

362 “O thou most High”

In many of the Psalms we are blessed with words of guidance and encouragement which often spring from times of hardship for the human writers, notably David. But behind, through and within these words, lies the gracious inspiration of the Holy Spirit, (as we are assured in II Timothy 3.16-17 for example).

In Psalm 9 we are given various strands of God’s ways and truths, of great comfort for us as we view the many uncertainties around us today, including the General Election to be held next week, God willing, within a nation and a world that is increasingly chaotic.

Using the King James version of Psalm 9, we can reflect first on the “thou-s” and “he-s” which refer to the Lord God Himself, starting with the vital truth, “O thou most High” (9.2b). We read of God’s faithfulness, and of His being a true, merciful refuge for the oppressed and for those in times of trouble, as well as for the needy and the poor (vv 4a, 9, 10b, 12b-13, 18). We read of His righteous judgments (vv 4b, 7-8, 12a, 16a, 17), and of His rebuke and destruction of the heathen and wicked (vv 3, 5-6, 19-20).

From these particular verses we are presented with the character and deeds of the living God: He is in charge and, in and through His Son Jesus Christ, He shows immense mercy, to all who will accept His call (egs., Matthew 11.28-30 / John 6.37 / Acts 2.37-39 / Romans 3.21-26; 5.1; 8.1 / II Corinthians 5.17-21 / Galatians 2.20 / ...).

Equally He is not mocked (Galatians 6.7b), and in His holiness and righteousness God judges, and will continue to judge, all within His creation where He is defied through sinfulness in its many guises. This theme of divine judgment is often spoken of by the Lord Jesus Himself (eg., Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43; 25.31-33), and in the Epistles (egs., Romans 5.8-10 / II Timothy 4.1), and culminates in the book of Revelation. We are left in no doubt that Almighty God will have His way with the peoples of this world in His own time and manner. What a comfort this is in these troubling days.

Then we can come on to the “I-s” of the psalm, and by implication therefore, the “we-s” also. Here are our rightful responses to the Lord God who loves and cares for us so much. “I will praise [thee], O Lord, with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvellous works. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name (vv 1-2a) ... And

they that know thy name will put their trust in thee (10a) ... Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings (v 11) ... (Have mercy upon me, O Lord) ... that I may show forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation” (vv 13-14). God’s people are to respond to Almighty God with praising, rejoicing, trusting and proclaiming.

We see here in this psalm, as in so many others also, how the psalmist is both led and then blessed during his prayerful contemplation of the Lord, bringing him through to the place of fresh praise and fresh trust. We find just this same theme in the equally Holy-Spirit-inspired writings of Paul. In Philippians for example we find nine occurrences of the word “rejoice” and six of “joy” in just four chapters, with the great statement, “... for I have learned, in whatever state I am, [therewith] to be content”, as a fitting summary (4.11b). Again, in I Thessalonians, we have five mentions of “joy”, summed up in that letter with, “Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you ...” (5.16-18) near the end of the letter.

Wherever we are living in the world, we Christians are seeing that “things are hotting up” at increasing pace, as we are surely entering into the end-times that are foretold so clearly in God’s word. We have considered in this Reflection just one of the Psalms, Psalm 9, in which we find so much to encourage and guide us. As we well know, and put into practice as and when we are able, we are entrusted with making known the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ, there being “one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (I Timothy 2.5-6).

We will rarely be thanked for this making-known of the Lord Jesus, and may undergo unpleasantness at times as we do this, but so be it – the world has never liked the Gospel and it never will.

But come what may, we have ample reason in Christ to lift our hearts with joy, praise and worship, to the One who is “O thou most High”.

© 2019 Faithful Sheep Ministries – www.fsmins.org