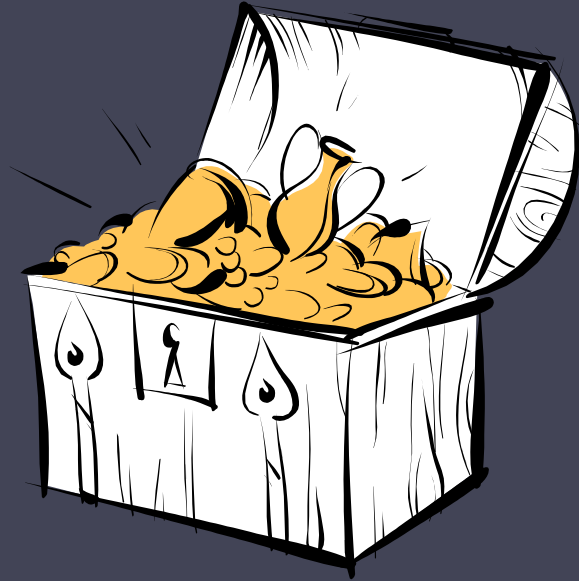


# PSALM 49

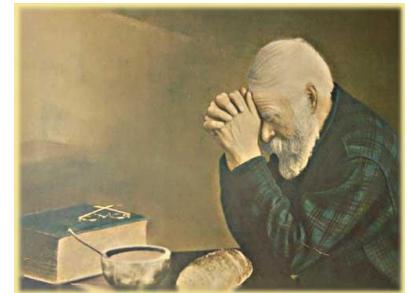


## The High Cost of Redemption

# Introducing Psalm 49

- **Psalms 47–49 have some common themes:**
  - **God as guide (48:14); Death as shepherd (49:14).**
  - **Addressed to all peoples (47:1; 48:10; 49:1).**
- **Psalms 49 and 73 share many similarities.**
- **Wisdom characteristics of Psalm 49 are common to Ecclesiastes and Proverbs.**

# Praying Psalm 49



- **Lord, help me to meditate on Your Word with understanding. (v. 3)**
- **Teach me not to fear the “days of adversity.” (v. 5)**
- **Father, thank You for the priceless ransom Christ paid for my soul. (vv. 8,9)**
- **Do not let me focus more on my house than on You, O God. (v. 11)**

# Understanding Psalm 49

- I. The Psalmist's Call (vv. 1–4)**
- II. The Psalmist's Query (vv. 5–12)**
- III. The Psalmist's Consolation (vv. 13–20)**



# Understanding Psalm 49

**v. 1** “the world”: do mundo

- **The Hebrew word *ḥeled* indicates the temporary world of time.**
- **People exist in a transitory world.**



# Understanding Psalm 49

**v. 2** “**low and high [baixos como altos] .  
.. Rich and poor [ricos como pobres]**”

- **These two merisms refer to all people by mentioning two extreme categories of people.**
- **Compare “young and old” and “ladies and gentlemen.”**

# Understanding Psalm 49

**vv. 3, 20** “understanding  
[entendimento] . . .

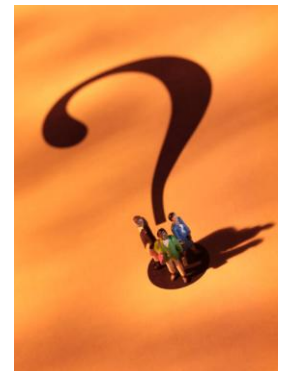
**without understanding [não tem  
entendimento]”**

- **An inclusio highlighting the condition of fallen man in contrast to the wisdom which God offers by revelation.**

# Understanding Psalm 49

**v. 4** “**a proverb** [uma parábola] . . . **my riddle** [o meu enigma]”

- **Proverb:** “Todavia o homem que está em honra não permanece; antes é como os animais, que perecem” (**the refrain in vv. 12 and 20**).
- **Riddle #1:** What can a man give in exchange for his own soul?
  - **Answer: Verses 6–9.**





## Matthew 16:26

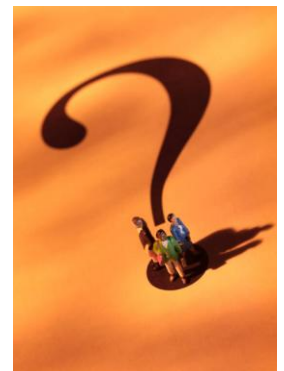
“For what will it profit a man  
if he gains the whole world  
and forfeits his soul?

Or what will a man give  
in exchange for his soul?”

# Understanding Psalm 49

**v. 4** “**a proverb** [uma parábola] . . . **my riddle** [o meu enigma]”

- **Proverb:** “Todavia o homem que está em honra não permanece; antes é como os animais, que perecem” (**the refrain in vv. 12 and 20**).
- **Riddle #2:** What is the great equalizer between rich and poor?
  - **Answer: Verse 10.**



# Understanding Psalm 49

**v. 4** “**a proverb [uma parábola] . . . my riddle [o meu enigma]**”

- **The riddle might be “the contradiction encountered when those who are wicked enjoy ease and prosperity while the righteous suffer oppression and want.”**

**— Gerald H. Wilson**

# Understanding Psalm 49

**vv. 5, 16** “**Why should I fear** [Por que temerei eu] . . . **Do not be afraid** [Näo temas]”

- **Another inclusio providing a rhetorical question and the understood answer.**



# Understanding Psalm 49

**v. 8** “the redemption of his soul is costly”: Pois a redenção da sua alma é caríssima

- **Compare 1 Peter 1:18–19.**



# 1 Peter 1

- 18** Sabendo que não foi com coisas corruptíveis, como prata ou ouro, que fostes resgatados da vossa vã maneira de viver que por tradição recebestes dos vossos pais,
- 19** Mas com o precioso sangue de Cristo, como de um cordeiro imaculado e incontaminado,

# Understanding Psalm 49

**v. 9** “That he should not undergo decay”: e não veja corrupção

- Literally, “That he should not see the pit.”
- Note the parallelism. The second line speaks of death.
- Compare Psalms 16:10; 30:3, 9.

# Understanding Psalm 49

## **vv. 9, 14** Eternal Life?

- **“That he should live on eternally”**: Para que viva para sempre (v. 9) and **“And the upright shall rule over them in the morning”**: e os retos terão domínio sobre eles na manhã (v. 14).



# Understanding Psalm 49

## **vv. 9, 14** Eternal Life?

- **“It is doubtful that the poet believes in an afterlife with God. The psalm is too early in the development of Israel’s thought to formulate such a belief.”**

**— Konrad Schaefer**

# Understanding Psalm 49

## **vv. 9, 14** Eternal Life?

- **“Most moderns, even A. B. Davidson and Salmond, minimise the Eschatology of the ancient Hebrews, so as to reduce it much below the level of that of the ancient neighbouring nations.”**

**— Charles Augustus Briggs and  
Emilie Grace Briggs**

# Understanding Psalm 49

## **vv. 12, 20** Refrain

- **The differing portions (“will not endure” [não permanece] and “yet without understanding” [e não tem entendimento]) involve assonance (similarity of sound: *bal yālîn* and *w<sup>e</sup>lō’ yābîn*).**

# Understanding Psalm 49

## **v. 12, 20** Refrain

- **The first refrain refers to the transitory nature of man and his wealth or power. Literally, “does not spend the night.”**

# Understanding Psalm 49

## **v. 12, 20** Refrain

- **“It suggests that in view of death a person’s position in life is not as secure even as a traveler who turns into an inn for the evening. In our case, life is so short that we do not even make it to the morning.”**  
— **James Montgomery Boice**

# Understanding Psalm 49

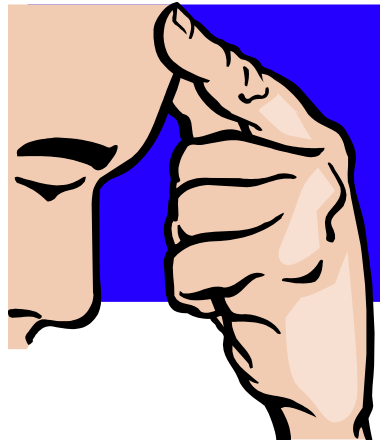
## **vv. 12, 20** Refrain

- **The second refrain refers to the ultimate distinction not erased by death: spiritual understanding (= fear of Yahweh).**

# Understanding Psalm 49

**v. 13, 15 (Selá.)**

- *What are the concepts upon which the reader is to meditate?*



# Understanding Psalm 49



**v. 14** “Death shall be their shepherd”: a  
morte se alimentará deles

- NIV’s “death will feed on them” is based upon the verb’s ambiguity. It can mean “shepherd” or “graze.”
- The picture is a stark contrast to Ps 23.
- “Those who thought they needed no divine guide end up with a shepherd whose name is Death, who herds them into Sheol to dwell forever” — Schaefer



# Understanding Psalm 49

**v. 15** “**But God**”: Mas Deus

- **This is the hope of the psalmist.**
- **Not only will God “redeem” [remirá] him, God will “receive” [receberá] him.**
- **Compare Genesis 5:24 and 2 Kings 2:11 (both use the same Hebrew verb).**

# Preaching/Teaching Psalm 49

- No man can save himself from death and hell.
- Wealth is not the answer to life's greatest riddles.