

## Psalm 49

# "A Proverb on The Demise of the Wealthy Wicked and The Resurrection of the Righteous Poor"

For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. <sup>1</sup>

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The theme seems to be: A Proverb in Song: "Do not fear the evil wealthy, for they will go to Sheol and not take their wealth with them, whereas God will rescue the righteous from Sheol!"

### A1 THE CALL TO ALL TO LISTEN 49:1-4

#### B1 The Call to Listen 49:1-2

C1 To all peoples: {1} Hear this, all peoples; Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,<sup>2</sup>

C2 To all classes: {2} Both low and high,<sup>3</sup> Rich and poor together.

#### B2 The Method of Communication 49:3-4

C1 A Message of Wisdom: {3} My mouth will speak wisdom,<sup>4</sup> And the meditation of my heart *will be* understanding.

C2 The Form of a Proverb / Riddle: {4} I will incline my ear to a proverb;<sup>5</sup> I will express my riddle on the harp.

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<sup>1</sup> Superscription - Sons of Korah: 11 or 12 psalms are composed by Korah. See note on the superscription of Psalm 42.

<sup>2</sup> 49:1 - world: *khelek*, used five times, is translated three times with a quality of time (age, time, lifetime) and twice as "world." Here, the translation is governed to a large degree by the synonym "peoples" and by the word "inhabitants" or "dwellers." It could mean, however, "Hear this, all peoples; Give ear all inhabitants of the **age**." The (English) occurrences are Ps. 17:14; 39:5; 49:1; 89:47 and Job 11:17.

<sup>3</sup> 49:2 - Both low and high: Heb. reads literally, "Even sons of man (*adam*); even sons of man (*i'sh*)."  
I'm not sure how the translators came up with "Both low and high."

<sup>4</sup> 49:3 - wisdom (*chokmowth*, 2454): This word for wisdom appears only here in Psalms and four times in Proverbs. It is closely related to *chokmah*, 2451, wisdom, a word appearing at least 39 times in the book of Proverbs and six times in Psalms. Clearly the descriptive language employed in this opening section of this psalm by the sons of Korah is language used in the book of Proverbs.

<sup>5</sup> 49:4 - proverb (*mashal*, 4912): A wise, pithy saying or maxim, used in Pss. 44:14; 49:4; 69:11; 78:2 (all English references); and in Proverbs 1:1,6; 10:1; 25:1; 26:7, 9. The book of Proverbs takes its name from this word.

**A2 DO NOT FEAR THE WICKED WEALTHY, FOR ALL DIE 49:5-13**

**B1 The Challenge Not to Fear When Surrounded by the Evil Wealthy 49:5-6**

- C1 His Fear: {5} Why should I fear in days of adversity,
- C2 His Foes: When the iniquity of my foes surrounds me,
- C3 Their Wealth 49:6
  - D1 {6} Even those who trust in their wealth
  - D2 And boast in the abundance of their riches?

**B2 The Futility of Purchasing Immortality 49:7-9**

- C1 The Impossibility of Redemption: {7} No man can by any means redeem his brother Or give to God a ransom for him –
- C2 The Prohibitive Costliness of Redemption: {8} For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease *trying* forever –
- C3 The Object of Redemption (Avoidance of Death): {9} That he should live on eternally, That he should not undergo decay.

**B3 The Universality of Death 49:10-12**

- C1 All Classes Die 49:10
  - D1 The wise die: {10} For he sees *that even* wise men die;
  - D2 The foolish die: The stupid and the senseless alike perish
  - D3 The wealthy die: And leave their wealth to others.
- C2 Man's Illusion of Eternity 49:11
  - D1 Perpetual dwellings: {11} Their inner thought is *that* their houses are forever *And* their dwelling places to all generations;
  - D2 Preservation of ownership: They have called their lands after their own names.
- C3 Man's Certain Death – The humbling reality -- man's destiny is no different than that of animals! {12} But man in *his* pomp will not endure; He is like the beasts that perish. 49:12

**A3 THE WAY OF THE FOOLISH CONTRASTED WITH THE HOPE OF THE RIGHTEOUS 49:13-15**

**B1 The Way of the Foolish: Demise in Sheol 49:13-14**

C1 The Announcement of Their Way: The non-exemption of the foolish (the wicked wealthy): {13} This is the way of those who are foolish, And of those after them who approve their words. [Selah] 49:13

C2 The Demise of Their Way 49:14

D1 Shepherded by death: {14} As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd;

D2 Ruled over by the righteous: And the upright shall rule over them in the morning,

D3 Their corpses consumed by Sheol: And their form shall be for Sheol to consume So that they have no habitation.

**B2 The Hope of the Righteous -- Redemption from Sheol 49:15**

C1 Redeemed by God from Sheol: {15} But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol,

C2 Received by God [into His presence]: For He will receive me. [Selah] 49:15

**A4 DO NOT FEAR THE WEALTHY, FOR HE WILL DIE 49:16-20**

**B1 Death, the Great Wealth Equalizer 49:16-17**

C1 The Call Not to Fear a Wealthy Man: {16} Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased;

C2 When He Dies He Will Take Nothing With Him: {17} For when he dies he will carry nothing away; His glory will not descend after him.

**B2 Death, the Great Honor Equalizer 49:18-19**

C1 Though He is Praised in This Life: {18} Though while he lives he congratulates himself-- And though *men* praise you when you do well for yourself –

C2 When He Dies, His Honor is Extinguished: {19} He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They will never see the light.

**B3 Death, the Great Specie Equalizer:** The humbling reality – man's destiny is no different than that of animals! {20} Man in *his* pomp, yet without understanding, Is like the beasts that perish. **49:20**

**EXPANDED ANALYSIS OF PSALM 49**

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### Psalm 49 Verb Analysis (NASB '95)

For the choir director (MS Piel Ptcpl). A Psalm of the sons of Korah. (NASB '88)

## "A Proverb on The Demise of the Wealthy Wicked and The Resurrection of the Righteous Poor"

The theme seems to be: A Proverb in Song: "Do not fear the evil wealthy, for they will go to Sheol and not take their wealth with them, whereas God will rescue the righteous (including me) from Sheol!"

Imperfect ("Prefixed"): main action or state of being

Imperative: A special type of imperfect (though Vern hasn't confirmed it) but Weingreen does.

Perfect ("Suffixed"): background, foreground, circumstantial, subordinate

Participle: Verbal adjectives that function in a variety of ways

Infinitive: Verbal nouns that function in a variety of ways.

- 1 {1} Hear (MP Qal Imperat) this, all peoples; Give ear, (MP Hiphil Imperat) all inhabitants of the world, {2} Both low and high, Rich and poor together. {3} My mouth will speak (3MS Piel Impf) wisdom, And the meditation of my heart *will be* understanding. {4} I will incline (1CS Hiph Impf) my ear to a proverb; I will express (1CS Qal Impf) my riddle on the harp.
- 2 {5} Why should I fear (1CS Qal Impf) in days of adversity, When the iniquity of my foes surrounds me, (3MS Qal Impf) {6} Even those who trust (MP Qal Ptcpl) in their wealth And boast (3MP Hith Impf) in the abundance of their riches? {7} No man can by any means redeem (Qal Infin Abs) (3MS Qal Impf) *his* brother Or give (3MS Qal Impf) to God a ransom for him-- {8} For the redemption of his soul is costly (3MS Qal Impf), And he should cease (3MS Qal Perf) *trying* forever-- {9} That he should live (3MS Qal Impf) on eternally, That he should not undergo (3MS Qal Impf) decay. {10} For he sees (3MS Qal Impf) *that even* wise men die (3MS Qal Impf); The stupid and the senseless alike perish (3MP Qal Impf) And leave (3CP Qal Perf) their wealth to others. {11} Their inner thought is *that* their houses are forever *And* their dwelling places to all generations; They have called (3CP Qal Perf) their lands after their own names. {12} But man in *his* pomp will not endure (3MS Qal Impf); He is like (3MS Niphal Perf) the beasts that perish. (3MP Niphal Perf) {13} This is the way of those who are foolish, And of those after them who approve (3MP Qal Impf) their words. [Selah]

6. The **secondary** (suffixed) form serves any of a number of "wild card" roles relative to either of these (e.g., background, foreground, circumstantial, subordinate). Some of these are determined along lines of **syntactical** conventions (e.g., clausal constructions, use of conjunctions such as *ki*), others must be inferred solely from **context**.

- 3 {14} As sheep they are appointed (3CP Qal Perf) for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd (3MS Qal Impf + 3MP Suff); And the upright shall rule (3MP Qal Impf, waw conv) over them in the morning, And their form shall be for Sheol to consume (Piel Inf Constr) So that they have no habitation. {15} But God will redeem (3MS Qal Impf) my soul from the power of Sheol, For He will receive me (3MS Qal Impf + 1CS Sfx). [Selah]

- 4 {16} Do not be afraid (2MS Qal Impf) when a man becomes rich (3MS Hiph Impf), When the glory of his house is increased (3MS Qal Impf); {17} For when he dies he will carry (3MS Qal Impf) nothing away; His glory will not descend (3MS Qal Impf) after him. {18} Though while he lives he congratulates (3MS Piel Impf) himself-- And though *men* praise you (3MP Hiph Impf + 2MS Suff) when you do well (2MS Hiph Impf) for yourself (2FS Suff)-- {19} He [*She!*]shall go (3FS Qal Impf) to the generation of his (3MS Suff) fathers; They will never see (3MP Qal Impf) the light. {20} Man in *his* pomp, yet without understanding (3MS Qal Impf), Is like (3MS Niph Perf) the beasts that perish (3CP Niph Perf).