

### Introduction

- Batman trying to save Catwoman from dying, holding on to treasure
  - Common trope: Indiana Jones, The Mummy, Aladdin (Abu), Sharknado 2
- Irony: wealth is what we turn to to avoid death
  - Food, warmth, clothes, shelter, protection...all to avoid death

### A Wisdom Psalm

**Psalm 49** For the choir director. A psalm of the sons of Korah.

<sup>1</sup>Hear this, all you peoples; listen, all who inhabit the world, <sup>2</sup>both low and high, rich and poor together. <sup>3</sup>My mouth speaks wisdom; my heart's meditation brings understanding. <sup>4</sup>I turn my ear to a proverb; I explain my riddle with a lyre.

- Listen to me...heart's meditation...understanding...riddle...proverb | WISDOM
- More on "the sons of Korah" in a minute

### Where to Put Your Trust

<sup>5</sup>Why should I fear in times of trouble? The iniquity of my foes surrounds me. <sup>6</sup>They trust in their wealth and boast of their abundant riches. <sup>7</sup>Yet these cannot redeem a person or pay his ransom to God—<sup>8</sup>since the price of redeeming him is too costly, one should forever stop trying—<sup>9</sup>so that he may live forever and not see the Pit.

- Ransom (in our minds) is like being kidnapped and the bad guys get paid
- Who owns us? If you really owned yourself, then you would live forever
  - God created us, we cut ourselves off from the tree of life
  - Because of that, death comes to every person
  - How much money could you pay to live forever?
  - The richest can afford homes, clothes, food, doctors...and still 100% die

### The Same Fate for All

<sup>10</sup>For one can see that the wise die; the foolish and stupid also pass away.

- Wise people and stupid people both die
- Wisdom can help you die less soon, but even that's not a guarantee

Then they leave their wealth to others. <sup>11</sup>Their graves are their permanent homes, their dwellings from generation to generation, though they have named estates after themselves.

- Build a house, a ranch, put your name on it...but your home is still in the grave

<sup>12</sup>But despite his assets, mankind will not last; he is like the animals that perish. <sup>13</sup>This is the way of those who are arrogant, and of their followers, who approve of their words. *Selah*

- Comparison to animals, our lives won't last forever | Nihilism?

## The Power of Sheol

<sup>14</sup> Like sheep they are headed for Sheol; Death will shepherd them. The upright will rule over them in the morning, and their form will waste away in Sheol, far from their lofty abode. <sup>15</sup> But God will redeem me from the power of Sheol, for he will take me. *Selah*

## Sheol | 65 times in the OT

- The realm of the dead | Used interchangeably with “the grave”
- Where everyone ends up | Jacob wants to join Joseph when he was “dead” in Sheol
- Shadowy and unescapable | disembodied but conscious
- Comfort vs. sorrow | “rested with fathers” vs “death will shepherd them”

## The Sons of Korah

- Korah a prominent leader | Numbers 16:1-2
  - Likely means wealthy, early rabbinic tradition
- Incites a rebellion against Moses | 16:2-3
  - Later in OT we learn that the family helped out in tabernacle/temple worship
  - Some sort of a power struggle, a coup for leadership of gathered worship
- A priestly showdown | 16:4-30
  - Both parties bring firepan (censer) for incense
  - God says “tell the others to move away from Korah and company”

## The Lord’s Vindication

**Numbers 16** <sup>31</sup> Just as he finished speaking all these words, the ground beneath them split open. <sup>32</sup> The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, all Korah’s people, and all their possessions. <sup>33</sup> They went down alive into Sheol with all that belonged to them. The earth closed over them, and they vanished from the assembly.

## A Descendant’s Reflection

**Psalms 49** <sup>15</sup> But God will redeem me from the power of Sheol, for he will take me. <sup>16</sup> Do not be afraid when a person gets rich, when the wealth of his house increases. <sup>17</sup> For when he dies, he will take nothing at all; his wealth will not follow him down.

- Sure puts this psalm in perspective.

## The Summary at Hand

<sup>18</sup> Though he blesses himself during his lifetime—and you are acclaimed when you do well for yourself—<sup>19</sup> he will go to the generation of his ancestors; they will never see the light. <sup>20</sup> Mankind, with his assets but without understanding, is like the animals that perish.

- He said something similar a few verses ago?

<sup>12</sup> But despite his assets, mankind will not last; he is like the animals that perish.

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<sup>15</sup> But God will redeem me from the power of Sheol, for he will take me.

### **Money is a helpful tool but a terrible god**

- Nothing wrong with possessions, even a sign of God's favor. HOWEVER...it easily goes bad
- **Matthew 6** <sup>24</sup> No one can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.
- Korah worshiped money and the power his money could buy, but it led to his destruction
- Korah's sons exhort us to abandon money as the source of our hope or salvation

### **The less we fear death, the less power money holds**

- **Luke 18** <sup>24</sup> Seeing that he became sad, Jesus said, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." <sup>26</sup> Those who heard this asked, "Then who can be saved?" <sup>27</sup> He replied, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."
  - This is *eternal life* stuff
- Reminder: all of us are "the rich" compared to world history and even today's population
  - Cell phone, hot water heater, grocery store | Senegalese entrepreneur
- We need something to break the power of death, the power of that fear
  - NOTE: other types of "death" | reputation, failure,

### **The gospel is a promise of an imperishable inheritance**

- We fear death, so we hoard and worship earthly possessions
- But to do so is to accrue a great spiritual debt, because this is sin
- Jesus came to pay the price for our sin, and to rise from the dead to free us!
- **Ephesians 1** <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup> that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding... <sup>11</sup> In him we have also received an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will, <sup>12</sup> so that we who had already put our hope in Christ might bring praise to his glory.

### **Putting Money In Its Place**

1. Tithe | Not a NT "law" per se, even OT tithing is relatively complicated
  - a. Point: give God his share first, provide for the work of the ministry
  - b. A tenth is a great and easy-to-remember guideline
2. Share | Benevolence, safety nets < giving directly to others
3. Margin | Lev 19 - don't glean right up to the edge
4. Save | Future reward is one thing that separates us from the animals (Ps 49.20)
5. Simplify | Don't gather possessions, don't hoard, live simple lives

**\*Pray over our wallets / purses**

## Scripture Reading

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