

PSALM 109

Vengeance Invoked upon Adversaries.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. From Roy H. Enoch (5-22-96).
- B. To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.
- C. Coffman titles this psalm: "The Most Terrible Psalm in the Whole Psalter." He gives the reason: "...the bitter imprecations of this psalm appear to us as wholly antithetical to the true spirit of Christianity." He compares it to the "same bitter spirit that appeared in the lives of two of the blessed apostles, namely, 'The Sons of Thunder'" who were James and John the sons of Zebedee (Lk. 9:52-56). But we are not able to judge the hearts and motives of others, and realize that our conclusions should be tentative. We believe that David's compiling of this psalm, as well as others, was by inspiration. They give the will of God rather than the anger or bitterness of men. It seems unjust to compare David's psalm with a suggestion that Jesus condemns. I am not surprised that liberal theologians consider this "further from the spirit of Christianity than anything else in the whole Psalter" (W.E. Addis), but I am surprised that Coffman agrees with them. God's prophets often declare His judgment on people and nations, but when writing by inspiration, it is not their own opinions.
- D. This psalm seems to have three natural divisions:
 - I. Description of David's Enemies (109:1-5).
 - II. His Prayer for God to Reward Them with Evil (109:6-20).
 - III. A Prayer for His Own Deliverance, with Thanksgiving (109:21-31).

THE TEXT.

- 109:1** O God of my praise,
Do not be silent!
- 2** For they have opened the wicked and deceitful mouth against me;
They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.
- 3** They have also surrounded me with words of hatred,
And fought against me without cause.
- 4** In return for my love they act as my accusers;
But I am *in* prayer.
- 5** Thus they have repaid me evil for good
And hatred for my love.
- 6** Appoint a wicked man over him,
And let an accuser stand at his right hand.
- 7** When he is judged, let him come forth guilty,
And let his prayer become sin.
- 8** Let his days be few;
Let another take his office.
- 9** Let his children be fatherless
And his wife a widow.
- 10** Let his children wander about and beg;
And let them seek *sustenance* far from their ruined homes.
- 11** Let the creditor seize all that he has,
And let strangers plunder the product of his labor.
- 12** Let there be none to extend lovingkindness to him,
Nor any to be gracious to his fatherless children.
- 13** Let his posterity be cut off;
In a following generation let their name be blotted out.
- 14** Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD,
And do not let the sin of his mother be blotted out.
- 15** Let them be before the LORD continually,
That He may cut off their memory from the earth;
- 16** Because he did not remember to show lovingkindness,

But persecuted the afflicted and needy man,
 And the despondent in heart, to put *them* to death.

17 He also loved cursing, so it came to him;
 And he did not delight in blessing, so it was far from him.

18 But he clothed himself with cursing as with his garment,
 And it entered into his body like water
 And like oil into his bones.

19 Let it be to him as a garment with which he covers himself,
 And for a belt with which he constantly girds himself.

20 Let this be the reward of my accusers from the LORD,
 And of those who speak evil against my soul.

21 But You, O GOD, the Lord, deal *kindly* with me for Your name's sake;
 Because Your lovingkindness is good, deliver me;

22 For I am afflicted and needy,
 And my heart is wounded within me.

23 I am passing like a shadow when it lengthens;
 I am shaken off like the locust.

24 My knees are weak from fasting,
 And my flesh has grown lean, without fatness.

25 I also have become a reproach to them;
 When they see me, they wag their head.

26 Help me, O LORD my God;
 Save me according to Your lovingkindness.

27 And let them know that this is Your hand;
 You, LORD, have done it.

28 Let them curse, but You bless;
 When they arise, they shall be ashamed,
 But Your servant shall be glad.

29 Let my accusers be clothed with dishonor,
 And let them cover themselves with their own shame as with a robe.

30 With my mouth I will give thanks abundantly to the LORD;
 And in the midst of many I will praise Him.

31 For He stands at the right hand of the needy,
 To save him from those who judge his soul.

COMMENTS.

A. Description of David's Enemies (109:1-5).

[v1-5] David gives three characteristics of his enemies:

1. They were deceitful liars (109:2).
2. They were wicked and hate him without cause (109:2,3).
3. They continued to fight against him returning hatred for his love (109:4,5).

B. A Prayer for God to Reward Them with Evil (109:6-20).

[v6] "Set a wicked man over him and let an accuser stand at his right hand." This would be justice for those described in verses 1-5.

[v7] "...let him be found guilty..." This also is appropriate for those who were returning evil for good. If one considers this to be "un-Christian" he should consider the inspired inscription of the request of the redeemed in Rev. 6:9-11. How different is the request of those who are redeemed in Christ and the prayer of David in this psalm for those of similar character?

[v8] "Let his days be few, and let another take his office" (Ac. 1:20). See also Psa. 69:25, these petitions are improper and "un-Christian" why does the inspired apostle quote them and apply them to Judas? Was Peter being "un-Christian?"

[v7-10] "...let his prayer become sin.... his children be fatherless... his wife a widow... his children continually be vagabonds, and beg..." David is describing the consequences of sin on family as well as the sinner. The most difficult part of this prayer to understand is the petition of hardship on the family of the sinner. I do not have a complete explanation for some of these things but neither will I

accuse an inspired writer of being “un-Christian.” In the OT God often dealt with nations with the view of what they would do if not destroyed. The future is the same with Him as the past and present. In no sense are we justified in condemning what He decrees by His inspired prophets just because we do not understand.

[v11-13] “Let the creditor seize all that he has, and let strangers plunder his labor...” These are some of the agents that God uses in punishing sinners.

[v14-20] “Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.... as he loved cursing, so let it come to him.” It is natural for children to live as their parents, so it is natural for them to receive the same punishment. We do have in 109:17, another description of the kind of people that David is writing about.

[v18] “He clothed himself with cursing as with his garment, so let it enter his body like water, and like oil into his bones.” This further emphasizes the extent of his wickedness.

C. A Prayer for His Own Deliverance with Thanksgiving (109:21-31).

David’s prayer now becomes one of confidence that God will do what is just and he expresses confidence that God will lift him up. This also seems to indicate that David was describing God’s righteousness and was an inspired prayer of faith in God’s justice.

[v21-24] “...I am poor and needy... my heart is wounded... my knees are weak... my flesh is feeble...” We do not know whether David was suffering these physical conditions or whether they are symbolic of the mental suffering that he had from the ridicule and persecution of the wicked.

[v25] “I have become a reproach to them; when they look at me, they shake their heads.” This is a description of the ridicule that Jesus suffered on the cross.

[v26,27] “Help me... save me... that they may know that this is Your hand...” Even in the punishment that David is praying for, is to be for the instruction of the wicked.

[v28,29] “Let them curse, but You bless... let my accusers be clothed with shame.” David seems to be asking God to punish them according to their deeds and to bless him as they cursed him.

[v30,31] “I will greatly praise the Lord...for He shall save him from those who condemn him.” David’s faith in God is not shaken by his hardships, and neither should ours be.