

# PSALMS

## Chapter 9

**I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of our wonderful deeds. <sup>2</sup>I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. <sup>3</sup>When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before your presence. <sup>4</sup>For you have maintained my just cause; you have sat on the throne, giving righteous judgment. <sup>5</sup>You have rebuked the nations; you have made the wicked perish; you have blotted out their name forever and ever. <sup>6</sup>The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins; their cities you rooted out; the very memory of them has perished. <sup>7</sup>But the LORD sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice, <sup>8</sup>and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness. <sup>9</sup>The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. <sup>10</sup>And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you. <sup>11</sup>Sing praises to the LORD, who sits enthroned in Zion! Tell among the peoples his deeds! <sup>12</sup>For he who avenges blood is mindful of them; he does not forget the cry of the afflicted. <sup>13</sup>Be gracious to me, O LORD! See my affliction from those who hate me, O you who lift me up from the gates of death, <sup>14</sup>that I may recount all your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in your salvation. <sup>15</sup>The nations have sunk in the pit that they made; in the net that they hid, their own foot has been caught. <sup>16</sup>The LORD has made himself known; he has executed judgment; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. *Higgaion. Selah* <sup>17</sup>The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God. <sup>18</sup>For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever. <sup>19</sup>Arise, O LORD! Let not man prevail; let the nations be judged before you! <sup>20</sup>Put them in fear, O LORD! Let the nations know that they are but men! *Selah***

**Ps 9** That Ps 9 and 10 were sometimes viewed (or used) as one psalm is known from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT. Whether they were originally composed as one psalm is not known, though a number of indicators point in that direction. Ps 10 is the only psalm from Ps 3 to 32 that has no superscription, and the Hebrew text of the two psalms together appears to reflect an incomplete (or broken) acrostic structure. The first letter of each verse or pair of verses tends to follow the order of the Hebrew alphabet near the beginning of Ps 9 and again near the end of Ps 10. The thoughts also tend to be developed in two-verse units throughout. Ps 9 is predominantly praise (by the king) for God’s deliverance from hostile nations (the specific occasion is unknown, but since there is no reference to victories on the part of Israel, God’s destruction of the nations may have come by other means). It concludes with a short prayer for God’s continuing righteous judgments (see v. 4) on the haughty nations. Ps 10 is predominantly prayer against the rapacity of unscrupulous men within the realm—as arrogant and wicked in their dealings with the “weak” (v. 2) as the nations were in their attacks on Israel (vv. 2–11 can serve equally as a description of both). The conjunction of these two within a single psalm is not unthinkable since the attacks of “the wicked” (9:5; 10:4), whether from within or from without, on the godly community are equally threatening to true Israel. Praise of God’s past deliverances is often an integral part of prayer in the Psalter (see 25:6; 40:1–5), as also in other ancient Near Eastern prayers. Such praise expressed the ground of the psalmist’s hope that his present prayer would be heard, and it also functioned to motivate the Lord to act once more in his people’s (or his servant’s) behalf. (CSB)

Based on the LXX, Ps 9 and 10 are understood by many scholars to comprise one psalm. Some commentators suggest that the psalm was composed later in David’s lifetime, after the ark of the

covenant was brought to and permanently kept in Jerusalem (v 11). *choirmaster*. See p 993. *Muth-labben*. Probably a musical notation. (TLSB)

Format: Vv 1–2, thanks and praise; vv 3–4, righteous judgment; vv 5–6, the wicked rebuked; vv 7–8, the Lord’s justice; vv 9–10, the Lord is a stronghold; vv 11–12, enthroned in Zion; vv 13–14, prayer for graciousness; vv 15–16, nations trapped; v 17, end of the wicked; v 18, not forgotten; vv 19–20, judge the nations. (TLSB)

The psalm is a psalm of thanksgiving to God for punishing the wicked oppressors, and defending the oppressed; but it turns into a prayer for the righteous judge of the whole earth to once again vindicate the oppressed. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

**9:1–2** Initial announcement of praise. (CSB)

In response to a distressing situation, the psalmist brings himself to praise God in anticipation of the hour of deliverance. The depth of gratitude and joy finds expression in five synonymous verbs expressive of praise: “I will praise...tell...be glad...rejoice...sing praise.” The verbs denoting praise also express the communal aspect of individual praise. The psalmist loves the Lord, has confidence in the power and wonder of God’s acts, and encourages the community in his expression of praise (cf. Eph. 5:19-20). (The Expositor’s Bible Commentary – Psalms)

**9:1** *heart* – In Biblical language the center of the human spirit, from which spring emotions, thought, motivations, courage and action—“the wellspring of life.” (CSB)

Mere lip service is not adequate to render due praise to God. (Leupold)

*tell of*. The Hebrew for this phrase is translated “declare” in v. 14. The praise of God in the Psalter is rarely a private matter between the psalmist and the Lord. It is usually a public (at the temple) celebration of God’s holy virtues or of his saving acts or gracious bestowal of blessings. In his praise the psalmist proclaims to the assembled throng God’s glorious attributes or his righteous deeds (see, e.g., 22:22–31; 56:12–13; 61:8; 65:1; 69:30–33). To this is usually added a call to praise, summoning all who hear to take up the praise—to acknowledge and joyfully celebrate God’s glory, his goodness and all his righteous acts. This aspect of praise in the Psalms has rightly been called the OT anticipation of NT evangelism. (CSB)

*wonders*. God’s saving acts, sometimes involving miracles—as in the exodus from Egypt, the desert wanderings and the entrance into the promised land—and sometimes not, but always involving the manifestation of God’s sovereign lordship over events. Here reference is to the destruction of the enemies celebrated in this psalm. (CSB)

**9:2, 10** *your name*. The name of the Lord is the manifestation of his character. It has no separate existence apart from the Lord, but is synonymous with the Lord himself in his gracious manifestation and accessibility to his people). (CSB)

**9:2** *Most High*. “lord of heaven” and “creator of earth” were frequently applied to the chief Canaanite deity in ancient times. Terminology and location (Jerusalem was in central Canaan) thus indicate that Melchizedek was probably a Canaanite king-priest. But Abram, by identifying Melchizedek’s “God Most High” with “the LORD” (see v. 22), bore testimony to the one true God, whom Melchizedek had come to know.). (CSB)

**9:3–6** In destroying the enemies, God has redressed the wrongs committed by them against David (and Israel). – In these verses David thanks God for delivering him from the attempts of enemies like the Philistines, Arameans, and Ammonites to destroy Israel. Because temporal judgments such as these defeats of Israel’s enemies are warning and down payments of the great judgment of the Last Day, David also praises God for his judgment of the whole world in 7-8. (PBC)

**9:3** *turn back...stumble...perish* – All this happened at the sight of the presence of the Lord, who as a mighty judge flashed the glory of his majesty upon them as he did upon the Egyptians at the Red Sea (Ex 14:24) (Leupold)

The figure of stumbling uses an aspect of their defeat, one that is fitting for the battlefield. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

*Before your presence.* – Hbr *panim*, “face,” so “to be in front of someone/something.” To “enter God’s presence” typically refers to visiting the temple or tabernacle for worship. An advancing warrior naturally “faced” his enemies, so the Lord’s “presence” or “face” is fearsome to His enemies. (TLSB p. 843)

**9:4** *my just cause* – As the anointed king of Israel, God’s elect, David knew his cause was just, so long as it was informed by God’s counsel. (TLSB)

*Righteous judgment* – As a righteous judge; he has taken his throne by setting things right, punishment for the wicked and vindication for the righteous. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

**9:5** Verse 5 uses three decisive verbs: “you have rebuked,” “you have destroyed,” “you have blotted.” The three verbs are present perfects, emphasizing the act and the continuing results. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

*Rebuked* – Rebuke (s.v. Ps. 76:~) refers to the divine decess of judgment that stops the wicked in their tracks. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

*blotted out their name.* As if from a register of mankind written on a papyrus scroll (see Nu 5:23; see also Dt 9:14; 25:19; 29:20; 2Ki 14:27). (CSB)

Utter destruction so as to disappear from the historical register, like the Canaanites, whom Israel overthrew. An even more harrowing truth is suggested here. The Creator forgets those who die outside the bounds of His grace, i.e., apart from faith in Christ Jesus. (TLSB)

This was actually the case in regard to the Canaanite nations that were overthrown by Israel: they never revived; they passed off the stage of history. (Leupold)

**9:6** This verse turns its attention on their state as a result of divine judgment. “The enemy is finished” (s.v. Ps. 7:8), completely cut off, meaning that they are in ruins forever. Even the memory of their cities has perished because God rooted them out. The last clause is somewhat cryptic: “perished/their memory/they.” Their “memory” is comparable to “their name.” This is certainly emphasized in the way that the line is written: “their memory even themselves.” (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

**9:7–10** Celebration of the righteous rule of God – Very often the “righteousness” of God in the Psalms (and frequently elsewhere in the OT) refers to the faithfulness with which he acts. This

faithfulness is in full accordance with his commitments (both expressed and implied) to his people and with his status as the divine King—to whom the powerless may look for protection, the oppressed for redress and the needy for help.), which evokes trust in those who look to the Lord. (CSB)

**9:7** *his throne*. In heaven (see 11:4). See also v. 4. (CSB)

The hope of the godly during duress remains in the presence of God's kingdom. (The Expositor's Bible Commentary – Psalms)

God will always remain the ruler of the nations and, moreover, will always uphold the cause of righteousness, on behalf of those who trust in Him. (TLSB)

Puny nations in their wicked opposition may come and go; Yahweh is perpetually enthroned, ready foe any judgment that the needs of his people may require. (Leupold)

**9:8** *with righteousness* – He will judge the world in righteousness! And in the process he will minister justice (s.v. Ps. 140:2) to the peoples in uprightness. Because the judgment will be fair and just, the wicked will be destroyed and the righteous vindicated, once again, finally. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

**9:9** *Lord is a stronghold* – After the picture of the sovereign Judge enthroned forever there follows the effect that this truth will have on his own: they will be moved to take refuge in him. (Leupold)

Fortress or place of refuge. (TLSB)

**9:10** *not forsaken* – Thus we have a description of the increase in confidence that grows out of the larger national experiences. (Leupold)

In times of trouble they trust in the Lord because he has not forsaken them. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

*Those who seek you* – Translates two terms: Hbr *baqash*, “look for”; Hbr *darash*, “care about, examine, inquire.” The Lord is sought in three ways: (1) through calling on His name in prayer, (2) by consulting Him through Urim and Thummim administered by the high priest, and (3) through the study of His Word. A visit to the tabernacle or temple is frequently implied. Unbelievers do not seek God. Believers seek Him in an attitude of repentance, not selfishness. (TLSB p. 843)

Urim and Thummim are objects placed in the breastpiece of the high priest, Their exact nature is unknown. They were used, however, to determine the will of the Lord (Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21). (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

**9:11–12** A call to the assembly at the temple to take up the praise of God for his righteous judgments. (CSB)

**9:11** *sing* – “Sing” is repeated from verse 1, but now as an imperative, calling for the faithful to sing praises to the Lord who dwells in Zion.” (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

**9:12** *he who avenges blood*. See Dt 32:41, 43. (CSB)

God will demand punishment for bloodthirsty oppressors (Ezek. 33:6; Gen. 9:5). It is his character to call to account and demand satisfaction for such crimes. the good news for the afflicted who trust in the Lord is that they are delivered from oppression. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

No matter how high and great the Almighty is, the cry of the poor is highly regarded by him and never forgotten just because such criers are poor. He is no respecter of persons. (Leupold)

**9:13–14** Perhaps a recollection of David’s prayer (“the cry of the afflicted,” v. 12), which the Lord has now answered. (CSB)

**9:13** *lift me up* – Since God has so often lifted up his own in the past, therefore this is called to mind by the use of a new title for God, for the original says practically, “my Lifter-up.” (Leupold)

*gates of death* – Ancient Mesopotamians believed that, immediately after death, the deceased passed through seven gates on the way to the netherworld. But Scripture uses this term in reference to hell. (TLSB)

The fact that the danger involved was not slight appears in the circumstance that one crying out had already gotten so far as to be practically at the point of passing through the “gates of death.” (Leupold)

The entrance to death is described as if it has gates but God is the one who prevents his people from going through them at the hands of the wicked. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

**9:14** *declare*. A vow to praise. Many prayers in the Psalter include such vows in anticipation of the expected answer to prayer. They reflect Israel’s religious consciousness that praise must follow deliverance as surely as prayer springs from need—if God is to be truly honored. Such praise was usually offered with thank offerings and involved celebrating God’s saving act in the presence of those assembled at the temple. (CSB)

*gates*. Having been thrust down by the attacks of his enemies to “the gates of death” (v. 13), David prayed to be lifted up so he could celebrate his deliverance in “the gates of . . . Zion.” (CSB)

The faithful are prevented from going through the gates of death prematurely so that they can stand in the gates of the city to praise the Lord for salvation. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

*Daughter of Zion*. A personification of Jerusalem and its inhabitants. (CSB)

First appears chronologically in a psalm of David (Ps 9:14). Plural “daughters” occurs in Sg. Otherwise, these expressions are associated with the prophets and are very common in Lam. They may refer to the cities or towns surrounding Jerusalem but often refer to the young women in and around Jerusalem who celebrated the victories of the city or mourned its siege and destruction. The important role of women as singers may stand behind these expressions (cf Ex 15:20–21; Jgs 11:34; 1Sm 18:6; Ps 68:25; Jer 31:4; Zep 3:14; Zec 2:10; 9:9). (TLSB p. 1079)

**9:15–18†** Under the Lord’s just rule, those who wickedly attack others bring destruction on themselves – David comforts himself with the common wisdom that under God’s rule “crime does not pay.”) and their end in this life will be the grave. But those who are attacked (“the needy,” v. 18) will not trust in the Lord in vain. (CSB)

**9:15** *pit they made* – God is able to turn their own devices back on them so that they will perish by their own hands. Again the classic example of this is Haman in the Book of Ester; who was hung on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

**9:16** *made Himself known*. Revealed Himself—His will and His Law—in the text of Scripture and, more appropriate to this context, through various miraculous interventions in history. (TLSB)

*Higgaion*. Hbr term of uncertain meaning; probably a musical notation, perhaps indicating an interlude. (TLSB)

*Selah*. Hebrew; untranslatable. Mainly in the first two books of Psalms. Probably refers to the accompaniment of the harps during the psalm. (TLSB p. 993)

This often occurs in the middle of a psalm and which apparently signals an interlude. “The Sela indicates that one must be still and quickly think through the words of the psalm; for they demand a quiet and restful soul, which can grasp and hold to that which the Holy Spirit there presents and offers” (Luther). (Psalms – The Prayer Book of the Bible – Dietrich Bonhoeffer p. 23)

*Selah* may be a musical notation. It could also be a point where a pause is desirable for the singer or reader of the psalm in order that the statement last made or the thought as a whole just developed may be reflected upon before the next turn of the thought appears. (Leupold)

*Work of their own hands* – In other words, he destroys himself by trying to destroy others. This is divine justice at work. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

**9:17** *Sheol* – This word, occurring 65 times in the Hebrew OT, is still obscure. Since the derivation of the word is uncertain, the context must determine the meaning in each case.

1. *Sheol* can mean the resting place of mankind’s mortal remains (Jb 17:16; Is 38:10).

2. *Sheol* can also mean “realm of the dead,” into which all enter who depart this life, righteous as well as wicked (e.g., Gn 37:35; Jb 7:9; Ps 16:10; 31:17; 89:48). In this sense, it is a general term used very much like the English phrase “the hereafter” or “the beyond.” The phrase “to go down into Sheol” means “to die, to depart from the land of the living.” But it should be noted that when the righteous are said to descend into Sheol, their fate beyond is rarely taken into account. The hope of the pious in the OT is expressed differently (e.g., Ps 73:24).

3. *Sheol* can mean the place where God’s judgment overtakes evildoers. In this sense, Sheol receives those who are taken away in God’s anger. Korah’s rebel band went down to Sheol because they had provoked the Lord (Nu 16:30, 33). Harlots go to Sheol (Pr 5:5). The anger of the Lord burns to the depths of Sheol (Dt 32:22). According to Ps 49, all people die physically, the righteous as well as the ungodly (v 10), but there is a difference in their existence in the hereafter. The confidence of the psalmist is expressed in the words “They [i.e., the wicked] are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd... But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for He will receive me” (vv 14–15). Clearly, there is a sharp contrast between the doom of the ungodly and the glorious hope of the believer, who hopes to rest securely in the hands of God (Ps 73). (TLSB p. 792)

*forget.* Take no account of. (CSB)

**9:18** *needy ... afflicted.* In this psalm David and Israel are counted among them because of the threat from the enemies. (CSB)

The point is that when God intervenes finally there will be a parting of the ways – the afflicted who trust in the Lord will never perish. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

*not ... forgotten.* Those who forget God will come to nothing, but the needy and afflicted will not be forgotten by God (see v. 12). (CSB)

It may seem at times that they are forgotten, but the Scripture makes clear that God will vindicate them. It is said that their hope shall not perish. What they expect, what they desire, what they pray for, what keeps them going, will not perish. It will be fully realized. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

**9:19–20** A prayer at the conclusion of praise, asking that the Lord may ever rule over the nations as he has done in the event here celebrated—that those who “forget God” (v. 17) may know that they are only men, not gods, and cannot withstand the God of Israel (see 10:18). (CSB)

**9:19** *Arise.* (Hebrew idiom frequently prefaces an imperative calling for immediate action with the call to arise. (CSB)

The request refers to “mortal” or “frail” men – mere men! God should not let them be strong (s.v. Ps. 29:1). In their great acts of tyranny and terror they seem to have strength; but when they will be judged they will be seen for they are. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

The psalmist prays for no more than God, himself, has in mind for the ungodly when he asks that “terror” be appointed for all such. Vindictiveness has not dictated this prayer but a strong conformity to the will and purpose of God. (Leupold)

**9:20** *put them in fear* – They have spent their lives forcing those they oppressed to live in fear of them; but when if the Lord judges them, then they will know what it means to live in fear. The fear the Lord will impose on them will be a much greater magnitude. Moreover, the world will know that they are but mortal, ordinary frail human beings. Thus it is with all tyrants and terrorists when they are stripped of their power and their supporting henchmen. The world is left wondering how they could have done so much damage to other people. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

*selah* – Hebrew; untranslatable. Mainly in the first two books of Psalms. Probably refers to the accompaniment of the harps during the psalm. (TLSB p. 993)

This often occurs in the middle of a psalm and which apparently signals an interlude. “The Sela indicates that one must be still and quickly think through the words of the psalm; for they demand a quiet and restful soul, which can grasp and hold to that which the Holy Spirit there presents and offers” (Luther). (Psalms – The Prayer Book of the Bible – Dietrich Bonhoeffer p. 23)

Selah may be a musical notation. It could also be a point where a pause is desirable for the singer or reader of the psalm in order that the statement last made or the thought as a whole just developed may be reflected upon before the next turn of the thought appears. (Leupold)

**Ps 9** “The wicked are snared in the work of their own hands,” David observes in this psalm. How timeless is this truth! How often do we dig ourselves deeper into sin just to cover up a previous sin? Ultimately, our sin carries the most frightening of consequences—death and damnation. However, as David reminds us, if we acknowledge our sin and God’s wonderful deeds on our behalf, especially through Christ, we can be confident of His mercy toward us so we, too, can “be glad and exult” (v 2) in His name. • Dear Lord Jesus, we continually recount, through praise and thanksgiving, Your wonderful deeds. Amen. (TLSB)