Let Israel Praise the Lord

Psalm 149:1-9
Let Israel Praise the Lord

Commentary

by

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Text:

Psalm 149:1-9,

1. Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints.
2. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King.
3. Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp.
4. For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation.
5. Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.
6. May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands,
7. to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples,
8. to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron,
9. to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the LORD. (NIV)
Introduction:

I. This psalm takes up the thought of Psalm 148:14 in the preceding psalm and elaborates upon what God has done for Israel.

A. Psalm 148:14, He has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his saints, of Israel, the people close to his heart. Praise the LORD. (NIV)

B. It pertains to a period of restoration following discomfort by their enemies.

C. See the excursus on imprecations in the Psalms at the end of Psalm 79.

1. Psalm 79:1-13, O God, the nations have invaded your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple, they have reduced Jerusalem to rubble. They have given the dead bodies of your servants as food to the birds of the air, the flesh of your saints to the beasts of the earth. They have poured out blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there is no one to bury the dead. We are objects of reproach to our neighbors, of scorn and derision to those around us. How long, O LORD will you be angry forever? How long will your jealousy burn like fire? Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the kingdoms that do not call on your name; for they have devoured Jacob and destroyed his homeland. Do not hold against us the sins of the fathers; may your mercy come quickly to
meet us, for we are in desperate need. Help us, O God our Savior, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name's sake. Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" Before our eyes, make known among the nations that you avenge the outpoured blood of your servants. May the groans of the prisoners come before you; by the strength of your arm preserve those condemned to die. Pay back into the laps of our neighbors seven times the reproach they have hurled at you, O Lord. Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will praise you forever; from generation to generation we will recount your praise. (NIV)

II. Psalm Outline:

A. Israel should praise the Lord for victory received (verses 1-4).

1. Psalm 149:1-4, Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King. Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp. For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation. (NIV)

B. Israel should even praise the Lord for victory anticipated (verses 5-9).
1. Psalm 149:5-9, Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds. May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the LORD. (NIV)

Commentary:

Praise for Victory Received

Psalm 149:1-4, Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King. Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp. For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation. (NIV)

Psalm 149:1, Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints. (NIV)

I. For the significance of the “new song”, see on Psalm 96:1-2; 98:1-3; and 144:9-10, where the idea of a victory song is in the forefront.

A. Psalm 96:1-2, Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. (NIV)
B. Psalm 98:1-3, Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. (NIV)

C. Psalm 144:9-10, I will sing a new song to you, O God; on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you, to the One who gives victory to kings, who delivers his servant David from the deadly sword. (NIV)

II. However, any fresh act of kindness from God should occasion new songs of praise (Psalm 33:3; and 40:1-3).

A. Psalm 33:3, Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy. (NIV)

B. Psalm 40:1-3, I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD. (NIV)

III. Three times in the psalm, “the saints”, jasidim, are mentioned (Psalm 149:1,5 and 9).
A. Psalm 149:1, 5 and 9, Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints. Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the LORD. (NIV)

B. Since these are the loyal, pious ones, it is not appropriate to think of them as bloodthirsty men who hold hatred in their hearts toward their enemies (Psalm 149:6-9).

1. Psalm 149:6-9, May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the LORD. (NIV)

IV. The song is to be sung “in the assembly” so that all can benefit by it.

Psalm 149:2, Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King. (NIV)

I. “Their Maker” involves a plural of intensity or majesty.

A. Israel was created as a nation by God (Psalm 95:6; Isaiah 45:5, 11; 51:12-13; 54:5; and Hosea 8:14).

1. Psalm 95:6, Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; (NIV)
2. Isaiah 45:5 and 11, I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me. “This is what the LORD says—the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands? (NIV)

3. Isaiah 51:12-13, "I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you fear mortal men, the sons of men, who are but grass, that you forget the LORD your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, that you live in constant terror every day because of the wrath of the oppressor, who is bent on destruction? For where is the wrath of the oppressor? (NIV)

4. Isaiah 54:5, For your Maker is your husband—the LORD Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth. (NIV)

5. Hosea 8:14, Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces; Judah has fortified many towns. But I will send fire upon their cities that will consume their fortresses. (NIV)

B. Though Israel had forsaken her Maker and had been disciplined, when she repented God took her back to Himself and restored her.
1. For “their king”, see on Psalm 145:1.

   a. Psalm 145:1, I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. (NIV)

   b. “People of Zion” and “Israel” are synonyms.

      i. By metonymy, the people of Israel are designated.

Psalm 149:3, Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp. (NIV)

I. The religious dance was especially appropriate in a time of victory and great jubilation (Exodus 15:20; Judges 11:34; 1 Samuel 18:6; 2 Samuel 6:14; and Jeremiah 31:4).

   A. Exodus 15:20, Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing. (NIV)

   B. Judges 11:34, When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of tambourines! She was an only child. Except for her he had neither son nor daughter. (NIV)

   C. 1 Samuel 18:6, When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with
singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes.  (NIV)

D. 2 Samuel 6:14, David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the LORD with all his might, (NIV)

E. Jeremiah 31:4, I will build you up again and you will be rebuilt, O Virgin Israel. Again you will take up your tambourines and go out to dance with the joyful. (NIV)

Psalm 149:4, For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation. (NIV)

I. For “takes delight in”, see Psalm 147:11.

A. Psalm 147:11, the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love. (NIV)

II. “The humble”, parallel to “his people”, may refer to those afflicted because of their sins (Psalm 107:17; 119:67, 71, and 75) or to those who humble their hearts in the meekness of obedience (Psalm 25:9-10; 37:10-11; and 147:6).

A. Psalm 107:17, Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. (NIV)

B. Psalm 119:67, 71 and 75, Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. I know, O LORD, that your laws are righteous, and in faithfulness you have afflicted me. (NIV)
C. Psalm 25:9-10, He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant. (NIV)

D. Psalm 37:10-11, A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found. But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace. (NIV)

E. Psalm 147:6, The LORD sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground. (NIV)

F. Probably both ideas are in the present passage.

   1. The humiliation of defeat led them to a state of penitence.

Praise for Victory Anticipated

Psalm 149:5-9, Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds. May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the LORD. (NIV)

Psalm 149:5, Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds. (NIV)
I. For “saints”, see Psalm 149:1.

   A. Psalm 149:1, Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints. (NIV)

II. “Honor” doubtless here refers to the restoration of Israel's honor after her restoration (Isaiah 43:4; and 49:5).

   A. Isaiah 43:4, Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. (NIV)

   B. Isaiah 49:5, And now the LORD says—he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength. (NIV)

III. “Beds” were places for relaxation and meditation, but in times of distress became a further reminder of the people's grief (Psalm 4:4; and 6:6).

   A. Psalm 4:4, In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah. (NIV)

   B. Psalm 6:6, I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears. (NIV)
C. To be able to “sing for joy on their beds” would indicate a state of tranquility.

Psalm 149:6-8, May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron. (NIV)

I. These verses may refer to a ritual celebration of victory at the temple.

Psalm 149:9, to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the LORD. (NIV)

I. “The sentence written against them” may be the sentence kept in store in God's book of records (Isaiah 65:6-7; Daniel 7:10), or that recorded in the Law and the Prophets (Deuteronomy 32:40-43; Isaiah 45:14; and 49:7, 23).

A. Isaiah 65:6-7, "See, it stands written before me: I will not keep silent but will pay back in full; I will pay it back into their laps—both your sins and the sins of your fathers," says the LORD. "Because they burned sacrifices on the mountains and defied me on the hills, I will measure into their laps the full payment for their former deeds." (NIV)

B. Daniel 7:10, A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousands stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. (NIV)
C. Deuteronomy 32:40-43, I lift my hand to heaven and declare: As surely as I live forever, when I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand grasps it in judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and repay those who hate me. I will make my arrows drunk with blood, while my sword devours flesh: the blood of the slain and the captives, the heads of the enemy leaders." Rejoice, O nations, with his people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take vengeance on his enemies and make atonement for his land and people. (NIV)

D. Isaiah 45:14, This is what the LORD says: "The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and those tall Sabeans—they will come over to you and will be yours; they will trudge behind you, coming over to you in chains. They will bow down before you and plead with you, saying, 'Surely God is with you, and there is no other; there is no other god.'" (NIV)

E. Isaiah 49:7 and 23, This is what the LORD says—the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel—to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: "Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you." Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in me will not be disappointed." (NIV)
II. The New Testament sets forth the idea of the final judgment of men because of what is written (Revelation 20:12).

A. Revelation 20:12, And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. (NIV)

Application:

II. The experiences of life can teach us very valuable lessons if we have hearts to listen.

A. It is unpleasant, sometimes distressing, when our plans fail and heartaches come instead of blessings.

1. Troubles may actually be blessings in disguise.

2. If we are faithful to God, times of rejoicing are certain to come.

B. We need to learn to share our rejoicing with others of like precious faith.

1. Sharing will increase fellowship and grant us the courage to rebuild our faith and hope.
Questions

Psalm 149:1-9

(Questions based on NIV text.)

1. “______________________ the _____________________."

2. “____________________ to the _______________________ a ______________________, his _____________________ in the ______________________ of the ______________________. Let _______________ _____________ in their ___________________; let the _________________ of __________________ be in their _____________________. Let them _______________ with ______________________ and make _________________ to him with ______________________ and ______________________. For the ______________________ takes ______________________ in his ____________________; he ______________________________________________ with ______________________. Let the __________________________ in this ______________________ and ______________________ for ______________________ on their _______________________."

3. “May the __________________ described ______________________ be in their __________________ and a _______________________—_________ _____________ in their ______________________, to __________________________ on the ______________________ and ______________________ on the __________________________, to ______________________ their ______________________ with ______________________., their ______________________ with ______________________ of ______________________, to _________________________________.

the ______________________________ ______________
_________________________.”

4. When, by whom and in regard to what historical situation was Psalm 149 written? ______________________________
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____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

5. In what ways are Psalms 148 and 149 related? ____________
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____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

6. Outline Psalm 149. Include verses referenced ____________
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____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
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7. What is the significance of “new song” in verse 1? ________
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____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

8. God’s fresh acts of kindness should occasion _____________
9. How many times in Psalm 149 are saints mentioned? In which verses are saints mentioned? Who are these saints? What is said of these saints? _________________________________  
____________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________  

10. ______________________ was ____________________ a ______________________ by _____________________. Though ____________________ had ____________________ her ____________________ and had been ____________________, when she ____________________ to ____________________ and ____________________ her.  

11. Define metonymy, imprecation, excursus. ______________  
____________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________  

12. Explain the use of the religious dance among ancient Israelites. Of what type dancing did it consist? What were its uses, purposes? _________________________________  
____________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________  

13. Who were designated “the humble”? __________________
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____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

14. “Beds” were ______________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

15. Verses 6-8 may refer to a ___________________________
_____________________ of ________________ at the        ________________ such as (Give Examples.)
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____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

16. What is “the sentence written against them”? Give biblical evidence to support your answer. _________________________
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____________________________________________________
17. The experiences of life can teach us very valuable lessons if we have hearts to listen. What beneficial lessons have you learned from life’s experiences?

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18. What hinders our learning from our life’s experiences?

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19. It is ________________, sometimes ________________, when our ________________ ________________ and ________________ come instead of ________________.

20. Give biblical examples which illustrate that troubles may actually be blessings in disguise.

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