

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

David praises God for the benefits which he has granted to Israel in general, and to himself in particular, Psalm 9:1-6. He encourages himself in the Lord, knowing that he will ever judge righteously, and be a refuge for the distressed, Psalm 9:7-10. He exhorts the people to praise God for his judgments, Psalm 9:11, Psalm 9:12; prays for mercy and support; and thanks God for his judgments executed upon the heathen, Psalm 9:13-16. He foretells the destruction of the ungodly, Psalm 9:17; prays for the poor and needy, and against their oppressors, Psalm 9:18-20.

The inscription to this Psalm in the Hebrew text is, To the chief Musician upon Muth-lab-ben, A Psalm of David. The Chaldee has, A Song of David, to be sung concerning the Death of the Strong Man, (or champion, x"x'x'x" (degabra)), who went out between the Camps, that is, Goliath, on account of whose defeat this Psalm has been supposed by many to have been composed. The date in the margin is several years posterior to the death of Goliath. See the introduction.

The Vulgate: A Psalm of David, for the end; concerning the secrets of the Son.

The Septuagint and Aethiopic are the same with the Vulgate.

The Syriac: A Psalm of David concerning Christ's receiving the throne and the kingdom, and defeating his enemies.

The Arabic: Concerning the mysteries of the Son, as to the glory of Christ, his resurrection, and kingdom, and the destruction of all the disobedient.

Houbigant causes the Hebrew title to agree with the Vulgate, Septuagint, and Ethiopic, by uniting xcxœ xžx^a (al muth), concerning the death, into the word xcxœxžx^a (alamoth), which signifies secret, or hidden things. To the chief musician, or conqueror; secrets concerning the Son: A Psalm of David.

About a hundred MSS. and printed editions unite the words as above. Some translate xcxœxžx^a (alamoth), concerning the youth or infancy; the infancy of the Son. Several of the fathers have on this ground interpreted it, concerning the incarnation of our Lord. Indeed the title and the Psalm have been so variously understood, that it would be as painful as it would be useless to follow the different commentators, both ancient and modern, through all their conjectures.

Verse 1

I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart - And it is only when the whole heart is employed in the work that God can look upon it with acceptance.

I will show forth - x"x|x"x" (asapperah), I will number out, or reckon up; a very difficult task, x xcxœxœx^a (niphleotheycha), thy miracles; supernatural interventions of thy power and goodness. He whose eye is attentive to the operation of God's hand will find many of these. In the Vulgate this Psalm begins with Confitebor tibi, Domine, I will confess unto thee, O Lord, which my old MS. above quoted translates thus: I sal schrifte Lard, til the, in al my hert, I sal tel al twi wonders. On which we find the following curious paraphrase: Here the prophete spekes agaynes that grucches with ese of il men: and the travel and anguis of gude men. I sal schrifte til the Lard, that is, I sal lufe the in al my hert, hally gederant it til thi luf: and gyfand na party tharof tyl errour, na to covatyse: ne til fleschly luf. A vile errour it is that some men says, that God dose unrightwisly in mani thinges in erthe: for tham thynk that tay sold noght be done. Als I hard say noght lang sythem, of a man of religyon, and of grete fame, that qwen he was in ttle see, in poynte to peryshe, he said tyl Gode: Lard thu dos unryghtwysly if thou sofyre us to perysch here. God myght haf answered and said, My rightwysnes rechtes sofer a betere man than thou ert to perisse here: for I hope, had he ben a ryghtwyse man, he had noght sayd swa: for al ar unryghtwyse, that hopes that any unryghtwysnes may be in Godes wylle. Bot I sal luf the in al thi workes; and tel al thy wonders; that is, bathe that er sene, and that ar noght sene; visibels and invisibels.

Verse 2

I will be glad and rejoice in thee - I am glad that thou hast heard my prayer, and showed me mercy; and I will rejoice in thee, in having thee as my portion, dwelling and working in my heart.

Verse 3

When mine enemies are turned back - It is a sure sign of a nearly approaching complete conquest over sin, when, by resistance to its influences, it begins to lose its power. That is the time to follow on to know the Lord.

Verse 5

Thou hast rebuked the heathen - We know not what this particularly refers to, but it is most probably to the

Canaanitish nations, which God destroyed from off the face of the earth; hence it is said, Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever, *לעלם ולעלם* (*leolam vaed*), endlessly. Here *לעלם* (*olam*) has its proper signification, without end. He who contends it means only a limited time, let him tell us where the Hivites, Perizzites, Jebusites, etc., now dwell; and when it is likely they are to be restored to Canaan.

Verse 6

Destructions are come to a perpetual end - Rather, "The enemy is desolated for ever; for thou hast destroyed their cities, and their memory is perished with them." Multitudes of the cities of the Canaanites have perished so utterly that neither name nor vestige remains of them.

Verse 7

But the Lord shall endure - All things shall have an end but God and holy spirits.

Verse 8

He shall judge the world in righteousness - All the dispensations of God's providence are founded in righteousness and truth.

Verse 9

A refuge - *מִצְבֵּת* (*misgab*), a high place, where their enemies can neither reach nor see them. He who has God for his portion has all safety in him.

Verse 10

They that know thy name - Who have an experimental acquaintance with thy mercy, will put their trust in thee, from the conviction that thou never hast forsaken, and never wilt forsake, them that trust in thee.

Verse 11

Declare among the people his doings - It is the duty of all those who have received the salvation of God, to recommend him and his salvation to the whole circle of their acquaintance, Christians, so called, when they meet, seldom speak about God! Why is this? Because they have nothing to say.

Verse 12

When he maketh inquisition for blood - This not only applies to the Canaanites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Philistines, who shed the blood of God's people unjustly, but to all the nations of the earth who, to enlarge their territory, increase their wealth, or extend their commerce, have made destructive wars. For the blood which such nations have shed, their blood shall be shed. If man should make no inquisition for this iniquitously spilt blood, God will do it, for he remembers them; and the cry of the humbled, distressed people, driven to distraction and ruin by such wars, is not forgotten before him.

Verse 13

Have mercy upon me, O Lord - David, having laid down the preceding maxims, now claims his part in their truth. I also am in trouble through the unjust dealings of my enemies; I am brought to the gates of death; have mercy on me, and lift me up, that, being saved from the gates of death, I may show forth thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion. The gates of death - an open grave, leading to a yawning hell. The gates of the daughter of Zion - all the ordinances of God, by which the soul is helped forward to heaven.

Verse 15

The heathen are sank down to the pit - See on Psalm 7:15 (note).

Verse 16

The Lord is known by the judgment - It is not every casualty that can properly be called a judgment of God. Judgment is his strange work; but when he executes it, his mind is plainly to be seen. There are no natural causes to which such calamities can be legally attributed.

The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands - There is nothing that a wicked man does that is not against his own interest. He is continually doing himself harm, and takes more pains to destroy his soul than the righteous man does to get his saved unto eternal life. This is a weighty truth; and the psalmist adds: *Higgaion, Selah*. Meditate on this; mark it well. See on Psalm 3:3 (note). Some think that it is a direction to the musicians, something like our *Presto, Largo, Vivace, Allegro*, "Play briskly and boldly; beat away; and let sense and sound accompany each other."

Verse 17

The wicked shall be turned into hell - **לְשׁוֹלַיִם** (lisholah), headlong into hell, down into hell. The original is very emphatic.

All the nations that forget God - They will not live in his fear. There are both nations and individuals who, though they know God, forget him, that is, are unmindful of him, do not acknowledge him in their designs, ways and works. These are all to be thrust down into hell. Reader, art thou forgetful of thy Maker, and of Him who died for thee?

Verse 18

The needy shall not alway be forgotten - The needy, and the poor, whose expectation is from the Lord, are never forgotten, though sometimes their deliverance is delayed for the greater confusion of their enemies, the greater manifestation of God's mercy, and the greater benefit to themselves.

Verse 19

Arise, O Lord - Let this be the time in which thou wilt deliver thy poor people under oppression and persecution.

Verse 20

Put them in fear - **יִתְּצוּם** (shithah Yehovah morah lahem), O Lord, place a teacher among them, that they may know they also are accountable creatures, grow wise unto salvation, and be prepared for a state of blessedness. Several MSS. read **יִתְּצוּם** (morre), fear; but teacher or legislator is the reading of all the versions except the Chaldee. Coverdale has hit the sense, translating thus: O Lorde, set a Scholemaster over them; and the old Psalter, Sett Lorb a brynger of Law abouen tham.

That the nations may know themselves to be but men - **עֲנוּשִׁים** (enosh); Let the Gentiles be taught by the preaching of thy Gospel that they are weak and helpless, and stand in need of the salvation which Christ has provided for them. This may be the spirit of the petition. And this is marked by the extraordinary note Selah; Mark well, take notice. So the term may be understood.

This whole Psalm, says Dr. Horsley, seems naturally to divide into three parts. The first ten verses make the First part; the six following, the Second; and the remaining four the Third.

The First part is prophetic of the utter extermination of the irreligious persecuting faction. The prophecy is delivered in the form of an **אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמַח**, or song of victory, occasioned by the promise given in the fifteenth verse of the tenth Psalm; and through the whole of this song the psalmist, in the height of a prophetic enthusiasm, speaks of the threatened vengeance as accomplished.

The Second part opens with an exhortation to the people of God to praise him as the Avenger of their wrongs, and the watchful Guardian of the helpless, and, as if the flame of the prophetic joy which the oracular voice had lighted in the psalmist's mind was beginning to die away, the strain is gradually lowered, and the notes of triumph are mixed with supplication and complaint, as if the mind of the psalmist were fluttering between things present and to come, and made itself alternately present to his actual condition and his future hope.

In the Third part the psalmist seems quite returned from the prophetic enthusiasm to his natural state, and closes the whole song with explicit but cool assertions of the future destruction of the wicked, and the deliverance of the persecuted saints, praying for the event.