

# Challenge

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

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PRAYER LETTER OF CHALLENGE LITERATURE FELLOWSHIP (AUST.) INC.

## PSALM 49 – The Foolishness of Trusting in Wrong Things

Everybody needs to hear the message of trusting in the wrong things, regardless of what country, people group or position in society you hold, or whether you are rich or poor. What we need is God's wisdom in understanding how to handle the wealth of this world and in particular the wealth that we possess ourselves. The Sons of Korah give us three good reasons as to why we need to be wise in how we handle wealth as individuals and as a nation.

**Firstly, wealth can not keep us from death as we see in verses 5-12.** What we need to understand here first and foremost is that wealth can often give us a false security. Being well off as a nation or as an individual can give us this false sense of security that everything is going well. By the way, sometimes people have this impression that in a country like Australia they are not wealthy, but you need to realise that having a meal once a day, a roof over your head and \$5 in your pocket puts you in the top 2% of the world. We need to understand that we live in a wealthy country and with that can come the danger of feeling very secure.

We can also feel that we are not accountable. As we have the things we need we can become self sufficient and thus we don't feel we need to be answerable to anyone. Also we see that wealth can bring corruption. We see this so often in leadership, particularly in governments, where monies are misappropriated etc. Then secondly we need to recognise that wealth cannot purchase immortality. Look at verse 8 where the Psalmist says *the redemption of their souls is costly and it shall cease forever*. What one has to see here is that our souls have been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus and not by the acquisition of wealth. We need to see that our redemption is not achieved, but received by faith. We need to recognise that redemption is not purchased individually or corporately. An example of this is where some religions indicate we can offer up a sum of money for the redemption of a family member's soul. We need to recognise that genuine redemption is costly because Jesus gave His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45) and that He did it willingly, and that He did it free of charge and that He did it for the joy that was set before Him.

We also need to see that redemption is the only way to deal with the tyranny of death and sin. True spiritual wealth cannot be transferred as we see in verses 10-11 where it says *For he sees wise men die, likewise the foolish and senseless person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inner thought is that their houses will last forever, their dwelling places to all generations*. The idea of course here is of the foolish person who has not trusted in the Lord; who thinks that their wealth will in some way buy them the redemption of their family line. Sadly for many, what they discover is that their family line quickly fritters away the wealth that has taken a person's life time to acquire. What we need to see then is that wealth does not remain. Often wealth can be here one moment and gone the next as we see with the stock market in recent days.

**Secondly, we need to see that wealth can not determine our destiny, verses 13-15.** What we have to see here is that some people think that wealth is something that will acquire them a certain position in eternity. The Psalmist indicates that such thinking is foolish. We read in Psalm 14:1 and also Psalm 53:1 where it says *the fool has said in his heart, there is no God*. When we trust in wealth and the accruing of things then in essence we are saying there is no God. Ultimately the things we have and all our wealth becomes our god. The Psalmist here and elsewhere throughout the Psalms is saying that indeed a person who thinks like this is very foolish indeed.

What the Psalmist then goes on to say is that people who trust in their wealth have a real reason to fear death. The upright will find they can stand with confidence before the throne of Grace but those who have trusted in their wealth will be consumed in their death. The problem is they fail to understand that only God can determine the destiny of a soul so that we are acceptable in His sight. We experience the reality of this by faith in the finished work of Calvary

**Thirdly, wealth does not dictate our desires in verses 16-20.** The sad thing for those of us who are not seen as wealthy, for example having large sums of money or vast properties and the like, is that we can be marked by a spirit of coveting. What that means is we can become envious of the people that have wealth, and maybe feel that somehow or other we are less spiritual because we don't. We do need to keep a right perspective on what wealth really is. Job mentioned in chapter 1 and verse 21 of his book that *he came into the world with nothing and that he would leave with nothing*. If we think that what we have defines us as a person then we are sadly lacking in our understanding of what is really important in this life. Now that is not to say we don't need money, home, vehicle or food but what we are saying is that these things are only a means to an end and not an end in itself. Wealth is the temporary, here today and gone tomorrow; while salvation is eternal. We are talking about forever here, and once we step over the line and genuinely commit our lives to Christ then we are eternally in the hands of the living God.

(Please turn over)

One last point worth thinking about is that for those who know and love the Lord, wealth can be invested wisely for eternity. People can use their wealth wisely with investments so they can give to their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria or the outer parts of the world. Wealth can be invested so that, "tho they die yet shall they live", their monies can be longer used to expand the Kingdom of God.

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge

## Praise:

1. Praise the Lord for a very encouraging response to the promotion trip to the United States. We are very encouraged indeed with a recent print run of just under 50,000 papers for North America.
2. Praise the Lord for the wonderfully encouraging emails that are coming out of Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and South Africa with the response to the distribution of Challenge. Even in the most difficult circumstances in Zimbabwe we are seeing God do some very special things in the church and it is great that Challenge can be a part of that.
3. We do praise God for the gifts that have come in for the work and we are enormously grateful for the faithfulness of those who give even in these difficult times.
4. We do praise the Lord for our Christian farmers who continue to give to the work of Challenge for our overseas projects.
5. Praise God for our volunteers who continue to do a marvellous job in helping us distribute the paper.
6. We also praise God for our headquarters church in Lebanon Ohio in the United States where they have a great team of volunteers doing an outstanding job of wrapping and distributing the paper there.
7. We praise God for all of our partner organisations around the world who we are working with to make a difference in sowing the seed of the gospel via the printed page.

## Prayer:

1. Please continue to prayer for the various areas of ministry we are involved in around the world. We need to be in prayer for Southern and Central Africa as finances are always scarce in these areas. Please pray for the Lord's ongoing provision not only for the finances to sustain what we are doing but to indeed expand it.
2. Kenya is another country where we have seen violence in recent days and things are still not what you would call back to normal. There is a great need for finances to continue to supply bibles and bicycles and also a couple of moped-type bikes to cope with long distance travel.
3. Please pray also for South America where we are continuing to put out a Spanish edition for Argentina and Uruguay. We would value your encouragement in this area as we desperately need funds to complete the commitment that we have for another three editions for the year.
4. We would value prayer also for upcoming prospects into India and the city of Hyderabad where we are looking to put out a Hindi/English edition of the paper starting in March/April of next year.
5. Please pray for investigations being done to start an Arabic edition for the Egypt later on in the year.
6. Please continue to pray for the Challenge team as we put together each edition of the newspaper. It is so important that we have God's direction with each story.

Send your testimony to **Challenge** – Your conversion to Jesus Christ is a miracle, and is a wonderful means of witnessing to a lost world – Ring or write to Challenge for a testimony outline sheet.

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