

The Saviour's Prophecy Of Judgement.

Text: Psa 69:19-28

Suggested Hymns:

71, 323, 49, 305, 492

1) An overview of the text

2) Jesus foretells its cause

3) Jesus foretells its nature

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Psalm 69:19-28, ¹⁹ *You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor; My adversaries are all before You.* ²⁰ *Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; And for comforters, but I found none.* ²¹ *They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

²² *Let their table become a snare before them, And their well-being a trap.* ²³ *Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; And make their loins shake continually.* ²⁴ *Pour out Your indignation upon them, And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them.* ²⁵ *Let their dwelling place be desolate; Let no one live in their tents.* ²⁶ *For they persecute the ones You have struck, And talk of the grief of those You have wounded.*

²⁷ *Add iniquity to their iniquity, And let them not come into Your righteousness.* ²⁸ *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

One can hardly contemplate this text and its awful implications without a shudder. Our Lord and Saviour makes some prophetic statements regarding the future punishment of those who despise God's mercy and grace.

He foretells their doom. To us it seems strange that the suffering Saviour, who so willingly and gladly sacrificed His own life upon the Cross for the sins of men and who extends mercy and compassion to all sinners, now ascends the judgement seat to pronounce sentence upon the godless and wicked.

But it is as God has indicated in His Word. The same Christ who once came into the world so humbly, humiliated Himself, became obedient even unto the death upon the Cross, is to return again to pass final judgement on that great Day.

In reality, however, it must have added to the anguish of the suffering Saviour to know and realise in His omniscience that a large number of sinners in the world would despise and reject Him as their Saviour and that on Judgement Day He would have to condemn them to hell.

May God grant us His grace that we rightly understand and take to heart the solemn words of our text. They are *The Saviour's Prophecy of the Judgement to Come*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. An Overview Of The Text

The first part of our text describes *Messiah's Shame*. We read in verses 19-21, ¹⁹ *You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor; My adversaries are all before You.* ²⁰ *Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; And for comforters, but I found none.* ²¹ *They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

After the interlude of prayer we looked at last Sunday, the psalmist resumes the description of the scorn the Messiah suffers from His enemies. The fulfilment of this prophecy is obvious in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' suffering.

The mockery of the soldiers during Jesus' trial, the taunts of His enemies gathered around the cross, the flight of His disciples, and Peter's denial — all of these contributed to the loneliness and anguish of Christ during His passion. The references to bitter gall and vinegar to drink in Matthew 27:34 & 48 make it clear that the suffering of Christ fulfilled this psalm.

The second part of our text covers verses 22-28. It may be given the title "*Messiah's Curse*."

The words of this prayer are horrifying. They are nothing less than a prayer for the damnation of one's enemies.¹ To many people this prayer seems incompatible with Jesus' prayer on the cross, "*Father, forgive them.*"

However, when the New Testament applies these words to Judas in Acts 1:20, which reads, ²⁰ "*For it is written in the book of Psalms: 'Let his*

dwelling place be desolate, it shows that this is a prayer of the Messiah against His enemies.

There are several Psalms that contain curses or prayers for the punishment of the psalmist's enemies.² These prayers, harsh as they sound, were proper prayers when they were first uttered, and they are still proper today.

These curses are part of God's inspired Word. Several of these curses occur in messianic psalms as the words of Christ himself. For example, one of the strongest curses is recorded in our text, Psalm 69, a messianic psalm quoted in the New Testament, verse 28, ²⁸ *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous.* Curses found in Psalms 69 and 109 are quoted by Peter in Acts 1:20 as finding their fulfilment in God's judgement on Judas.

Luther once commented that we cannot pray the Lord's Prayer without cursing. Every time we pray "*Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,*" we are praying that the plans of Satan and all who serve him will fail and that they will receive the judgement that they deserve.

We should indeed pray that God will lead our enemies to repentance and forgiveness as Christ and Stephen did, but we must also pray that all who continue to defy God will receive the justice they deserve.

God is a God of absolute holiness. It is in harmony with God's character and His attributes revealed in Scripture when the psalmist prays in such a way. When the psalmist uttered such prayers, His concern was for God's glory and for the success of God's plans.

In Psalm 69 we note that the Messiah was being persecuted without cause, since the attacks on Him were not because of anything He had done, but because of His role in God's plans.³ Even when the inspired psalmist prayed such prayers, He still hoped God's judgements would serve as a warning that would lead at least some of the wicked to repentance.

Similar prayers for God to display His justice also occur in the New Testament. Paul prayed for God's judgement against those who opposed his preaching of the Gospel. We read in Galatians 1:8, ⁸ *But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to*

you, let him be accursed. And in 2 Timothy 4:14, ¹⁴ *Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works.*

However, Scripture also delivers a strong warning against taking personal vengeance on our enemies, because it also promises us that the just and holy God will repay the wicked. We read in Romans 12:19, ¹⁹ *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.* To punish the ungodly with force is the duty of God and of the government as the servant of God. Therefore we should only oppose the enemies of God with prayer.

Our prayers must be in harmony with this revealed will of God. God has revealed His will to us. We read in Mark 16:16, ¹⁶ *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*

Jesus’ will certainly was in harmony with that of His Father, who wants all people to be saved. Jesus did pray for the repentance of His enemies. Jesus had repeatedly warned Judas and appealed to him to turn back from his sin. But when Judas closed his heart to God’s love, he placed himself under the curse of God’s law. The God who does not want anyone to perish is the same God who will cast those who reject His will into hell. This prayer reflects that grim reality.

In one sense the wounds and pain Christ suffered were imposed on Him by His Father, since He was permitting Christ to suffer for our sins. But the enemies who were imposing Christ’s suffering and mocking Him as He endured it did not understand this. They were afflicting Christ for their own malicious purposes.

Even as Jesus was bearing the sins of the world, they were mocking His claim to be God’s Son and scorning Him as a worthless, self-appointed Messiah. Because they blasphemously and defiantly rejected the only payment for sin, nothing remained for them, but God’s condemnation as described in this psalm.

2. The Saviour’s Prophecy Of The Judgement To Come Jesus Foretells Its Cause

In Romans, chapter 11, the Apostle Paul is pleading with Israel.⁴ Since he quotes Psalm 69⁵ and applies it to the Israelites, we shall begin by applying the words of our text to the same people.

God had chosen them. He had guarded them, kept them, protected them, and led them out of one difficulty after another. To Israel God had sent His Prophets. Among the Israelites He had recorded His name. To Israel He had given the promises concerning the Messiah and the redemption of mankind. The record of the Old Testament abounds with instances of mercy and grace which God bestowed upon His chosen people, Israel.

On the other side of the ledger the record just as clearly shows how shamefully Israel despised God's grace and mercy. When our Saviour made His entry into the city of Jerusalem, we find Him weeping over the sins of His people, saying in Matthew 23:37,³⁷ ***“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”***

When in our text the Lord makes the statement ***“My adversaries are all before You,”*** He is thinking in particular of His people. ***“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”***⁶ During His whole lifetime Jesus suffered the persecution and hatred of His people, which reached the climax when He was on trial before Pontius Pilate, and the mob, incited by the leaders of the people, cried out, ***“Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!”***⁷ ***“His blood be on us and on our children.”***⁸

And how they rejoiced to see Jesus hanging upon the tree! How they mocked and ridiculed Him! To us their attitude is beyond comprehension. We think that there should have been manifested at least a spirit of humanity. It is only when people revert to the instinct of the beast and are filled with a mob spirit that humane feelings are squelched.

Thus our Saviour complains again and again, ***I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; And for comforters, but I found none.*** He had to tread the wine press alone. As previously stated, not even the inner circle of His closest associates and intimate friends dared to lift up a helping hand or offer a word of comfort or sympathy to the suffering Saviour.

Thus Israel despised the Saviour. And what is even worse, Israel continued, and still continues, to despise the Lord's Christ. So the Lord had no alternative but to bring judgement upon these evildoers.

However, the Lord's prophecy of impending judgement cannot be limited to Israel. It comprises all people who despise God's grace and trample on His mercy. The great majority of people to whom the precious Gospel has been preached have rejected the divine mercy offered to them.

All the efforts of the Church and of Christ's ambassadors to persuade people to depart from their wicked way and live, have made hardly more than a dent on the huge masses of humanity.

The faithful followers of Jesus Christ have always been, and to the end will be, a small band. Even the proclamation of such threats and judgements as we find in the text, yes, God's visitations themselves, frequently leave men's hearts cold and unaffected. So God's judgement will of necessity take its course. The wicked will go to their doom, for *"he who does not believe will be condemned."*¹⁹

3. The Saviour's Prophecy Of The Judgement To Come Jesus Foretells Its Nature

The words of the text describe this judgement as being of utmost severity. Our text says, ²² *Let their table become a snare before them, And their well-being a trap.* The reference is to a banquet hall. The table is spread with every bounty. Around this table are seated the guests. That is a true picture of God's chosen people Israel, invited to and sitting at the banquet table, upon which are spread lavishly God's abundant mercy and grace.

But what was to be a blessing becomes a curse; the food so liberally supplied is turned into poison because carnal Israel rejects God's offer of salvation. By unbelief it converts the saviour of life into the saviour of death.

Our text continues, ²³ *Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; And make their loins shake continually.* God had sent His Holy Spirit to enlighten their eyes, but they refused His gift. He smote them with blindness, not physical, but spiritual blindness, as Jesus says in John 9:39, *"For judgement I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."*

The eyes of Israel were darkened because they stubbornly insisted on their own personal righteousness and rejected the righteousness obtained for them through Christ's meritorious atonement. The shaking of the loins indicates both uncertainty and fear, which would come upon them as a direct punishment.

We read in Luke, 21:26, 35 ²⁶ *"men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. ...* ³⁵ *"For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.*

Our text reads, ²⁴ *Pour out Your indignation upon them, And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them.* It has always been disastrous to men when God began to empty His vials of wrath upon them. The destruction of the first world in the Flood shows how completely and thoroughly God carries out His threats of judgement against the sinner who refuses and despises His mercy.

The people of Israel should have realised from previous experiences that God makes no vain threats. Their nation, as well as their cherished city and Temple, was annihilated. The poet writes, *"Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding fine."*¹⁰

²⁵ *Let their dwelling place be desolate; Let no one live in their tents.* This prophecy, though primarily fulfilled in Judas Iscariot, applies not only to Judas. Israel's dwelling place was made desolate. Israel experienced the full visitation of God's wrath. Yet physical and temporal punishments and visitations of God are as nothing when compared to the ensuing eternal damnation and punishment of hell. In hell *"their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."*¹¹

However, let us not make the mistake of thinking that this prophetic statement, with its terrible curses, is addressed to Israel only. It pertains to all people who reject, persecute, and despise the Christ. God has visited this world time and time again with most severe physical and temporal punishments.

It is for us to realise how much depends on our attitude toward the Saviour of mankind. In some ways the world's opportunity of sitting at the banquet table of the Gospel is greater today than in the days of Israel. God's offers of grace and mercy are extended so widely that there is hardly a people on earth without the opportunity to learn the way of salvation. The Gospel is being preached

throughout the length and breadth of the land. It is spread by every available means of communication.

Let us, then, remember that here and now we have God's mercy and His grace, His kindness and long-suffering. Rejection and contempt of these, necessarily results in the greater damnation.

If people today, with all their opportunities, do not repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ as their only Saviour and Redeemer, will it not be more tolerable for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah on Judgement Day than for them?

Ask yourself, as written in Romans 2:4, ***‘Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?’***

May our gracious God and Lord help us sincerely to repent of our sins, receive His Son as our Saviour into our heart, and firmly believe in Him for our souls' salvation. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ See "The Imprecatory Psalms" in the "The People's Bible Commentary", Psalms Vol. 1, p 11

² For example Psalms 55, 56, 58, 69, 109

³ Psalms 35:19; 69:4, 7, 9; 109:3

⁴ Rom 11:9-10

⁵ Psa 69:22-23

⁶ John 1:11

⁷ John 19:15

⁸ Matthew 27:25

⁹ Mark 16:16

¹⁰ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

¹¹ Isaiah 66:24