

Psalm 49

1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah. Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world: 2 Both low and high, rich and poor, together. 3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. 4 I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?

6 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; 7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: 8 (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) 9 That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption. 10 For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. 11 Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. 12 Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.

13 This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah. 14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah. 16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; 17 For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him. 18 Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself. 19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light. 20 Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.

Introduction:

1. “To the chief Musician” (2 Chr. 5:12).
2. The Sons of Korah (Num. 16:23-34, Num. 26:11). The Sons of Korah Psalms are 11 in total (Pss. 42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87, 88).
3. This Psalm instructs us about the foolishness of riches apart from wisdom.

Outline:

- A. Introduction (vv.1-4)
- B. The Question (v.5)
- C. The Certainty of Death (vv.6-12)
- D. The Folly of Riches apart from Wisdom (vv.13-14)
- E. The Question Resolved (vv.15-20)

Observations:

1. God is interested in man, including how man uses His (God’s) money. God owns everything. Man is only a manager of God’s gifts.
2. The Psalmist (either the sons of Korah or David) asks the question: Why? (Why should a believer fear the coming days of evil – old age, uncertain future, rejection of man, fleeting sense of well-being, abandonment.
3. The worldly (usually unsaved) trusts in wealth, and gains that wealth by taking advantage of the people.
4. (vv.7-9) Death is the certain equalizer between the rich and the poor. Money cannot buy eternal life. Death is a part of our earthly existence (v.12).
5. The folly of riches is the self-sufficiency that accompanies wealth. Death is like a shepherd that leads their sheep to the slaughter.
6. The opposite of the foolish-wealthy person is the righteous person. The one who trusts in riches vs. the one who trusts in God.
7. (v.18ff) Man’s praise is worthless against God’s condemnation.

Lesson: God will redeem those who trust in Him from the certainty of death. Trust in God, and not in the folly of riches.