

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Forty-Nine: Dealing With The Problem Of The Abuse Of Influence By The Wealthy (Psalm 49:1-20)

I. Introduction

- A. It is an unwelcome evil of this life that riches often go hand in hand with influence, and that often in the form of evil, destructive influence. The sin of the human heart, mingled with the power that wealth can bring is often too much a temptation for the endowed to resist harming the less wealthy for personal goals.
- B. This evil was present in antiquity, and Psalm 49:1-20 supplies God's admonition regarding this problem to those who are rich **or** poor:

II. Dealing With The Problem Of The Abuse Of Influence By The Wealthy, Psalm 49:1-20.

- A. The psalmist called both the rich and poor alike to pay heed to his instruction as it supplied wisdom applicable for both of them, Ps. 49:1-4.
- B. Then, he supplied a lesson that, on the **surface**, is for the man who is **oppressed** by the wealthy, 49:5-15:
 1. The psalmist questions why he should be afraid when wealthy people use their power to abuse him, 5-6.
 2. The **reasons** for this optimistic questioning are supplied in Psalm 49:7-15 as follows:
 - a. Wealthy people, like poor people and even mere animals, cannot keep themselves from death, 7-14a.
 - b. On the other hand, the upright will be raised in the eternal resurrection to rule over the godless, no matter how wealthy they had been in their mortal lives, Ps. 49:14b-15.
 3. The psalmist applies these truths to the current crisis of oppression of the wealthy over the poor, Psalm 49:16-20:
 - a. One who is oppressed by a financially more-powerful foe should not be overawed because of the growing financial power of the oppressor, Ps. 49:16.
 - b. After all, he can take none of that power with him at death as his possessions stay above ground while his body goes beneath the ground to decay, Ps. 49:17.
 - c. If he is godless, he will never again see the light of day in the resurrection state, so his brief mortal life is nothing in comparison to the eternal darkness he will see in judgment after death, Ps. 49:18-19.
 - d. A man of wealth but no understanding of his eternal accountability is like an animal that dies never to be resurrected again to blessing, Ps. 49:20.
- C. By implication, we have a lesson the self-assessed **wise** but oppressive rich man can learn also as follows:
 1. A proud, oppressive wealthy man who considers himself shrewd can realize from this psalm that it is not a good investment to use financial power in this life to trounce the poor, for life is too short and he must give an eternal account to a righteous God for such a sinful effort.
 2. In view of the brevity of this life and of his accountability to an eternal God, it is a better investment for him to use his wealth in life to treat others around him well so in the resurrection he will still have a good life under God's blessing!

Lesson: (1) For the poor man, (a) this life is too short and (b) his accountability to God too comprehensive toward the life to come (c) and the next life too endless to worry about getting even for abuses by the wealthy done to him in this life. (2) For the wealthy man, (a) this life is too short and (b) his accountability to God too comprehensive toward the life to come (c) and the next life too endless to make it worth his while abusing others in this life with his influence.

Application: When it comes to wealth and this life, we have to think of investing like investing in the stock market. Compared to T-bills and bonds, the most effective, sensible investment long-term is to invest in the stock market. However, doing so means paying a price in the short-term, for the market can go way down short-term. However, in the long haul, it is worth even temporary setbacks to invest in stocks. The same holds true with this life. Learn to invest this life's resources and efforts for the life to come, for this life is too short and meaningless if viewed only in itself to focus on making things successful here-and-now. Think long-term--in the life to come, to make the best investment in spite of temporary setbacks as measured only in this life!