

Psalm 9

"The Wonderful Works of God"

September 10, 2023

1. Intro

- a. In Acts chapter 2, we have the amazing account of the Day of Pentecost, what many would say was the birthday of the church as we know it today
 - i. It was the day when the followers of Jesus were gathered together in a house in Jerusalem, and the Holy Spirit descended upon each one of them like tongues of fire
 - ii. It's possible that this house that they were gathered in was a large house, one that would have had a sizable area on the roof where people could gather in the fresh air
 1. As the Spirit fell on the Apostles and the others gathered there, they went outside, likely onto this rooftop, and an astonishing thing happened
 - a. The multitudes of Jews walking by, Jews who had previously settled in virtually every nation of the world at that time, heard these Apostles speaking
 - i. But the Apostles weren't speaking in the normal Greek or Aramaic that the men of Galilee SHOULD have been speaking in
 - ii. They were speaking in all of the MANY tongues of the MANY nations these other Jews had come from
 1. Parthians and Medes, Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judeans and Cappadocians, men from Pontus and Asia, and Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egyptians, Libyans, Romans – even Cretans and Arabians
 2. All of these Jews from the multitudes of the nations gathered around the house and heard the Apostles speaking in languages that they could understand
 - b. According to Acts 2:11, these men were amazed and perplexed as they heard the Apostles speaking to them in their own tongues, as they proclaimed the "mighty works of God"
 - i. The King James Version renders it as the "Wonderful Works of God," which will be the title of our sermon for this morning
 - b. This is the theme of Psalm 9
 - i. This Psalm, written by David, is a call for God's people to recount all the wonderful works of our God
 1. It is a call for us to sing praises to Him who sits enthroned in Zion, and to tell among the peoples His deeds
 2. It is a call for us to recount HIS praises, that we might rejoice in His salvation
 - ii. We don't know the context or the reason for this Psalm that David wrote
 1. Some commentators believe that he might have written it later in his life, as he thought back on his battle against Goliath
 - a. You could certainly apply this Psalm to that story, but there just isn't any conclusive evidence that supports that idea
 2. But what we do know is that Psalm 9 and Psalm 10 are both linked together
 - a. In the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament, Psalm 9 and 10 are actually written just as one Psalm
 - i. It was later translators who broke it up into two Psalms
 3. These two Psalms also form an acrostic hymn
 - a. In Hebrew, each stanza starts with the successive letter in the Hebrew alphabet
 - i. We don't see this in the English, but in the original Hebrew, the first stanza starts with the letter "aleph," the second stanza starts with the letter "beth," and so on
 - ii. Some of you might know that Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the entire Bible, is also set up in this kind of acrostic format

4. What this tells us is that, in contrast to some of the other Psalms we've looked at already, David didn't write this Psalm while he was on the run
 - a. Rather, this is a Psalm that was carefully and artistically crafted, as David had time to reflect on all that God had done in his life
 - i. Let's look at this Psalm together...

c. Psalm 9

i. To the choirmaster: according to Muth-labben. A Psalm of David. ¹I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. ²I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. ³When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before your presence. ⁴For you have maintained my just cause; you have sat on the throne, giving righteous judgment. ⁵You have rebuked the nations; you have made the wicked perish; you have blotted out their name forever and ever. ⁶The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins; their cities you rooted out; the very memory of them has perished. ⁷But the Lord sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice, ⁸and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness. ⁹The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. ¹⁰And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you. ¹¹Sing praises to the Lord, who sits enthroned in Zion! Tell among the peoples his deeds! ¹²For he who avenges blood is mindful of them; he does not forget the cry of the afflicted. ¹³Be gracious to me, O Lord! See my affliction from those who hate me, O you who lift me up from the gates of death, ¹⁴that I may recount all your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in your salvation. ¹⁵The nations have sunk in the pit that they made; in the net that they hid, their own foot has been caught. ¹⁶The Lord has made himself known; he has executed judgment; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. Higgsaion. Selah ¹⁷The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God. ¹⁸For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever. ¹⁹Arise, O Lord! Let not man prevail; let the nations be judged before you! ²⁰Put them in fear, O Lord! Let the nations know that they are but men! Selah

d. Note how David opens this Psalm...

i. I will give thanks to the Lord WITH MY WHOLE HEART

1. In these crazy and hectic days in which we live, it's increasingly difficult to give our whole heart to ANYTHING, isn't it?
 - a. Between our families, our jobs, all the stuff we have to take care of, and just the general day-to-day concerns we all have, our hearts are pulled ten million different directions
 - i. But David gives us a great reminder here at the beginning of Psalm 9...
 1. The Lord God deserves our WHOLE HEART
 2. As WE reflect on the wonderful works He has done on OUR behalf, we ought to thank Him with our WHOLE heart, as often as we possibly can
 - b. It is GOOD for us to recount the wonderful works of our God!
 - i. And as we study Psalm 9 this morning, we'll look specifically at 5 works of the Lord that David highlights

2. The first of these wonderful works of God is the knowledge that THE LORD JUDGES THE WORLD WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS

- a. In verses 1-8, we see David exulting in the Lord and singing praises to the name of the Most High
 - i. But look in verse 3 at WHY David is exulting in the Lord
 1. David is exulting in the Lord because his enemies stumble and perish before the presence of God
 2. David is exulting in the Lord because, as verse 5 tells us, the Lord has rebuked the nations and has made the wicked perish
 3. And David is exulting in the Lord because, as verses 7-8 tell us, the Lord is enthroned forever, and He judges the world WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS
 - b. This is incredibly good news for us, isn't it?
 - i. The God we serve is not an evil god, or a vindictive god, or a petty god

1. He is a God of RIGHTEOUSNESS!
 - a. Again, verses 7-8 say,
 - i. *⁷The LORD sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice, ⁸and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness.*
 - ii. Now, if you're anything like me, you may have kind of a vague idea of what "righteousness" means, but it can be a little hard to pinpoint it sometimes
 1. We know it's a GOOD thing, but we may not be able to precisely define it – especially in terms of the righteousness OF GOD
 - a. Theologians run into this difficulty often when trying to define God, and who He is
 - i. How do you define something that our finite brains simply cannot fully comprehend?
 1. Their solution to this problem is to define these works and attributes of God by the OPPOSITE works and attributes that He DOES NOT have
 2. The fancy word for this is *apophasis*, or defining something by its negative
 3. So, if we are going to define God's righteousness by its OPPOSITE, where is the best place to look?
 - a. Well, the best place to look for God's opposite is US, isn't it?
 - b. For our unrighteousness is about as far away from God's righteousness as you can get!
 - iii. One of the clearest places we can see this is in Romans 1:28-32, so let's look at that together...
 1. *²⁸And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³²Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.*
 - a. That's quite the list, isn't it?
 - i. So, if we use this passage as a framework to describe what God's righteousness IS, we could say,
 1. God is NOT evil, but He is supremely GOOD
 2. God is NOT full of malice, but is full of LOVE
 3. God is NOT a murderer, but is the Giver of LIFE
 4. God is NOT insolent or haughty, but is the very ideal of HUMILITY
 5. God is NOT foolish, but is the pinnacle of WISDOM
 - b. So, how do we define God's righteousness?
 - i. Well, we look at all of OUR unrighteousness, and we proclaim that God is THE EXACT OPPOSITE of every evil and self-centered thing that we do
 - iv. And David tells us that THIS is the manner in which God judges the world!
 1. Obviously, if you are among the wicked that David speaks about in this Psalm, then this is NOT good news, but it is instead very, very BAD news
 2. BUT, for those of us who have been found in Christ, the fact that God judges this world in absolute righteousness and goodness and perfection is a WONDERFUL truth that we can find rest in, regardless of our circumstances!
 - a. For God's judgement on behalf of His children is PERFECT
 - b. And God's judgment on behalf of His children is GOOD!!
 3. The second of these wonderful works of God is the knowledge that THE LORD IS A STRONGHOLD FOR THE OPPRESSED
 - a. Back to Psalm 9, verse 9 says,
 - i. *⁹The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.*

1. The picture that this word for “stronghold” gives us is one of a fortress set high upon a cliff
 - a. A high tower that is virtually impossible to destroy
 - b. A place of refuge where God’s people can run to and find peace and rest and comfort
- b. Just listen to how this kind of language runs all throughout the Psalms...
 - i. Psalm 18:2 says,
 1. *²The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer/ my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge/ my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*
 - ii. Psalm 46:6-7 says,
 1. *⁶The nations rage, the kingdoms totter/ he utters his voice, the earth melts./ ⁷The LORD of hosts is with us/ the God of Jacob is our stronghold.*
 - iii. Psalm 59:8-9 says,
 1. *⁸But you, O LORD, laugh at them/ you hold all the nations in derision./ ⁹O my Strength, I will watch for you, for you/ O God, are my stronghold.*
- c. The Psalms tell us over and over again that the Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed
 - i. He isn’t a stronghold for the rich and powerful
 - ii. He isn’t a stronghold for those who are at ease and comfort
 - iii. He isn’t a stronghold for those who have figured out how to “win” at life
 1. The Lord is a stronghold for the OPPRESSED
 - a. And again, this is REALLY good news for the follower of Jesus Christ!
 - i. For a true follower of Jesus Christ is, by definition, one who will be oppressed by the nations
 - iv. Flip over to 2 Corinthians 4:7-11... This was Paul’s word to the believers in Corinth, as he wrote to them about his own oppression,
 1. *⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. ⁸We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. ¹¹For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.*
 - v. The follower of Christ is afflicted in every way, but not crushed
 - vi. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair
 - vii. We are persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed
 1. We are oppressed and in times of trouble
 - a. Why? Because as Paul says in verse 7, the world needs to see that the surpassing power in our life DOES NOT come from us, but FROM GOD
 - b. So we don’t give up, do we?
 - i. For the Lord is a STRONGHOLD for the oppressed
 - ii. As we sang earlier, the Lord is a Mighty Fortress in times of trouble!
 - d. But He isn’t just a stronghold for anyone who is oppressed
 - i. He is a stronghold for those who are oppressed AS THEY SEEK HIS FACE
4. Which leads us to the third of the wonderful works of God, THE LORD WILL NOT FORSAKE THOSE WHO SEEK HIM
 - a. In verse 10, David reminds us,
 - i. *¹⁰And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.*
 - b. This is the great promise of the Scriptures, isn’t it?
 - i. James 4:8 says,
 1. *⁸Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.*
 - ii. Acts 17:26-27 says,
 1. *²⁶And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,*

- iii. And Hebrews 11:6 says,
 - 1. *⁶And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*
 - c. The Lord WILL NOT forsake those who seek Him
 - i. So, my friend, the question must be asked, "Have YOU sought after the Lord?"
 - 1. Do you know His name?
 - 2. Have you put your trust in Him?
 - ii. At the beginning of the sermon, we heard of the incredible work of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, as the Apostles were given the ability to proclaim the wonderful works of God in many different languages
 - 1. But Acts 2 goes on to tell us that Peter also stood up and gave a sermon that absolutely cut the people to their hearts
 - a. This was not a "feel-good" message
 - b. This was not a sermon on 7 steps to a better life
 - c. This was a sermon that convicted the people to the very depths of their soul
 - 2. And, in sorrow, they cried out to Peter, "What shall we do???"
 - a. Peter's response to the crowds on that day is the same response of the church throughout the ages,
 - i. *³⁸"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."*
 - b. And verse 40 goes on to say,
 - i. *⁴⁰And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."*
 - iii. My friends, the only way you can save yourself is to die to yourself
 - 1. The only way you will NEVER be forsaken is if you repent of your sins, and put ALL your faith, ALL your hope, ALL your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - a. You must seek him
 - b. And you must seek him with your WHOLE heart
 - iv. If you do, Peter's promise hold's true for you as well...
 - 1. Your sins will be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
 - a. For the Lord WILL NOT forsake those who seek Him!
 - i. This is the GOOD news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!!
 - b. But sadly, the flip side of that truth is also true
5. The fourth of the wonderful works of God that David gives us is this: THE LORD AVENGES THE BLOOD OF HIS PEOPLE
 - a. In verses 11 and 12, David writes,
 - i. *¹¹Sing praises to the LORD, who sits enthroned in Zion! Tell among the peoples his deeds! ¹²For he who avenges blood is mindful of them; he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.*
 - 1. David goes on in verses 13-14...
 - a. *¹³Be gracious to me, O LORD! See my affliction from those who hate me, O you who lift me up from the gates of death, ¹⁴that I may recount all your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in your salvation.*
 - 2. We've seen this morning how the Lord judges the world in righteousness
 - 3. We've seen that He is a stronghold for the oppressed
 - 4. And we've seen that He will not forsake those who seek Him
 - a. These are all great truths for those who are IN CHRIST
 - b. But the reality that the Scriptures give to us is that, for all those who are NOT in Christ, the Lord will avenge Himself upon them
 - i. Verse 15 tells us that the nations will sink into the pit that they have made
 - ii. Their feet will get caught up in the nets that they have hidden
 - iii. The wicked will be snared in the work of their own hands
 - 1. And the Lord will execute His judgement against them

- a. We must not forget these truths, Christians
 - b. There are an increasing number of people out in the world who claim to be followers of Christ, yet they would deny that God would ever judge those who reject His commands
 - i. "God is a God of LOVE," they argue, "Therefore He would NEVER condemn anyone to eternal judgement!"
 - ii. "Just be who you are – that is how God made you, with all your desires and longings and wants – so just embrace these things... God just wants you to be happy..."
 - c. These things sound great on the surface, don't they?
 - i. But the problem is that they are simply not biblical
 - ii. And if we preach a "gospel" that is void of the truths of God's judgment against sinners, then we preach a FALSE gospel
 - iv. David closes his Psalm in verse 19 and 20 by saying,
 - 1. ¹⁹Arise, O LORD! Let not man prevail; let the nations be judged before you! ²⁰Put them in fear, O LORD! Let the nations know that they are but men!
 - a. WHY would we say that the Lord's vengeance against the wicked is one of His WONDERFUL works?
 - i. It is wonderful because it reminds us WHO GOD IS
 - ii. And it is wonderful because it reminds us that we are but men
 - 1. We are not the Creator, we are the created
 - 2. We are not the Master Gardener, we are the branches
 - 3. We are not the Skilled Artist, we are the lump of clay
 - v. And our response to these truths reveals the conditions of our hearts
 - 1. If our hearts willingly and joyfully come under the Lordship of the One who has created us, then that is the evidence that Christ has made us new, and we have been reconciled back to our Father
 - 2. But, if we continue to gnash our teeth at the commands of the Scripture, and prideful place ourselves on the thrones of our heart, then the only thing that awaits us is judgment
 - a. And as Hebrews 10:31 says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God."
 - 3. The Lord will avenge Himself against the wicked
 - a. And this is a WONDERFUL promise of who He is
6. But as we close this morning, we must look at THE most wonderful of all the works of our great God, THE LORD HAS MADE HIMSELF KNOWN
- a. We see this incredible statement at the beginning of verse 16, "*The Lord has made himself known*"
 - i. In the context of this Psalm, David praises the Lord for making himself known as he executes judgment against all of David's enemies
 - ii. But, in the larger context of the overarching story of the Bible, the Lord has made Himself known in an extraordinary way, hasn't He
 - 1. For the Lord has made himself known IN CHRIST!!
 - a. Hebrews 1:3 says that Jesus is the "*radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature*"
 - b. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says that Satan has blinded the minds of unbelievers, "*to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God*"
 - c. Colossians 1:15 says that Jesus is "*the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation*"
 - d. And Jesus himself says in John 14:6-7,
 - i. ⁶"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."
 - iii. This is the glorious truth of the Gospel: in Jesus Christ, God has made himself KNOWN to us!

1. God, who dwells in unapproachable light
2. God, who is so perfectly holy that no one who has sin could EVER see Him in all of His glory
3. God, who is high and exalted over all that He has created
 - a. This God has made Himself known to us by sending His Son,
 - i. The radiance of His glory and the exact imprint of His nature
 - ii. He has sent His Son, that we may look upon Christ, and know that we have seen the Father!
 1. My friends, there is no more wonderful work of God than this!!
- iv. So I would ask this question again... do you know this Jesus?
 1. Have you sought after Christ with your WHOLE heart?
 - a. God in heaven has made Himself known to us through Jesus... and ONLY through Jesus
 - i. Jesus said, *"I am THE way, and THE truth, and THE life. NO ONE comes to the Father, EXCEPT THROUGH ME"*
 2. If this is the confession of your heart, then rest in these truths, my friend:
 - a. The Lord will judge the world in righteousness
 - b. The Lord will be a stronghold for you in your oppression
 - c. And the Lord will NEVER forsake those who seek Him
 - i. These promises are true, for the Lord has made Himself known through His Son, Jesus Christ
 3. But if this is not the confession of your heart, then know this:
 - a. There is a very real and a very sure judgment that is coming
 - i. But the Father has provided the means by which you may be pardoned
 - ii. In the midst of your sin, in the midst of your rebellion, while you are still an enemy of the One who has created you...
 1. God has made Himself known through His Son
 - a. And the promise given to you is the same promise Peter gave to the crowds nearly two thousand years ago:
 2. ³⁸*"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."*
 4. May this gift of the Holy Spirit, and the forgiveness of your sins, be poured out mightily upon your heart today!