

## **Sermon Seeds from the Psalms**

by

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### **Psalms One to Nine**

#### **PSALM ONE**

- 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.**
- 2. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.**
- 3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.**
- 4. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.**
- 5. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.**
- 6. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.**

This is more than a Psalm of the blessed man for it also speaks of the un-blessed man.

It is really a Song of Contrast. It unveils the tremendous difference in (1) life, (2) death, and (3) eternity, between the godly and the ungodly. All life is filled with such contrasts. Life and death, weddings and funerals, joy and sorrow, and so forth. Such contrasts are aptly and amply illustrated by Cain and Abel, Nimrod and Noah, Isaac and Ishmael, Esau and Jacob, Moses and Pharaoh, Caleb and Achan, Joshua and Korah, Haman and Mordecai, Ruth and Orpah, Saul and David, John and Judas, Barnabas and Ananias, and the two thieves upon the cross.

The godly man is (1) blessed,

- (a) because he does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly who always have free advice to offer,
- (b) because he does not stand in the way of sinners, he has no fellowship with evil or evil doers,
- (c) because he does not sit in the seat of the scornful. He is not a good mixer as is boasted by some. He knows that the crowd is not going the way of holiness. "Walketh, standeth, sitteth," reveals a growth in evil just as "ungodly, sinners, and scornful," shows a fearful downward trend.
- (d) He is blessed because his delight is in the law of the Lord.

- He not only reads the Bible, he delights in it.
- He not only studies the holy word, he enjoys it.
- He not only reviews truth, he relishes and revels in it.

(e) He is blessed because he meditates in the Word of GOD day and night. He is not religious by spells and spasms. He is not a grasshopper reader of the good Word of GOD. He "chews" and digests it.

The godly man is (2) fruitful, **"like a tree planted."**

(3) The godly man is prosperous, **"whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."** The godly man is a success, he is truly great.

The ungodly are like "chaff." The ungodly are bound for "judgment," and shall "perish."

What a contrast. Godliness is gain here and glory hereafter. Purity pays in this world and paves the way to Paradise in the world to come.

"He that would be wise, let him read the Proverbs: he that would be holy, let him read the Psalms."

- R. Steele, 1674

"The Book of Psalms is a little Bible."

- Luther (Preface to German Psalter)

## PSALM TWO

1. Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,
3. Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.
4. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.
5. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.
6. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.
7. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.
8. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
9. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
10. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
11. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
12. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

This is a Song of the King and the Kingdom.

It is entirely and strictly prophetic.

The entire Old Testament Scriptures are not only historical and spiritual, they are typical and prophetic. The Second Psalm looks forward to the coming of CHRIST.

The people of the world want sin, impurity, and their own way. They "rage," and plan to get rid of GOD's chosen king. GOD shall laugh. The wicked, Christ-rejecting multitudes are destroyed, and CHRIST reigns supreme.

The Song closes with a word of exhortation to close in with the offers of mercy, repent and be reconciled, and an assurance of pardon and peace upon the one condition of "trust" in GOD. **"Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."**

Verse 8 so often used by missionaries as a promise of salvation for the heathen is not a Gospel text at all. **"Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen,"** is interpreted and expounded in the next verse, **"Thou shalt break them," "Thou shalt dash them in pieces."** The Song sets forth the triumph of CHRIST and the destruction of the heathen.

This world is headed for the judgments of God. A few may **"be wise,"** and **"serve the LORD,"** and be **"blessed,"** but the majority are to be broken with **"a rod of iron,"** and **"dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel."**

CHRIST, the rejected Saviour and Lord, shall be the King over all the earth.

We mention only a few of the possible Topics and Texts:

- (1) Big Questions of the Bible. **"Why do the heathen rage. . .?"** (verse 1).
- (2) A Deriding and Displeased Deity. **"He... shall laugh"** (verses 4-5).
- (3) The Triumphant CHRIST. **"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill"** (verse 6).
- (4) The Destruction of the Wicked. **"Thou shalt break them"** (verses 8-9).
- (5) A Ringing Call to Reconciliation. **"Kiss the Son"** (verse 12).
- (6) A Closing Beatitude. **"Blessed . . . trust"** (verse 12).

"I thought of many expressions of Rutherford's this morning, before I was up. I feel one the burden of the song: 'I lay my head to rest on the bosom of Omnipotence.' While I can keep hold of this, it shall be a fine day, whether it rains, hails, or shines."

- Cecil

### PSALM THREE

1. LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.
2. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.
3. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
4. I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.
5. I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.
6. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.
7. Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the

**cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.**

**8. Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.**

This is a hymn of salvation and blessing. "Arise, O Lord, save me." "Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people."

(1) Salvation from trouble. "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me."

(2) Salvation from persecutors. "Many there be that rise up against me."

(3) Salvation from false accusers. "Many there be which say . . . there is no help for him in GOD. Selah." The word Selah means "think of that."

(4) Salvation from the fear of man. "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people."

Trouble, false accusation, and persecution have been the lot of the faithful followers of CHRIST throughout all the ages.

Every righteous Abel has had his unrighteous Cain to club him. Every loving Isaac has been beset by sneering Ishmaels. Every David has been opposed by his jealous Sauls and dirty Doegs. Every sanctified man on earth has been brought face to face with unexplainable sorrow and inexplicable grief. Even a Job, a Daniel, and a Joseph had slanderous foes with whom to contend and fight.

The inspired songs of the Holy Word fit perfectly into every phase of the Christian life today. The most heartbreaking grief endured by David was the sinister stab in the back by his own son, Absalom. This Old Testament Judas, Mussolini, or Tojo proved to be the unworthy child of a tender, just, and worthy father. CHRIST is seen in this psalm as praying for help, deliverance and salvation from His troublers and accusers.

#### PSALM FOUR

**1. Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.**

**2. O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.**

**3. But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.**

**4. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.**

**5. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.**

**6. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.**

**7. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.**

**8. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.**

This charming Hymn is addressed to the Chief Musician.

CHRIST is our chief, our commander-in-chief, our chief everything, everywhere and all the time. We should sing for him and unto him. Despite his many sorrows, this sweet singer sings unto the Lord. The Psalm may be called a Psalm of Enlargement.

The writer thanks his God for enlargement despite the daily distresses and everlasting pin pricks and persecutions of life. To experience enlargement even in the midst of distress and misery we must:

- (1) be separated from sin,
- (2) hate sin,
- (3) be meditative,
- (4) be righteous,
- (5) be trustful,
- (6) be faithful,
- (7) be obedient.

To be a growing, glowing, and glad believer we must avoid all sin and live holily and righteously in this present evil world.

Note also, that this enlargement is to be an inward enlargement. It is to be an increase in holiness and power within. The word "increase" is from the Latin *incremere*, which means to grow from within.

Justification and sanctification are just the beginning of the Christian life. Growth, development, or increase is the work of a lifetime.

A Quaker congregation had been sitting in silence for a long time, when a little boy between five and six years of age stood up, and, with a childish lisp, gave utterance to the following: "My friends, I wish the Lord would make us all gooder and gooder and gooder, till there is no bad left!"

## PSALM FIVE

- 1. Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation.**
- 2. Harken unto the voice of my cry, my king, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.**
- 3. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.**
- 4. For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.**
- 5. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.**
- 6. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.**
- 7. But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.**
- 8. Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.**
- 9. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their**

**throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.**

**10. Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.**

**11. But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.**

**12. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.**

If the fourth Psalm may be regarded as an evening hymn, then the fifth may be treated as a morning meditation.

As a rule, the early morning hours are best for devotion, prayer, and the exercise of faith. "**In the morning will I direct my prayer... and will look up.**" Like a steady and determined archer, David directs his prayer. He takes careful aim, steadies himself, prays intelligently and perseveringly, and then looks up as though he were expecting and anticipating an answer.

Praying by spasms and without a fixed aim is like throwing a line and sinker into the water without a worm or minnow.

Here is one of the golden keys which unlock the storehouses of God, "**and will look up.**" The poet prays expectantly, anticipatively, and believingly. He "directs" his prayer and then looks up for the answer. The Old Testament seers and sages oftentimes prayed with the palms of their hands held up and out towards the sky as though they expected GOD to put something in them.

This hymn also declares that:

- (1) God has no pleasure in the wicked,
- (2) God loves holiness,
- (3) God hates sin,
- (4) He is set to destroy the wicked (verses 5-10).

The song rises to a grand crescendo, closing with a description of the happiness of the holy (verses 11-12).

"Lamartine in his '*Travels in the Holy Land*,' when speaking of the great mountain-blocks of white marble, says, 'In looking back upon them from a distant standpoint, they appeared like great masses of gold as the sun shone upon them, - bright and dazzling.' The children of GOD are blocks of spiritual marble, and have a brightness superior to that of gold, when the polish of entire sanctification is put upon them."

- S. Cates

## PSALM SIX

**1. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.**

**2. Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed.**

**3. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?**

4. **Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.**
5. **For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?**
6. **I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.**
7. **Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.**
8. **Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.**
9. **The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer.**
10. **Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly.**

Sorrow is the eldest of the children of sin. The godly have groaned ever since Satan triumphed in the garden of Eden. Storms and clouds are now the order of the day for all the sons of Adam. The sixth Psalm reveals some of the groans of the saints of God.

- (1) **"I am weak."**
- (2) **"My bones are vexed."**
- (3) **"My soul is also sore vexed."**
- (4) **"I am weary with my groaning."**
- (5) **"All the night make I my bed to swim."**
- (6) **"I water my couch with my tears."**
- (7) **"Mine eye is consumed because of grief."**

Blinded by bitter and hot briny tears, the author of this hymn is bowed beneath almost unbearable grief. To him, the grave seems much closer than the granary. His recourse refuge and hope is found in prayer to GOD. **"O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord . . . O Lord, heal me . . . deliver my soul . . . save me."**

His prayer was heard and he was delivered. **"The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping . . . the LORD hath heard my supplication."**

To read this Song with CHRIST in mind will throw light upon the sufferings of the Saviour while He sojourned among men.

A reader of the Bible was assailed by an infidel with such expressions as these: "That the blood of CHRIST can wash away sin is foolishness; I don't understand or believe it." The Bible student remarked, "You and Paul agree exactly." "How?" "Turn to the first chapter of Corinthians and read the eighteenth verse: **"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God."**

## PSALM SEVEN

1. **O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:**
2. **Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.**
3. **O Lord my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;**

4. If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:)
5. Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.
6. Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded.
7. So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high.
8. The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.
9. Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.
10. My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart.
11. God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.
12. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.
13. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.
14. Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.
15. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.
16. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.
17. I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high.

The singing of sacred songs is an important part of divine worship and service.

Such singing should be done by the soul as well as the voice and throat. It should be done sincerely and heartily as unto the Lord and not unto the congregation. There is too much singing to entertain and tickle the flesh rather than edify the spirit. Such singing and such worship is nauseating to GOD. The sweet singer of Israel sang unto the Lord.

Psalm 7 is a hymn against the unholy and slandering children of men.

- The enemies of the Psalmist accuse him falsely.
- They have whispered around that he is wicked and a disturber of the peace.
- They digged a pit for David but they fell into it themselves.

The inspired writer takes his case to the Lord and leaves it there, saying, "**My defence is of God**" (verse 10). Scandal mongers may not realize it, but it is much more sinful to kill character, injure reputation, and destroy usefulness than it is to stick an ice pick into the heart.

There are at least seven subjects suggested in this Psalm for sermon or prayer meeting talks:

- (1) A prayer against persecutors, "**Save me from all them that persecute me**" (verse 1),
- (2) A plea against false accusers, "**O LORD, my God, if I have done this**" (verse 3),
- (3) A profession of holiness, "**My righteousness. . . . mine integrity. . . . in me**" (verse 8),

- (4) A pronouncement against sinners, "**God is angry with the wicked every day**" (verse 11),
- (5) The exceeding sinfulness of indwelling sin, "**Behold, he travaileth with iniquity . . . conceived mischief . . . brought forth falsehood**" (verse 14),
- (6) Sin is both murderous and suicidal, "**He made a pit (murder) . . . is fallen into the ditch (suicidal) (boomerangic) (fatal)**" (verse 15),
- (7) The final triumph of the holy, "**I will praise. . . and will sing**" (verse 17).

## **PSALM EIGHT**

- 1. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.**
- 2. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.**
- 3. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;**
- 4. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?**
- 5. For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.**
- 6. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:**
- 7. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;**
- 8. The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.**
- 9. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!**

### **The Glory and Excellence of CHRIST**

The heavens above, the earth below, mankind upon the earth, the ways, words, and works of GOD all show forth the glory and excellence of His majesty.

The Psalmist first speaks of GOD's glory above the heavens, and then of His glory in the creation and crowning of man, and finally of His glory in giving man dominion over all the works of His hands.

We are told that the sun is about 92 million miles from the earth, and yet it can burn and blister the crops and grass of the field as well as the body of man. The sun is so large that if our earth fell into it, it would never feel the impact and not increase its heat.

When it comes to size and weight, man is insignificant. Creatures have lived and roamed upon the earth and they were so large that the earth must have trembled under their ponderous and powerful feet.

Man lives for about 70 years - a few reach 80, whereas the Pyramids have been standing for 5000 years and some trees have been growing for 6000 years. Man is here today and gone tomorrow. The insignificant bumble bee can travel so fast that it can eat breakfast in New York, dinner in Paris, and supper in Moscow. An ant, in comparison to man in size, can lift and erect a bridge that can span the Mississippi without the help of cranes or crooks. The house-fly is able to

walk upside down, head down and head up, and on ceiling, wall, or floor. Birds of the air have looped the loop for centuries without praise from man.

In the first Song, CHRIST is set forth as the Son of GOD and GOD's chosen King. In this eighth Song, CHRIST is presented as the Son of man. He is both the Son of man and the Son of God. As Son of God He is heir to all the Father's possessions above, and as Son of man He is heir to all below. "**Thou madest him to have dominion**" (verse 6). As the Son of Adam He is heir of the world. As Son of Abraham He is heir to all the promises. As the Son of David He is heir to the throne of David in Jerusalem and as the Son of God He is heir of all things.

## PSALM NINE

- 1. I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.**
- 2. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.**
- 3. When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.**
- 4. For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right.**
- 5. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.**
- 6. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.**
- 7. But the Lord shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment.**
- 8. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.**
- 9. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.**
- 10. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.**
- 11. Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.**
- 12. When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.**
- 13. Have mercy upon me, O Lord; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:**
- 14. That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.**
- 15. The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.**
- 16. The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgsion. Selah.**
- 17. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.**
- 18. For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.**
- 19. Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.**
- 20. Put them in fear, O Lord: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.**

A casual analysis of the twenty stanzas of this very suggestive Song reveals not less than seven reasons for wholehearted gratitude and praise to GOD.

- (1) **"I will shew forth all thy marvellous works,"**
- (2) **"Thou hast maintained my right and my cause,"**
- (3) **"Thou satest in the throne judging right,"**
- (4) **"He shall judge the world in righteousness,"**
- (5) **"A refuge in times of trouble,"**
- (6) **"He forgetteth not the cry of the humble,"**
- (7) **"The needy shall not alway be forgotten."**

The key of this wonderful hymn is found in the words, **"I will shew forth all thy marvellous works."**

God demands and deserves wholehearted praise, worship, sacrifice, and service. Lukewarmness, coldness, indifference, and unfelt gratitude is unbecoming to a lover of CHRIST. Nothing less than whole-souled, pure affection and holy love, giving out itself in holy and sacrificial service, can satisfy the big heart of our glorious God.

To shew forth the marvellous works of GOD requires the whole man. Think of the marvellous works of GOD in nature. The flaming suns, the beautiful light bearing moons, the scintillating stars, the shining oceans and boundless seas, and the good and fruitful earth with its times and seasons for the benefit and blessing of man. Think of His marvellous works in the creation of man and the race. A factory of many fires and more amazing products, indeed a universe of perfect wonders, man climaxes all the creations of our majestic GOD and King. Think also of His marvellous works in grace - His love, mercy, forgiveness, cleansing, sanctification, protection, and preservation.

Think again, and ponder more carefully His marvellous works in the Holy Bible, the divinely inspired revelation of His will. What a storehouse of supplies. What a mine of priceless gems. What a work of wisdom and hope. What a book of beauty and blessedness. It is the duty and privilege of all believers to **"shew forth all thy marvellous works."** With the heart man believeth and with the mouth confession is made.

~ end of chapter 1

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