accordance with His Unchangeable Character. His acts of judgment will be repeated.
 - a. Mal. 3:6 "For I *am* the LORD, **I change not**;"
 - b. James 1:17 "... the Father of lights, with whom is **no variableness, neither shadow of turning**."
 - c. Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ **the same** yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
2. The Determination of God (Vs. 7b) God's throne is prepared for judgment. This speaks of God's Divine Determination to judge sinners. Make no mistake about it. God will judge!

B. The Reach of God's Judgment (Vs. 8a)

1. The whole world will be judged. This looks way beyond David's immediate circumstances to the great and final day of judgment in the future for the unsaved.
2. This judgment is described in Revelation. "And I saw **a great white throne**, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. 20:11-12)

C. The Righteousness of God's Judgment (Vs. 8b)

1. God's judgment will be right and perfect in every way. The Psalmist uses the words 'righteousness' and 'uprightness' to describe God's judgment of the wicked. This cannot be said of human justice which often makes mistakes. God's judgment will be according to His Omniscience (He knows all things) and His Righteousness (His perfect and Holy nature guarantees perfect justice).
2. The answer to the question "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" is a resounding "yes!"

D. The Refuge from God's Judgment (Vs. 9-10)

1. The Provision of the Believer's Refuge (Vs. 9; 10b)
God Himself is the believer's place of refuge. God is:

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- a. God is the believer's refuge of salvation. If you are in Christ, you are safe from judgment! God's judgment has just been declared for the whole world. The only place of shelter from God's judgment is in the Rock which is Christ.
- b. God is the believer's refuge in storms. God is our refuge in the troubles and battles of the Christian life. The context is David's battle with the enemies of Israel. We are in a fierce battle with the forces of darkness and God is our safe place of refuge and comfort in the midst of that battle. God never forsakes His children (Vs. 10b).
2. The Pathway into the Believer's Refuge (Vs. 10a)
 - a. Refuge is available to those who trust in God. Salvation refuge is accessed by faith!
 - b. Believers must also learn to look to the Lord and put their faith in Him during times of crisis and distress.

E. The Response to God's Judgment (Vs. 11-12)

There is:

1. A call to sing (Vs. 11a). In verse 1-2 we have David's personal resolve to sing and praise God. Now he invites others to join him in praising God for His presence among His people.
2. A call to speak (Vs. 11b-12). We are to bear testimony not only by our singing but also by sharing the truth of God's acts with others. Verse 12 gives several specific examples of what God does:
 - a. God examines the deeds of wicked men (Vs. 12a). The word 'inquisition' means "inquiry; examination; a searching or search; a judicial inquiry." (Websters 1828). Again, God is pictured in His position and function as Judge.
 - b. God remembers the cries of humble men (Vs. 12b). Likely a reference to the cries of those who suffered at the hands of their evil murderers and oppressors.
3. Concerning singing and preaching, Spurgeon writes, "The heavenly spirit of praise is gloriously contagious, and he that hath it is never content unless he can excite all who surround him to unite in his sweet employ. Singing and preaching, as a means of glorifying God are here joined together, and it is remarkable that, connected with all revivals of gospel ministry, there has been a sudden outburst of the spirit of song. Luther's Psalms and Hymns were in all men's mouths, and in the modern revival under Wesley and Whitfield, the strains of Charles Wesley, Cennick, Berridge, Toplay, Hart, Newton and many others were the outgrowth of restored piety...Sing on brethren and preach on, and these shall both be a token that the Lord still dwelleth in Zion."

IV. THE PRESENT NEED FOR GOD'S JUSTICE (VS. 13-14)

"The Psalm now turns from a song of victory to an earnest prayer for God's gracious intervention." (Ross) "Memories of the past and confidences concerning the future conducted the man of God to the mercy seat to plead for the needs of the present." (Spurgeon)

A. The Appeal of David's Request (Vs. 13)

In light of David's experience of God's faithful dealings in the past and his assurance of God's continued faithfulness in the future, he presents a plea for his present distress.

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1. He prays for mercy in the battle (Vs. 13a). The word 'trouble' means "misery, affliction." David is now in another conflict with those who "hate" and oppose him.
2. He prays for deliverance from the battle (Vs. 13b). He appeals to His God, touchingly describing Him as the one who would lift him up from the gates of death. For David, his life was likely literally under threat at this time (perhaps at the hand of Saul) and he described it as being brought near to the gates of death which were ready to open to him. David had confidence that God would rescue him from such a fate at the hands of the wicked.
3. What a touching picture of our salvation experience. We were headed on the broad road of destruction, moving closer and closer to the gates of death leading to hell fire on the other side but Christ rescued us in saving grace!

B. The Aim of David's Request (Vs. 14)

David's prayer has a spiritual outcome in mind. If God would deliver him, it would be an occasion for the glory of God. David would:

1. Declare the salvation of God (Vs. 14a). David would publicly proclaim his testimony of God's saving grace.
 - a. The "gates" in ancient times were places of concourse, where important transactions were performed. The reference appears to be to the gates of Jerusalem.
 - b. Note the contrast between the gates of death (Vs. 13) and the gates of Jerusalem (Vs. 14). This presents another beautiful salvation picture. Because we have been delivered from the gates of hell, we will one day rejoice in the gates of glory in the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:23-24).
2. Delight in the salvation of God (Vs. 14b). God's deliverance of David would bring him great joy. So it is for us when we experience God's saving rescue. Do you rejoice in the fact you were spared from going through hell's gate pass? The wonder of our salvation should always move us to rejoicing in the Lord.

V. THE PATTERN OF GOD'S JUSTICE (VS. 15-18)

A. The Reaping of the Unrighteous (Vs. 15-16)

"Verse 15 introduces a section of confidence, an expectation of the future defeat of the wicked that will parallel what he had experienced before." (Ross) The law of sowing and reaping is seen in relation to the wicked and it is the mechanism that God often uses to execute judgment upon them. They become:

1. Entrapped in their own pit (Vs. 15a)
2. Ensnared in their own trap (Vs. 15b-16)
 - a. The pit and the net are "figures for the plans the wicked made to destroy the innocent victims. God is able to turn their own devices back on them so that they will perish by their own hands...the wicked destroys himself by trying to destroy others." (Ross) Haman is an illustration of this principle who ended up hanging on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai.
 - b. This is clearly God's doing as verse 16 notes that "The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth". This means God's holy character is revealed through the judgments He executes. Illustration: A ruler

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who overlooks evil reveals that he is evil himself. In contrast, a ruler who deals justly and righteously reveals his own nature thereby.

c. The words 'Higgaion' and 'Selah' indicate a pause.

B. The Reward of the Unrighteous (Vs. 17)

1. Hell is the destiny for wicked people.
2. Hell is the destiny for wicked nations.
 - a. The sin of forgetting God is enough to damn a nation. How well that describes our own nation which has forgotten God!
 - b. Psalm 10:4 "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts."
 - c. Prov. 29:2 "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn."
 - d. Prov. 14:34 "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin *is* a reproach to any people."
 - e. The only remedy for a hell bound nation is the Gospel and the need is too urgent to get distracted by secondary matters! Political activism will not keep the Australian people out of the fires of hell but the Gospel will if they will receive it! The Biblical pattern for change is Regeneration, Revival and then Reformation.

C. The Remembrance of the Righteous (Vs. 18)

1. In contrast to the fate of the wicked just described stands the needy and the poor who are not forgotten by God. God does take note of the treatment of the poor and needy.
2. The higher principle in view is that the destiny of the righteous is in sharp contrast to that of the unrepentant.

VI. THE PLEA FOR GOD'S JUSTICE (VS. 19-20)

The Psalmist prays that God would:

A. Hinder Evil Men (Vs. 19)

1. "Arise, O LORD" = this is a battle cry plea for God to intervene in the battle and to thwart the enemy's advance.
2. "let not man prevail" = the cry of the believers heart is that God would put a stop to the forward march of evil.
3. "let the heathen be judged" = the Psalmist prays for that God would dispense Divine justice.

B. Humble Evil Men (Vs. 20)

1. The nations come back into view as they did in verse 17. Here David prays that God would cause them to fear Him so that they would come to the realization that they are mere mortal men. These wicked oppressors had spent their lives putting others in fear but they would be put in fear by God's judgment.
2. How greatly we need the leaders of our nation to come back to the realization that they are only men and not God!

Conclusion:

1. Theological lessons (what we learn about God)

- God is a just, holy and righteous God who WILL judge sinful men.

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- Jesus Christ is the victorious one who has overcome the world. John 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but **be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**"

2. Practical/Spiritual lessons (what we learn about the Christian life)

- Believers need to resolve to praise God in the midst of the battle.
- Believers can be confident of God's working on our behalf in the battle. God is our defence and will plead our cause if we are on the side of His cause and will give us the victory. 1 Cor. 15:57 "But thanks *be* to God, which **giveth us the victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- Believers need to seek God's aid and help in the spiritual battles they face.

3. Soteriological lessons (what we learn about salvation)

- God will send the unrepentant to a place called hell (Vs. 17). But God will rescue repentant sinners from the gates of hell if they will call on Him.