

God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me.

(PSALM 49:15)

## STRUCTURE

**v. 1-4** Introduction: I will speak wisdom.

**v. 5-9** Why should I fear? Man cannot save or condemn.

**v. 10-14** Man is destined for death.

**v. 15-20** God will deliver me from death!

## AT A GLANCE

### PART OF A WHOLE

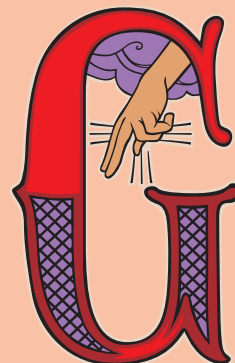
This psalm brings the first Sons of Korah collection (PSALMS 42-49) to an end with a reflection on man's transitory nature and inability to save.

### "RANSOM"

The concept of ransom is incredibly important in both the Old and New Testaments, with its roots in the Exodus and its culmination at the cross.

### "SHEOL"

Found throughout the Old Testament, this term describes the prison-house of the dead, a place from which the faithful pray for release.



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**All the “wisdom” psalms** take their cue from Psalm 1’s description of the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. Psalm 49 is no exception. In fact, the psalmist himself calls his composition a psalm of wisdom (v.3). The theme throughout is the fleeting nature of man. Man cannot save. Man cannot be trusted. Man will fade away. This has the potential to be a very dark psalm, yet these gloomy sentiments are simply a backdrop against which the psalmist declares the greater works of the Lord. Man cannot save, but God can! “Why should I fear in days of trouble?” (v.5), the psalmist asks when describing the fate of those who appear to be blessed in this world. Like Job, the psalmist points out while men may prosper in this world, they can bring none of their wealth with them; apart from faith in God, they are “like the beasts that perish” (v.20). What matters is trust in the Lord, who gives far more than just material goods. Psalm 49 contains one of the psalter’s clear references to life beyond death: “Surely God will redeem my soul from the hand of Sheol, for he will receive me” (v.15).



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## USE IN THE CHURCH

**Antiphon:** v. 1b

**In the Daily Office:** Tuesdays at Matins

**At the Divine Service:**

**Three-Year:**  
Introit for Proper 13C (ant: v. 1–2)



## SPIRITUAL CARE

- During times of trouble.
- To answer unbelievers.
- Against covetousness.
- For humility.
- For civic leaders.



## PSALM PRAYER

**PSALM**  
**49**

O Lord, fill our mouths with Your wisdom, that remembering that You were made man and have ransomed us from the power of the grave, we may at last behold Your face in light; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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