

Preaching the Psalms Series

(42)

Psalm 9

Praise the Lord for His Triumph Over All Who Trouble You (All the Wicked), 9:1-20

A Palm of Thanksgiving for God's Justice

For the Choir Director; on Muth-labben. A Psalm of David

Psalm 9:1-20 (NASB)

¹ "I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders.

² I will be glad and exult in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.

³ When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before You.

⁴ For You have maintained my just cause; You have sat on the throne judging righteously.

⁵ You have rebuked the nations, you have destroyed the wicked; You have blotted out their name forever and ever.

⁶ The enemy has come to an end in perpetual ruins, And You have uprooted the cities; The very memory of them has perished.

⁷ But the LORD abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment,

⁸ And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity.

⁹ The LORD also will be a stronghold for the oppressed, A stronghold in times of trouble;

¹⁰ And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.

¹¹ Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion; Declare among the peoples His deeds.

¹² For He who requires blood remembers them; He does not forget the cry of the afflicted.

¹³ Be gracious to me, O LORD; See my affliction from those who hate me, you who lift me up from the gates of death,

¹⁴ That I may tell of all Your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in Your salvation.

¹⁵ The nations have sunk down in the pit which they have made; In the net which they hid, their own foot has been caught.

¹⁶ The LORD has made Himself known; He has executed judgment. In the work of his own hands the wicked is snared. Higgsion Selah.

¹⁷ The wicked will return to Sheol, *even* all the nations who forget God.

¹⁸ For the needy will not always be forgotten, Nor the hope of the afflicted perish forever.

¹⁹ Arise, O LORD, do not let man prevail; Let the nations be judged before You.

²⁰ Put them in fear, O LORD; Let the nations know that they are but men. Selah.”

(Psalm 9:1-20) Introduction: many studies have been conducted to determine the power of praise on people. Positive words have been proven to have a great impact in the home and in the workplace. Some studies, however, have produced conflicting information. Experts have concluded that too much praise produces arrogance, laziness, and fear in children.

While we cannot be sure how much praise is too much for us to receive, there is no question about the power found in our praising the Lord. Previous psalms teach the power found in pouring our hearts out to the Lord in prayer. [Psalm 9](#) teaches the power of exalting God for who He is and for what He has done for us.

David is seen erupting in wholehearted praise to the Lord even while he is in the midst of battling fierce enemies, enemies that had dragged him to the door of death.

The enemies in this psalm are seen from three perspectives:

⇒**Personal**—David viewed the individuals who were attacking him.

⇒**National**—David viewed the nations that rose up against Israel.

⇒**Eschatological** (end times)—David viewed the wicked as the enemies of God and His sovereign purposes, as enemies who had launched a never-ending assault on God, His righteousness, and His truth. At the end of time, God will triumph over all these enemies.

David also wrote from three perspectives of time:

⇒He considered the faithfulness of God in the *past*.

⇒He considered the foes facing Israel in the *present*.

⇒He considered the final fulfillment of this psalm in the *future*.

The specific occasion of the ninth psalm is unknown. Some commentators speculate that the term *muthlabben* (“**death of the son**” or “**to die for the son**”) may give insight to its historical setting. Most scholars think this was the title of an existing song, and David was ordering the director of music to perform the psalm to its tune. Some speculate that this was another song composed by David, perhaps at Absalom’s death ([2 Samuel 18:33](#)). Hebrew tradition claimed it to be a song celebrating the slaying of Goliath.

2 Samuel 18:33 (NASB)

³³ “The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus, he said as he walked, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

This is, *Praise the Lord for His Triumph Over All Who Trouble You (All the Wicked)*, [Psalm 9:1-20](#).

1. **Praise the Lord with all your heart (vv. 1-10).**
2. **Challenge others to praise the Lord (vv. 11-12).**
3. **Pray for the Lord’s mercy and deliverance (vv. 13-14).**

4. **Declare the truth of God's justice (vv. 15-18).**
5. **Cry out for God's justice and judgment to be executed (vv. 19-20).**

1. **(Psalm 9:1-10) Praise the Lord with all your heart.**

Psalm 9:1-10 (NASB)

- ¹ "I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders.
- ² I will be glad and exult in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.
- ³ When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before You.
- ⁴ For You have maintained my just cause; You have sat on the throne judging righteously.
- ⁵ You have rebuked the nations, you have destroyed the wicked; You have blotted out their name forever and ever.
- ⁶ The enemy has come to an end in perpetual ruins, And You have uprooted the cities; The very memory of them has perished.
- ⁷ But the LORD abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment,
- ⁸ And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity.
- ⁹ The LORD also will be a stronghold for the oppressed, A stronghold in times of trouble;
- ¹⁰ And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.

Nothing less than whole-hearted praise is worthy of the Lord. Here, at the very beginning, David declares his purpose for this psalm: it is a praise song to the Lord. The Hebrews viewed the *heart* as the seat of thought. David fully engaged his mind in his worship. His meditation on God's faithfulness, righteousness, and power produced eight reasons why the Lord deserves our total praise.

By passionately praising the Lord at a very difficult time in his life, David provides a powerful example for us. His enemies were in furious pursuit of him, so much so that he felt he stood at the very door of death ([v. 13](#)).

Psalm 9:13 (NASB)

- ¹³ "Be gracious to me, O LORD; See my affliction from those who hate me, You who lift me up from the gates of death."

Yet, in the midst of life-threatening danger, David focused his mind on God. When he meditated on the Lord rather than his problems, his heavy heart overflowed with praise. In so doing, he teaches an important lesson: in our most perilous trials, we should take our eyes off of our problems and fix them on the Lord.

a. Because of God's marvelous works down through the ages ([v. 1](#)).

Psalm 9:1 (NASB)

- ¹ "I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders."

b. Because of God's wonderful name: He is the "Most High" (v. 2).

Psalm 9:2 (NASB)

² "I will be glad and exult in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High."

c. Because God turns back and overthrows those (all enemies) who cause you trouble (v. 3).

Psalm 9:3 (NASB)

³ "When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before You."

d. Because God upholds your right and cause (v. 4).

Psalm 9:4 (NASB)

⁴ "For You have maintained my just cause; You have sat on the throne judging righteously."

e. Because God rules and judges righteously (vv. 5-6).

Psalm 9:5-6 (NASB)

⁵ "You have rebuked the nations, You have destroyed the wicked; You have blotted out their name forever and ever.

⁶ The enemy has come to an end in perpetual ruins, And You have uprooted the cities; The very memory of them has perished."

f. Because God reigns forever: In contrast to the nations, He has established His rule forever (v. 7).

Psalm 9:7 (NASB)

⁷ "But the LORD abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment."

g. Because God will judge the world and govern the people with justice (fairly and righteously) (v. 8).

Psalm 9:8 (NASB)

⁸ "And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity."

h. Because God is a refuge in the time of trouble (vv. 9-10).

Psalm 9:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ "The LORD also will be a stronghold for the oppressed, A stronghold in times of trouble;

¹⁰ And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.

2. (**Psalm 9:11-12**) Challenge others to praise the Lord.

Psalm 9:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹ “Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion; Declare among the peoples His deeds.

¹² For He who requires blood remembers them; He does not forget the cry of the afflicted.”

a. Because He executes justice (avenges blood) and remembers the wrongdoer (**v. 12**).

Psalm 9:12 (NASB)

¹² “For He who **requires blood** remembers them; He does not forget the cry of the afflicted.”

Psalm 9:12 (KJV)

¹² “When he maketh **inquisition for blood**, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.”

b. Because He does not ignore the needy (**v. 12**).

Psalm 9:12 (NASB)

¹² “For He who requires blood remembers them; **He does not forget the cry of the afflicted.**”

Psalm 9:12 (KJV)

¹² “When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: **he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.**”

3. (**Psalm 9:13-14**) Pray for the Lord’s mercy and deliverance.

Psalm 9:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ “Be gracious to me, O LORD; See my affliction from those who hate me, You who lift me up from the gates of death,

¹⁴ That I may tell of all Your praises, That in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in Your salvation.”

a. Ask Him to deliver you from persecution and death (**v. 13**).

Psalm 9:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ “Be gracious to me, O LORD; See my affliction from those who hate me, You who lift me up from the gates of death.”

b. The reason: That you may proclaim God’s praises and rejoice in your salvation (**v. 14**).

Psalm 9:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ “That I may tell of all Your praises, That in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in Your salvation.”

4. (**Psalm 9:15-18**) Declare the truth of God’s justice.

Psalm 9:15-18 (NASB)

¹⁵ “The nations have sunk down in the pit which they have made; In the net which they hid, their own foot has been caught.

¹⁶ The LORD has made Himself known; He has executed judgment. In the work of his own hands the wicked is snared. Higgsion Selah.

¹⁷ The wicked will return to Sheol, *Even* all the nations who forget God.

¹⁸ For the needy will not always be forgotten, Nor the hope of the afflicted perish forever.

After petitioning God to intervene in his current crisis, David returned to praising the unchanging character of the Lord. Again, he emphasized God's faithfulness to himself and His people. As in the past, the Lord will continue to act in righteousness. Note four great facts about the justice of God:

a. Fact 1—the nations reap what they sow (suffer retribution), the very evil they inflict on others (v. 15).

Psalm 9:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ "The nations have sunk down in the pit which they have made; In the net which they hid, their own foot has been caught."

God sometimes judges people by letting them be caught in their own traps. He often judges people by allowing them to experience the natural consequences of their actions (see **outline and notes—Ps. 5:10 and 7:15-16** for more discussion).

b. Fact 2—people came to know the Lord by His acts of justice: He causes the wicked to trap themselves in their own evil (v. 16).

Psalm 9:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ "The LORD has made Himself known; He has executed judgment. In the work of his own hands the wicked is snared. Higgsion Selah."

David again celebrated God's perfect justice. Some commentators understand this verse to be speaking of the Lord's reputation for judgment. However, *known* (*yada*) means to know personally and by experience.

Both *higgsion* and *selah* are words that call for meditation on the truths of this verse (see

Thought 1). Ponder two applications:

⇒ Some people will not experience (know) the Lord until they are actually suffering the judgment of God. Those who reject God's love and refuse to repent will never know Him as the God of salvation; they will only know Him as the God of judgment.

⇒ Other people will come to know God personally *because of* His judgment. They will fear facing God one day in judgment, fear spending eternity in the lake of fire; therefore, they run to His offer of salvation.

As a result, they enjoy a personal relationship with the Lord and will be given the right to live eternally with Him. As we bear witness for the Lord, we need to remember this fact: the attribute that brings some people to God is His righteous justice (judgment).

c. Fact 3—the destiny of the wicked and of the nations that forget God is death (the grave, hell) (vv. 17).

Psalm 9:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ “The wicked will return to Sheol, *Even* all the nations who forget God.”

All the wicked will spend eternity separated from God in *hell (sheol)*, where they will perish physically and spiritually. Here *wicked* specifically refers to those who oppress others. [Verses 17](#) and [18](#) express the contrast between the oppressors and their victims. All who forget God and oppress others will experience His justice and suffer eternal destruction.

d. Fact 4—the needy and afflicted will have their hope fulfilled: God will not forget them (v. 18).

Psalm 9:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ “For the needy will not always be forgotten, Nor the hope of the afflicted perish forever.”

The wicked forget God ([v. 17](#)), but God never forgets those who suffer at their hand. *Needy (ebyown)* emphasizes their economic and physical condition: they are destitute because of the wicked.

Poor (ani) refers to their mental and emotional condition: they are depressed and despondent, mentally defeated because they have been beaten down by evildoers.

It often seems that God has forgotten the victims of the wicked. Tragically, many of the victims suffer all the days of their lives and perish before justice is served on their oppressors. However, some of them live with the *expectation* of justice, and their hope for justice does not die with them. God does not forget them. He will judge their persecutors in His time. The expectation of the afflicted will ultimately be fulfilled.

Thought 1. Note the two words at the mid-point of this passage ([v. 16](#)). *Higgaion* is an instruction that signals a sober, instrumental interlude. *Selah* is an instruction to pause for reflection and meditation (see **Deeper Study #2—[Psalm 3:2](#) for more discussion**).

DEEPER STUDY # 2

Psalm 3:2 (NASB)

² “Many are saying of my soul, “There is no deliverance for him in God.” Selah.

([Psalm 3:2](#)) *Selah*: the term *selah* occurs 71 times in 39 psalms. It occurs elsewhere in Scripture only in [Habakkuk 3](#). Selah is derived from a root word which means to *lift or raise up*. Its exact meaning in Hebrew music, however, is not certain. Of all the opinions about its meaning and usage, two primary views emerge:

1. It is an instrumental instruction to play louder or stronger, the equivalent of *forte* in modern music. Bible teacher John Phillips explains, "...it is thought to be a kind of crescendo mark in the music..."
2. There is a roar of music to draw attention to the sentence being sung, a kind of musical punctuation mark."**[5] John Phillips. *Exploring Psalms, Volume 1. WORDsearch CROSS e-book.***
3. It is the instruction for an instrumental interlude, for all singing to cease. It is a pause for reflection or meditation upon what has been immediately sung, a time to *lift up* silent praise or petition to God in response to the previous verse or stanza of verses.

What a powerful place this is for a pause! We would do well to stop and contemplate the certainty and seriousness of God's judgment. God never turns His head at sin. His righteous character would not allow Him to simply overlook our sinful behavior, to ignore it as if it didn't exist. His justice requires a price for sin. In order that His justice could be satisfied and we could be pardoned, God provided His Son as the sacrifice for our sin.

Those who reject Christ's sacrifice will suffer the full punishment for their sin. They will not receive a free pass into heaven in the end. God will not wink at their wickedness and allow them entrance into His eternal kingdom. He is just, and He will condemn them to the full sentence for their sin. God's redemption is available to all, but it is effective only for those who repent and receive Christ as Savior and Lord.

Never forget, no one—neither unbeliever nor believer—can sin in this life and get by with it. Those who never repent and trust Christ will be judged for every sin they have committed. And those who receive Christ and then sin will be chastened by the Lord.

In addition, throughout life, every one of us will reap what we sow: the natural, unavoidable consequences of our actions.

In our age, the justice and judgment of God is seldom emphasized and is often forgotten. If we are wise, we will take a *selah* moment—a moment to reflect—every time we are tempted. We will pause to remember the fact that God is always true to His character. He always judges sin.

Romans 1:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."

Galatians 6:7 (NASB)

⁷ "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 (NASB)

⁷ "And to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the

Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,

⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

⁹ These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”

2 Peter 2:9 (NASB)

⁹ “*Then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.”

Jude 1:14-15 (NASB)

¹⁴ “*It was* also about these men *that* Enoch, *in* the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones,

¹⁵ to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

Job 8:13 (NASB)

¹³ “So are the paths of all who forget God; And the hope of the godless will perish.”

Ezekiel 25:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ “I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes; and they will know that I am the LORD when I lay My vengeance on them.”

Ezekiel 38:23 (NASB)

²³ “I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the LORD.”