

The cost of your salvation

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- [0 : 0 0] Psalm 49. That's the second reading, but this one is the first one. Psalm 49, verse 1. Hear this, all peoples. Give ear, all inhabitants of the world, both low and high, rich and poor together. My mouth shall speak wisdom. The meditation of my heart shall be understanding.
- I will incline my ear to a proverb. I will solve my riddle to the music of the lyre. Why should I fear in times of trouble, when the iniquity of my persecutors surrounds me?
- Men who trust in their wealth and boast in the abundance of their riches. Truly, no man can ransom his brother or give to God the price of his life.
- For the ransom of his life is costly and can never suffice, that he should continue to live on forever and never see the pit.
- Yes, he shall see that even the wise die. The foolish and the stupid alike must perish and leave their wealth to others.
- [1 : 3 1] Their graves are their homes forever. Their dwelling places to all generations, though they named lands their own. Man cannot abide in his pomp.
- He is like the beasts that perish. This is the fate of those who are foolish confidence, the end of those who are pleased with their portion.
- Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol. Death shall be their shepherd. Straight to the grave they descend. And their form shall waste away.
- Sheol will be their home. But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me.
- Be not afraid when one becomes rich, when the wealth of his house increases. For when he dies, he will carry nothing away.
- [2 : 3 7] His wealth will not go down after him. Though while he lives, he counts himself happy. And though a man gets praise when he does well for himself, he will go to the generation of his fathers and they will never more see the light.
- Man cannot abide in his pomp. He is like the beasts that perish. Then turning over to the book of Exodus, chapter 21, and reading there from verse 28.
- And if you wonder how this relates to the psalm, then all will be revealed shortly. It's the rule, it's the law about an ox when he gaws a man or a woman.
- Exodus 21, verse 28. When an ox gaws a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten, but the owner of the ox shall be clear.
- But if the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has been worn, but has not kept it in, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death.
- [4 : 0 3] If a ransom is laid on him, he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is laid upon him. If it gaws a man or a man or a man or a man, he shall be dealt with according to the same rule.

If the ox gaws a slave, male or female, the owner shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

Amen. May the Lord bless those these readings. May they be to his praise and to his glory. Before we turn your attention to verses seven to nine of this psalm.

And they read like this. Truly, no man can ransom his brother or give to God the price of his life. For the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice.

But he should continue to live on forever and never see the pit. The book of Psalms, your life in the Psalms, speaks to every situation of the human heart and in the varied situations that life has the habit of throwing at us.

[5 : 30] And when we read through that psalm, you might have come to the conclusion that this is somewhat negative. It's all about wealth and wisdom and these people who have got wealth and they're no good and so on and so on.

And what's that got to do with us? Well, it does treat this perennial problem of the wealth of the wealthy and how they put their trust in it.

And if they do, their end is extinction. There's nothing wrong with having money.

And as someone has said, in the story of Lazarus and the rich man recounted by Jesus in Luke 16, the rich man did not end up in hell because he had money.

He ended up in hell because he had no relation with God and he didn't use his money wisely. So this is the theme of this psalm.

[6 : 39] But in verses 7 to 9, there's a little aside. And speaking about the wealthy and how they cannot achieve salvation, the psalmist then says, So I want to look at this this morning.

First of all, the nature of this ransom. What does it mean to ransom? Now, the idea of ransom is closely related to the idea of redemption, which you will pick up in the epistles of Paul.

But here I'm looking at this psalm. And the Hebrew text makes what this idea is by its verb pada, which means to buy out, to redeem, or to ransom.

But why is he talking about it here? And this is where the second reading comes in, because this gives you the background to the idea and the concept of ransom.

We read Exodus 21, 28 to 32, and that law governs the situation of an ox goring a man or a woman to death.

[8 : 21] Now, the law clearly states that initially, when this happens, the sentence of death is pronounced on the ox.

Listen. When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned, its flesh shall not be eaten, but the owner of the ox shall be clear.

Now, in all law that you get in the Old Testament, you first of all get a principle. And here is the principle. When this happens, the owner is clear, but the ox is not.

And having said what the principle is, it then goes on to discuss another possibility. What if this ox had been used to gore in times past?

It injured a man or a woman or a boy or a girl, and the owner was warned, but paid no attention to the warning.

[9 : 30] Then we read this. But if the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has been warned, but has not kept it in, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death.

But then comes this idea of ransom in the very next verse. If a ransom is laid on him, he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is placed upon him.

And reading on further, we find that there is a ransom. So that if, for example, this ox has gored a servant, a slave, male or female, then the owner is to pay to the master of the slave 30 shekels.

And thus, by the payment of this 30 shekels, he is exempt the penalty of death. No man is ever able to ransom his brother or give to God the price of his life.

Now this is moving on from the law. This is looking at it in the context of salvation. Now this is a surprising statement because in the law that we've just looked at in Exodus 21, a man could, in the context of that law, pay the ransom so his brother would be exempt the death penalty.

[11 : 17] And that expectation is also found in the book of Job, chapter 6, verse 23. He says this, Have I said, deliver me from the adversary's hand or ransom me from the hand of the oppressors?

In other words, he's saying it's possible for me to pay and to get rid of these people. So why isn't it possible here?

I come back to this theme that the psalmist has. It's the age-old question of the value of riches and wealth and he is of the opinion that riches, they are of no value when he considers his trust in God.

Listen to what he says, verse 5 and 6. Why should I fear in the times of trouble when the iniquity of my persecutors surround me, men who trust in their wealth and boast in the abundance of their riches?

And then he goes on in a very negative section, verses 13 and 14, he now talks about the fate of those whose trust is in riches.

[12 : 42] This is the fate of those who have foolish confidence, verses 13 and 14, the end of those who are pleased with their portion.

Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol, what that means will come to shortly. Death shall be their shepherd, straight to the grave they will descend, and their form shall waste away, Sheol will be their home.

Now that is the statement about those who put their trust and their confidence and their security in their bank balance, in their stocks and shares, in their assets, in the car that they drive.

This is what is being said about them. But it's not the same for the psalmist because he says in verse 15, but God.

And how marvelous it is to consider every sentence in the Bible that starts but God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol for he will receive me.

[13 : 57] Only God is what the psalmist is saying has the power and ability to enact a true ransom for the souls of all those who trust in him.

And this truth the psalmist is expounding for himself, for those of his age, but also for us today.

The teaching of Jesus is this, Matthew 20, 28, even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to give his life a ransom for many.

In other words, when Jesus died on the cross, it has an eternal benefit. It is something that it will achieve in every generation to give his life a ransom that those that were captivated by sin will not seek their salvation in their assets, but will seek their salvation in him.

apostle Paul says in 1st Timothy 2, verses 5 and 6, there is one God and there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all, for you, for me, for all.

[15 : 47] Second, the cost. Truly, no man can ransom his brother or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice that he should continue to live on forever and never see the pit.

more in the mind, there is more in the mind of the psalmist than the ransom that would have been applied to the law in Exodus 21.

It's not the case here that what the psalmist has in mind is this law that we looked at, that if the ox gores a slave, male or female, the ox shall give to their master 30 shekels of silver and the ox shall be stoned.

Now, what he's thinking about isn't something temporal. He's thinking about something that's final and eternal, something that can deal with death.

God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol for he will receive me. And now he says this, this ransom that I am now talking about, is costly.

[17 : 12] It can never suffice. The Hebrew verb that's used to describe it is yakar, it means to be scarce, to be rare, costly, weighty, precious, and lovely.

So, in other words, what he's saying, this ransom that I'm now talking about, nobody can ever afford, it's costly.

God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. What does it mean, this Sheol?

Sheol's a Hebrew name, and it's a word that describes the abode of the dead, the underworld. world. And in the use of this term in the Old Testament, there is no concept of eternal punishment.

It simply denotes the dwelling of the dead of both good and evil. But there's something about it, as you find in the Old Testament, and that is, there is a fear expressed of ever going to that place, since it was believed that no fellowship with God would ever continue there.

[18 : 37] I take you to Genesis 42, where Jacob has sent the brothers of Joseph down into Egypt because he has learned that there is grain there.

And they are interviewed by Joseph, although they don't recognize him, and he establishes the fact that there is a younger brother that they have left behind. And he makes the stipulation that you will never see my face again unless you bring your younger brother with you.

And they put this to Jacob, and he says this, My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he only is left.

If harm would befall him on the journey you are to make, you would bring my gray hairs with sorrow down to Sheol. So the contemplation of going there is a state of misery and depression.

That state of misery and depression is also spoken about by Job in Job 17, 13, 15, 15 to 16. If I look for Sheol as my house, if I spread my couch in darkness, where then is my hope?

[20 : 06] Who will see my hope? Will it go down to the bars of Sheol? Shall we descend together in the dust? The next life for Job isn't one that is full of contemplation, of fellowship.

There's something final about this place and it is only God that can supply a deliverance from it. There is no possibility that anybody could do this for themselves.

so that in verse 7, I read it as being no man can ever ransom his brother, but there is also an alternative reading, which may be in your Bible, which says no man can ever ransom himself.

Who is going to provide this ransom? A righteous king? A holy priest? An ordained prophet?

prophet? The question is on the mind of the heavenly court in the book of Revelation. Revelation 5 and 2.

[21 : 21] Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? And we read there that no one in heaven or in earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or even to look in it.

Then we're told, one of the elders said to me, weep not. Lo, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David is conquered so he can open the scroll and its seven seals.

He has done what no other can do. He has prevailed. saved. You are not your own, says Paul in 1 Corinthians 6.

You were bought with a price. Finally, the design. Truly, no man can ransom his brother or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice, that he should continue to live on forever and never see the pit.

Here is the design behind all of this and a purpose. The ransom of their life is costly, but he should continue to live on forever and never see the pit.

[22 : 52] What does this mean, this pit? Again, a Hebrew word, shachat, which means the grave of the underworld, and it's just another synonym for this Sheol that I explained as being the abode of the dead.

So the effect of the ransom will be to rescue the believer from that shadowy existence, and that shadowy existence is already defined in Psalm 6, verse 5, for in death there is no remembrance of you.

In Sheol who can give you praise? Thus, the Old Testament believer requires to be ransomed and delivered from this place.

How can this be achieved? The answer we are able to give is through the death and resurrection of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was the privilege of the early church to give witness to the truth of the resurrection, and this was done ably by the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost in the sermon that we find in Acts chapter 2.

[24 : 06] And in that sermon from verses 24 to 27, Peter says of Jesus, but God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

For David says concerning him, I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced.

Moreover my flesh will dwell in hope. You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let your holy one see corruption. Now Peter has not based this on his own experience.

No, no, it's based on scripture. And that scripture is Psalm 16. Now what we find by looking at the quotations of the Old Testament in the New is that they are slightly different.

And they are slightly different because the New Testament church used the Greek version of the Old Testament, which we call the Septuagint.

[25 : 16] To find out what the Hebrew looks like, all you have to do is to go to Psalm 16, verses 9 to 10 in our English Bible, and therefore it reads like this.

Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices, my body also dwells secure. For you do not give me up to Sheol, nor let your godly one see the pit.

it uses the same words that we have come across, this Sheol and the pit. But the truth which this psalm teaches is a profound one.

It is the version that the apostle Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost. And it is the scriptural truth that Christ was prophesying to rise from the dead 1,000 years before he actually did.

And if that's not a truth and an evidence about the inspiration of God's word, I don't know what is. It is relevance today for our Christian lives and experience.

[26 : 27] We are not like the people of the Old Testament, who only had in front of them the prospect of Sheol or the pit, where there was no fellowship or praise with God.

God, what does Jesus say? He says this, John 14, let not your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am there you may be also.

This is a great hope which, unlike the psalmist, we have. We have it in our hearts.

[27 : 28] It carries us forward day by day. We are marching on a journey. and one day the earthly journey will come to an end.

But on that day the new journey will begin. Let's remember what the dying thief said to Jesus.

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Jesus said to him, I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise.

The earthly journey coming to an end, a heavenly journey about to start. So when we go to Psalm 49 and we read these words, no man can ransom his brother or give to God the price of his life.

For the ransom of his life is costly and can never suffice. But he should continue to live on forever and never see the pit. Clearly what the psalmist is talking about are the deeds of God.

[28 : 51] And what he's talking about has been achieved. through the mission, the ministry, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And because of that, we have a hope that transcends the grave, that transcends the sorrows, that gives us joy, hope, peace, and security.

Amen. will father sing happy with LOL, savior.

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