

## Praise the Lord!

We've been looking at Psalm 149 and have found it, I trust, to be very informative for our lives. We've seen that the people of God gather for worship and then scatter for witness to others in the world around us. In my previous article we saw how we're to regularly give words of praise to God. In my final article from this Psalm, we'll look at a word of judgment from God. I'll conclude with some practical applications for our lives.

Our Psalm concludes with verses 7-9 beginning with: "*to execute* vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples." We saw in verse 2 that God's people are to, "rejoice in their King." God is our Warrior King, and this Psalm follows other passages in the Old Testament that shows us that God fights for his people. For example, in Exodus 14:13-14 when the people of God are crossing the Red Sea and Pharaoh's armies are following close at hand we hear these words from Moses to God's people: "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you....." We see this same type of thing in Joshua 5:13-6:6 in the battle of Jericho. As Joshua encounters the man standing before him with a sword in his hand, he's told to "Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." (see also Exodus 3). In Joshua 6:2, God says to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand." The people had to follow what God called them to do, but God guaranteed the ultimate victory.

As we look in verses 7-9, we're reminded that there are battles that all Christians will face, but God, ultimately, guarantees the final victory. God is there "*to execute* vengeance on the nations; *to bind* their kings in chains and their nobles with fetters of iron" and "*to execute* on them the judgment written!" All these acts of *ultimate* judgment by God on his enemies, i.e., the ones who will not turn to him in faith, is a reason for praise from his people. This truth of God as Warrior King who goes before us in our fight with the world, the flesh, and the devil is illustrated many times in scripture. Although we know that God fights for us even now, this Psalm, ultimately, points to a final future day when God will judge all his and our enemies. This Psalm is meant to encourage us in our relationship with our Covenant God in every way. *He loves his people and he fights for us.*

You may be aware that the Psalms were the hymnbook of the Old Testament. I hope and pray that the church that you attend sings the Psalms regularly. Singing is one important way that we're reminded of God's faithfulness, as well as his promises to his people given in Scripture. With that in mind, allow me to make some practical applications from this Psalm.

—*Singing this Psalm* reminds us that we should always be singing a “new song” (vs. 1) of praise to God because he’s continually at work in our lives in the *present* and we should have no doubt about his Covenant promises to us for the *future*.

—*Singing this Psalm* is a reminder that God’s people can have great comfort in the fact that our God is faithful. Even as we lie on our beds in the dark hours of the night (vs. 5) there’s no reason for unhealthy fear and anxiety but rather, there’s reason to “sing for joy.”

—*Singing this Psalm* reminds us that God is with us in every battle we face. God is our warrior king who fights for us (Ex. 14:13-14) We have access to the “two-edged sword.” (vs. 6) The “sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.” (Eph. 6:17) This sword is both an *offensive* and well as a *defensive* weapon. We bring the truths of the word of God to bear in people’s lives and we defend ourselves and live our lives with the instruction given in the word of God. Unlike those who fought under Nehemiah with real swords, in our *day to day* we don’t fight with those kinds of weapons. As Paul notes, “....the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ.” (2 Cor. 10:4-5) We can think of this in terms of raising our children who may say to us, “I want what I want!” This is also true of disagreements with friends and/or all those who don’t really know the Scriptures.

—*Singing this Psalm* should remind us that, although God fights for us *in the present*, this Psalm, ultimately, points to a final *future* day when God will judge all his and our enemies. This Psalm is meant to encourage Christians in our relationship with our Covenant God in every way. He loves us and he is with us to the end. Because of the Lord Jesus Christ, the phrase “Praise the LORD,” which begins and ends this Psalm, is a phrase that should regularly be on our lips and show up in our lives. God delights in our heart worship—worship from the inside out—every day of our lives.

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