



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Psalms

Psalm 9

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Introduction

- David is the author of this Psalm
- It is a psalm of thanksgiving for victory
- Perhaps David wrote this psalm remembering the victory over Goliath
- From this point up to Psalm 148 the versions differ over the numbering of the psalms
- In the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate Psalms 9 and 10 are combined into one
- Some believe there are many convincing reasons for uniting the two psalms



Introduction

- A certain Hebrew alphabetical structure which extends throughout both psalms is noticeable
- The absence of a title to Psalm 10 supports the view that it is a continuation of Psalm 9
- These two psalms have in common certain characteristic turns of expression, which occur rarely elsewhere
- However, the Hebrew counts them two
- The Hebrew division probably is based on the fact, that while at first sight Psalm 9 seems to be a thanksgiving for victory, expressing triumph and hope, Psalm 10 is a prayer against violence and blood



Introduction

- The title of this Psalm in the Hebrew text is, 'To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben, A Psalm of David'
- While some believe the title Muth-Labben refers to a tune, others suggest that it refers to an instrument upon which the song was played
- The New King James Version says the Death of the Son instead of Muth-Labben
- Muth-Labben or the death of the Son could refer to the death of Betheba's first son, or Nabal or Absalom
- 'The death of the Son' some believe it is concerning the Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ



Introduction

- The Syriac version is 'A Psalm of David concerning Christ's receiving the throne and the kingdom, and defeating His enemies'
- The title in the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate, A Psalm of David, for the end; concerning the secrets of the Son
- "Unto the end" refers to Christ, our Righteousness, who is the end or purpose of our life, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes" (Romans 10:4)
St. Augustine
- Some scholars see that the phrase "Unto the end" is supposed to be that this psalm is to be sung always, continually, or frequently, thus declaring this composition of great value and utility



Introduction

- Psalm Outline
- Praising God 9:1-2
- The Lord, the Judge 9:3-8
- The Lord, the Refuge 9:9-11
- The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



Praising God 9:1-2

- The opening of this psalm is a thanksgiving uttered in gratitude for the psalmist victory over his enemies and on God's wonderful deeds
- David recognized that God was worthy of praise with the *whole heart* not with partial gratitude and insincerity
- With a sincere, affectionate, and devout heart; his entire being praises God
- We, like David, must determine in our heart to praise and thank the Lord
- Sometimes circumstances make us want to mourn, when we should be praising



Praising God 9:1-2

- We must remind ourselves of all the marvelous works of God
- Our joy must not be in the gift, so much as in the Giver
- In the Latin Vulgate this Psalm begins with "I will confess unto thee, O Lord,"
- St Chrysostom says, "confession takes two forms: condemnation of one's own sins, or thanksgiving to God."
- Here, David described an important and often neglected way to praise God – to *tell of all His marvelous works*
- Simply remembering and telling the great things God has done is a wonderful way to praise Him



Praising God 9:1-2

- *rejoice in You*, He would express his joy in God - in knowing that there was such a Being
- He rejoices in all that He had done for him; in all the evidences of his favor and friendship
- We must recognize the fact that there is none greater than God
- He is the *Most High* – there's none higher – none more mighty
- This is the God to whom the psalmist is crying out – the mightiest, most marvelous, and most praise-worthy Being
- *glad and rejoice*, Two words being here used express the greatness of this joy, and especially the latter word denotes a very deep joy, a joy unspeakable and full of glory



The Lord, the Judge 9:3-8

- In the first two verses of this psalm, David described general reasons for praising God
- Now, he recounted a reason more specific to his present circumstances; he praised God for the way that the Most High defeated his *enemies*
- God's presence is always sufficient to work the defeat of our enemies, and their ruin is so complete when the Lord takes them in hand, nothing can save them
- When our spiritual enemies are fallen, this is a result of God's presence



The Lord, the Judge 9:3-8

- An example of such an occasion occurred when Jesus came forward and said, *"I am He," His enemies then stepped backwards and fell upon the ground* (John 18:6)
- Some Church Fathers consider these verses to be a reference to the Jews who resisted Christ
- *turn back*, It is the result of God's power alone
- 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
- St. Augustine says that when we flee from the devil, our persecutor, and follow our Lord as our Leader, the first turns behind us



The Lord, the Judge 9:3-8

- The *enemies* could not stand before God
- So David attributes the honor of his victories to God only, and to His presence and assistance
- We must be careful, like David, to give all the glory to Him whose presence gives the victory
- When David came against Goliath, he came in the name of the *Most High* God
- We do not have to avenge our enemies, *“Therefore ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.”* Romans 12:20



The Lord, the Judge 9:3-8

- *For You have maintained my right and my cause*, God justified and established his righteous cause
- God had defended *my cause*, and by the flight, fall, and ruin of his enemies, had clearly made it appear that his cause was just and good
- The evidence of the psalmist's innocence and uprightness is another reason of his joy and gladness
- St. John Chrysostom says, “After all, if he had not suffered unjustly, God would not have avenged him.”
- God has a throne of judgment where He sits as the Judge of all the earth, and will do right



The Lord, the Judge 9:3-8

- David saw God in action among *the nations*, righteously judging the wicked
- Who are the *nations* rebuked by God who reigns in our hearts as well as in His church where He is enthroned?
- They could be nothing else but sin and evil
- For where God reigns there can be no evil
- Light and darkness cannot co-exist
- *the nations ... the wicked* Denotes the nations in persistent and sinful opposition to God's people



The Lord, the Judge 9:3-8

- The word rebuke here does not mean, as it does usually with us, to reproach with words, but it means that He had done this by deeds; that is, by overcoming or conquering them
- *the wicked* - The Hebrew here is in the singular number
- *the nations* – sins, have been spoken of in the plural, whereas the cause of these sins is Satan, the one enemy of mankind, *the wicked*
- *forever and ever*, God is patient and forgiving
- God gives plenty of time to repent, but and if they will not repent, His judgement falls hard upon them



The Lord, the Judge 9:3-8

- *You have blotted out their name forever and ever,* “You have utterly destroyed, rooted up and so wiped them out that memory of them has also disappeared.” St. John Chrysostom
- St. Augustine comments on verse 5 and says, “We take this to be more suitably said to the Lord Jesus Christ, than said by Him. For who else hath rebuked the heathen, and the ungodly perished, save He, who after that He ascended up into heaven, sent the Holy Spirit, that, filled by Him, the Apostles should preach the word of God with boldness, and freely reprove men’s sins?”



The Lord, the Judge 9:3-8

- In verse 6 David shifted his focus from speaking directly to the Lord to addressing the enemies whom the Lord had defeated
- The psalmist exults over the fallen enemy
- Some interpret the word *O enemy* as the enemies of God's people, Philistines, Amorites, or other nations and some understand of Goliath
- Some understand that it is antichrist, he opposes himself to God
- In any case, David assured them that their evil work of destruction would end in vanity
- It can also be explained that God destroys all traces of sin



The Lord, the Judge 9:3-8

- *O enemy*, It is singular, what enemy but the devil?
- He *destroyed cities*....thus the enemy is wholly devoured and can find no place to settle in our hearts
- The judge destroys all the cities of the enemy that exist within us
- “And their cities were destroyed, that is those who were like towers and cities.” St. Cyril of Alexandria
- *Even their memory has perished*, They shall not be returned or built any more, but shall be like a millstone cast into the sea, and be found no more at all, Ezekiel 35:8-9



The Lord, the Judge 9:3-8

- *But the Lord*, in contrast to the enemies of His people, shall sit enthroned for ever, as King and Judge
- *Cities and nations perish*, but *the Lord* remains a King for evermore
- While all is alteration and disturbance upon earth, the unchanged and unchangeable Eternal One continues constantly seated, in serene majesty, in heaven
- The enduring existence and unchanging dominion of our God, are the firm foundations of our joy



The Lord, the Judge 9:3-8

- We might have expected David to set *himself* in contrast to the wicked; yet he was wise and humble enough to know that God would judge the wicked more for being *His own* enemies instead of David's
- David looked forward to the eventual and ultimate rule of God over all nations
- This would be the perfect expression of God's righteous judgment
- Whatever earthly courts may do, heaven's throne ministers judgment is in *uprightness*
- Partiality and unfairness are things unknown in the dealings of the Holy One



The Lord, the Refuge 9:9-11

- God has some special titles in the Psalms like, the Defender of the lowly (147:6), the Father of the orphans the Defender of the widow (68:5) as well as the Guardian of the little ones (116: 6)
- Here, David was grateful that God did more than judge the wicked; He also was a *refuge* and support for those *oppressed* by the wicked
- David did not say that the armies have proved your refuge, nor money, nor walls and barriers, instead *The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed*



The Lord, the Refuge 9:9-11

- St. John Chrysostom comments by saying, “He is saying that nothing in fact is equal to that refuge on the score of ease and security. The other refuges may be subject to scheming and cannot be found promptly and readily but are obstructed by time and place and countless circumstances.”
- There are many forms of oppression
- Both from man and from Satan oppression comes to us; and for all its forms, a refuge is provided in God
- There were cities of refuge under the law, God is our refuge-city under the gospel



The Lord, the Refuge 9:9-11

- David understood that the help of God was not given just because God favored some and opposed others
- It was because His people have relationship with Him (*know Your name*)
- By knowing His name is also meant an experimental acquaintance with the attributes of God
- Each attribute ensures to hold the soul from drifting in times of danger
- The experience of His faithfulness to His people in all ages is a just ground for their confidence (*put their trust in You*)



The Lord, the Refuge 9:9-11

- God had never forsaken those who faithfully adhered to Him, (*who seek You*)
- *Sing praises to the LORD*, Being full of gratitude himself, David is eager to excite others to join the effort, and praise God in the same manner as he himself vowed to do in the first and second verses
- As the special residence of His glory is in heaven, so the special residence of His grace is in His church, of which Zion was a type
- There He meets His people with His promises and grace, and there He expects they should meet Him with their praises and services



The Lord, the Refuge 9:9-11

- David here communicated something known among those who praise God
- When they praise God, it is natural for them to draw others into similar praise
- What God does for the souls of men is not only to be declared among the people of God, Psalm 66:16; but also among the people of the world
- Partly that the name of God may be exalted, His grace, goodness, and mercy be displayed
- And partly that these nations may also be brought to the knowledge and worship of the true God

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- There is no murder committed that goes unpunished and is fully avenged
- As we read in Genesis 9:5-6, *“Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning ... From the hand of every man’s brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.”*
- Numbers 35:33-34 tells us that the blood of unavenged murders pollutes the earth
- The blood of Abel spoke to God (Genesis 4:10), and the blood of Nabal was seen by God (2 Kings 9:26)

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- God has promised to avenge blood and remember the murdered
- Yet if He does not promptly take revenge, do not be surprised
- He gives sinner the opportunity of repentance
- The humble, or meek, as this word is translated Matthew 21:5, is he who do not, and cannot, and will not avenge themselves, but commit his cause to God to whom vengeance belongs
- The consideration of God's mercies in the past, and especially in the recent deliverance, leads the psalmist to beseech and plead a continuance of His mercies in the future
- He is not yet free from troubles

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- There are still enemies who afflict and threaten him
- David is beseeching God to look upon him under it with an eye of pity and compassion, and help and deliver him and look upon his enemies that give him this trouble, and take vengeance on them
- *lift me up from the gates of death*, From the edge or mouth of the grave, into which he was falling, being as near death as a man is to the city who is come to the very gates of it
- David wanted God to rescue him so that he could give God all the *praise*, and to passionately *rejoice in God's salvation*
- David sees his deliverance as a way for God to bring more glory to Himself

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- He did not see his rescue as the final goal; the goal was always God's greater glory
- *Your praise In the gates of the daughter of Zion, That I may praise You in the land of the living*
- The idea is, that the dead could not praise God, *"for in death no one remembers You: and who will confess You in hell?"* (Psalm 6:5)
- And he calls on God, therefore, to intervene and save him that he might yet worship and praise him on the earth
- In this sentiment, the psalmist expresses only what man naturally feels when he looks upon the grave; it is an end of human plans and pursuits

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- *I will rejoice in Your salvation*, Either temporal salvation in delivering him from his dangers which would be matter of joy to him
- Or, spiritual salvation, which may be called God's salvation, through His Only Begotten Son in the fulness of time
- And a gracious man rejoices in this salvation more because it is the Lord's than because it is his own; or he rejoices more because of the glory of God, which is displayed in it, than because of his own advantage and happiness by it

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- *The nations* Fallen into that destruction which they designed to bring upon others
- Even the best plans and efforts of those who oppose God end up serving His purpose
- This pattern is demonstrated again and again in the Scriptures
- Joseph's brothers fight against the plan of God only to further it
- Haman built a cross for Mordecai, only to be executed upon it himself
- Judas betrayed Jesus and became himself a fulfillment of prophecy

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- The greatness of God is demonstrated by the way He can use the plans and efforts of the ungodly, while also bringing righteous *judgment* upon them
- This, of course, never justifies the evil that men do; though the betrayal of Judas sent Jesus to the cross, he himself was rightly called the *son of perdition* (the one destined for destruction) for his evil work (John 17:12)
- *In the net which they hid*, The allusion here is to a spring-net made to capture birds or wild beasts
- God's character can be learned from His dealings with mankind

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- Or, by studying the dispensation of His Providence, we may learn what He is
- God makes Himself known by what He does in His dealings with men bestowing blessings upon the righteous, and sending punishments upon the ungodly
- *The wicked is snared in the work of his own hand*, The idea is that the wicked are the cause of their own destruction
- Their own devices and designs are the means of their ruin, and they are made their own executioners
- *Meditation*, Some suggest that it is a note of attention, a kind of behold

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- It suggest that the matter deserves deep and frequent meditation, or consideration
- They think that *Meditation*, combined with *Selah*, seems to denote a pause of unusual importance and emphasis
- We are called upon to ponder and meditate upon it with deep seriousness
- Some suggest that the word *Meditation* indicates a direction to the choir to play a gentle strain of instrumental music as a pause



The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20

- Here, as David approaches the conclusion of the psalm, he considered the *end* of the wicked – ultimate destruction in *hell*
- The verse is closely connected with the previous one
- The wicked are bringing about their own destruction, and so witnessing to the righteous judgment of God
- What does the sinners, *the nations*, forget about God?
- Men forget the *infinite majesty and glory* of God; His mercies; His law; His presence; and His justice
- It may be applied to every wicked man who forgets there is a God who sees and knows all things, and to whom men are accountable; Psalm 50:22

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- *all the nations*, whom their great numbers and power cannot protect from God's wrath
- David expresses a beautiful contrast here
- The wicked try to *forget God*; yet the *needy* and *poor* (here describing the godly who are oppressed by God's enemies) are *not...forgotten*
- Though God, for a time, may seem to forget or neglect them, and suffer their enemies to triumph over them
- But even this seeming forgetfulness comes to an end when judgment crashes on the oppressors (verse 17)
- *The expectation of the poor* is deliverance



The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20

- It shall not *perish*, or be disappointed, *forever*
- There shall be a time when their expectation shall have its accomplishment
- The first few verses of John chapter 14 promise that Jesus is even now in heaven building a mansion for us
- We may be poor in this world, but we have the greatest wealth known to man, when we have the gift of eternal life
- Many very wealthy people would trade all of their wealth just to know their eternal life in heaven with Jesus was assured
- We must be like Paul who said, whatever state he found himself in, he was content, Philippians 4:11

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- *Arise, O LORD*, To the destruction of Your enemies, and the salvation of Your people
- Stir up Yourself, employ and use Your power
- Previously in this psalm, David expressed a firm confidence in God's judgment of the wicked and His vindication of the righteous
- Yet David did not allow this expectation to make him passive
- Instead, he boldly prayed, *Arise, O LORD, do not let man prevail*
- *Do not let man prevail*, The man of sin, antichrist, let him not always prevail

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- He is the little horn that was to prevail against the saints, and has prevailed (Daniel 7:21)
- But he shall not always prevail
- This petition will be heard and answered; for though he shall cast down many thousands, he shall not be "strengthened" by it (Daniel 11:12)
- The Lamb at last shall overcome him and his ten kings, his supporters, and all that shall aid and assist him (Revelation 17:14)
- *Let the nations be judged in Your sight,* The antichristian nations that adhere to the man of sin

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- Let them be judged and punished in the sight of God, the Judge of all the earth
- David again expressed his confidence in God's judgment of the wicked
- Yet this did not lead David to a hatred of mankind or unhealthy joy in judgment
- His real hope was that the display of God's judgment would *teach* the nations their proper place before God *to be but men*
- *Put them in fear*, Either by striking a panic terror into them, as into the Syrians when they had brought Samaria to the last gasp (2 Kings 7:6, 7)

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- Or, by causing them calmly to review the situation, and to see how dangerous it was to assail God's people (2 Kings 6:23)
- They may recognize their weakness; may remember that they are mere weak perishing humans and nothing comparing to God
- This was a prayer for God to reach the nations through the display of His judgment
- Selah, as it was discussed before, it has been interpreted as an instruction calling for a break in the singing of the Psalm or it may mean *forever*

The Lord, the Redeemer 9:12-20



- St. Augustine says, “He seems to me to point out Antichrist: of whom the Apostle says, “When the man of sin shall be revealed.” “Let the heathen know that they are men.” That they who will be set free by the Son of God, and belong to the Son of Man, and be sons of men, that is, new men, may serve man, that is, the old man the sinner, “for that they are men.” And because it is believed that he is to arrive at so great a pitch of empty glory, and he will be permitted to do so great things, both against all men and against the Saints of God, that then some weak ones shall indeed think that God cares not for human affairs, the Psalmist interjecting a pause, adds as it were the voice of men groaning and asking why judgment is deferred.”

Discussion



- How does David express the way he will praise the Lord?
- What is the overall sequence describing the experience of the nations as presented in verse 3?
- Who fights the battles for the believer?
- What is the three-fold response of God in verse 5 which parallels verse 1?
- What is telling about the fact that they have been “blotted out”?

Discussion



- Why is the sinner judged guilty on judgement day?
- What are the two groups who are being contrasted here, verses 11-16?
- What are the two locations associated with each and what do they mean?
- For what purpose does the psalmist request God's judgment of the nations in this present life?