

Psalm 109

David's Imprecations ¹ Against His Adversaries

(For the choir director. A Psalm of David.)

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A1 COMPLAINT TO ELOHIM BECAUSE OF THE ADVERSARIES 109:1-5

B1 An Appeal to Elohim for Audience 109:1

C1 {1} O God of my praise,

C2 Do not be silent!

B2 A Recitation of the Evils of the Adversaries 109:2-5

C1 Deceitful Speech 109:2

D1 {2} For they have opened the wicked and deceitful mouth against me;

D2 They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.

C2 Hateful Combat 109:3

D1 Hateful speech: {3} They have also surrounded me with words of hatred,

D2 Baseless combat: And fought against me without cause.

C3 Repaying Good with Evil 109:4-5

D1 Repaying love with accusation: {4} In return for my love they act as my accusers;

D2 His continual prayer: But I am *in* prayer.

¹ Psalm 109 is one of the "Imprecatory Psalms". An imprecatory psalm calls down curses or evil upon the psalmist's enemies, also seen as God's enemies. There follows a brief discussion, taken from Allen P. Ross, "Theology of the Psalms", *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

The psalmists did not hesitate to avow their loyalty to God and His covenant. In their zeal to champion righteousness, their words frequently contain imprecations or curses. They prayed that God would break the arms of the wicked (Ps. 10:15), smash their teeth (58:6), and turn His wrath on them (69:22-28). It must be remembered that the psalmists were filled with zeal for God's theocracy. Thus these expressions were not indications of personal vendetta. The psalmists, in fact, protested that their kindness to such people had been betrayed by treachery (109:4-5). Their prayers represent their longing that God's cause be vindicated on earth, that sin would be judged—which God would do eventually.

Of course the New Testament believer has a different prayer life because of his understanding of the full revelation of God. Yet to pray for God's will to be done or for Christ to come quickly, is also to pray for the vindication of the righteous and the judgment of the wicked. See the APPENDIX, below.

D3 Repaying evil for good: {5} Thus they have repaid me evil for good

D4 Repaying hatred for love: And hatred for my love.

A2 CALL TO YAHWEH FOR PUNISHMENT OF THE ADVERSARY 109:6-15

B1 Defeating Him in a Divine Court of Law 109:6-7

C1 Appointing an Evil Prosecuting Attorney 109:6

D1 {6} Appoint a wicked man over him,

D2 And let an accuser stand at his right hand.

C2 Ensuring His Guilt 109:7

D1 His Guilty Sentence: {7} When he is judged, let him come forth guilty,

D2 His Abominable Prayer: And let his prayer become sin.

B2 Prematurely Taking His Life 109:8-11

C1 Cutting Short His Life's Work 109:8

D1 {8} Let his days be few;

D2 Let another take his office.

C2 Disrupting His Family 109:9

D1 Resulting in orphans: {9} Let his children be fatherless

D2 Resulting in widowhood: And his wife a widow.

D3 Resulting in poverty 109:10

E1 Begging children: {10} Let his children wander about and beg;

E2 Wandering children: And let them seek *sustenance* far from their ruined homes.

C3 Seizing His Property 109:11

D1 Foreclosure: {11} Let the creditor seize all that he has,

D2 Windfall profits for others: And let strangers plunder the product of his labor.

B3 Withholding All Mercy to His Family Line 109:12-15

C1 Preventing Loyal Love and Graciousness 109:12

D1 Towards him: *{12}* Let there be none to extend lovingkindness to him,

D2 Toward his children: Nor any to be gracious to his fatherless children.

C2 Cutting Off His Family Line 109:13

D1 Killing his posterity: *{13}* Let his posterity be cut off;

D2 Erasing their family name: In a following generation let their name be blotted out.

C3 Withholding Forgiveness 109:14-15

D1 Not forgiving his fathers: *{14}* Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD,

D2 Not forgiving his mother: And do not let the sin of his mother be blotted out.

D3 Perpetual remembrance of their sins in heaven: *{15}* Let them be before the LORD continually,

D4 Cessation of memory of family existence on earth: That He may cut off their memory from the earth;

A3 CATALOGUE OF THE SINS OF THE ADVERSARY 109:16-20

B1 His Failure to Exhibit Loyal Love: *{16}* Because he did not remember to show lovingkindness, 109:16a

B2 His Persecution of the Afflicted 109:16b

C1 Persecuting the Afflicted: But persecuted the afflicted and needy man,

C2 Murdering the Depressed: And the despondent in heart, to put *them* to death.

B3 His Love of Cursing, not Blessing 109:17-18

C1 His Love of Cursing, Reciprocated: *{17}* He also loved cursing, so it came to him;

C2 His Disaffection toward Blessing, Withheld: And he did not delight in blessing, so it was far from him.

C3 His Utter Dedication to Cursing: {18} But he clothed himself with cursing as with his garment,

C4 His Absorption of Cursing

D1 And it entered into his body like water

D2 And like oil into his bones.

B4 David's Plea for Payback Time 109:19-20

C1 For the Adversary 109:19

D1 {19} Let it be to him as a garment with which he covers himself,

D2 And for a belt with which he constantly girds himself.

C2 For David's Accusers from Yahweh 109:20

D1 {20} Let this be the reward of my accusers from the LORD,

D2 And of those who speak evil against my soul.

A4 PLEA FOR DELIVERANCE AND RETRIBUTION 109:21-29

B1 Plea to Yahweh Adonai for Deliverance Because of His Loyal Love and David's Great Need 109:21-25

C1 The Plea for Deliverance 109:21

D1 For His name's sake: {21} But You, O GOD, the Lord, deal *kindly* with me for Your name's sake;

D2 Because of His goodness: Because Your lovingkindness is good, deliver me;

C2 The Need for Deliverance 109:22-25

D1 His psychological frailty 109:22

E1 Afflicted: {22} For I am afflicted and needy,

E2 Wounded heart: And my heart is wounded within me.

D2 His ebbing life 109:23

E1 Passing away: {23} I am passing like a shadow when it lengthens;

E2 Discarded: I am shaken off like the locust.

- D3 His physical frailty 109:24
 - E1 Weakness: {24} My knees are weak from fasting,
 - E2 Weight loss: And my flesh has grown lean, without fatness.
- D4 His diminished standing 109:25
 - E1 Reproached by others: {25} I also have become a reproach to them;
 - E2 An object of serious doubt: When they see me, they wag their head.

B2 Plea for Salvation and Retribution 109:26-29

- C1 Plea for His Own Salvation 109:26
 - D1 For help: {26} Help me, O LORD my God;
 - D2 For salvation: Save me according to Your lovingkindness.
- C2 Plea for Retribution upon His Adversaries 109:27-29
 - D1 Their knowledge of Yahweh's actions 109:27
 - E1 {27} And let them know that this is Your hand;
 - E2 You, LORD, have done it.
 - D2 Thwarting of their cursing by Yahweh's blessing 109:28a
 - E1 Countermand their curses: {28} Let them curse,
 - E2 With Divine blessing: but You bless;
 - D3 Contrasting reactions 109:28b
 - E1 Shame: When they arise, they shall be ashamed,
 - E2 Joy: But Your servant shall be glad.
 - D4 Dishonor and shame 109:29
 - E1 Dishonor: {29} Let my accusers be clothed with dishonor,
 - E2 Shame: And let them cover themselves with their own shame as with a robe.

A5 VOW OF PRAISE 109:30-31

B1 Vow of Praise 109:30

C1 Vocal, Abundant Thanks: *{30}* With my mouth I will give thanks abundantly to the LORD;

C2 Public Praise: And in the midst of many I will praise Him.

B2 Cause for Praise 109:31

C1 *{31}* For He stands at the right hand of the needy,

C2 To save him from those who judge his soul.

Expanded Analysis of Psalm 109

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APPENDIX: Can we pray the prayers of Psalm 109 today?

I have been asked the question as to whether we can pray the prayers of Psalm 109, specifically, Psalm 109:8 in regard to political adversaries today. Here is my response. Here is the petition in question: "Let his days be few; let another take his office" (Psa. 109:8).

Psalm 109 is an imprecatory psalm, one in which the author calls down curses upon his enemies. This particular request is really asking that the adversary's life be prematurely terminated.

I know that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23; 33:11). Personally, I do not feel justified in asking that God take an elected official's life. I am convinced from reading the book of Daniel that God removes kings (and presidents) from office and that he installs them in office (Daniel 2:21).

Governments and the men who run them are the servants of God, established by Him to do His work on the earth. For this reason they (including the President, the Senate Majority Leader, and the Speaker of the House) deserve obedience, the payment of taxes, and honor (Romans 13:1-7). They also deserve our prayer (1 Timothy 2:1-4) so that they maintain an orderly and law-abiding country, creating an atmosphere that is most suitable for people to become saved and to know the truth.

I think those are our first responsibilities.

Having said that, I believe we can pray that God will have mercy upon our country and prevent our leaders (including the afore-mentioned) from damaging and slowly destroying this country and its citizens.

Even in that prayer, however, I have to acknowledge that God has a master plan for our world, which is to let it go through a time of great trouble, called the Tribulation. In Revelation 13 we find a horrible, but accurate description of that world government. It will be anti-God, anti-Christ, totalitarian, controlling, intrusive, and global in scope. People will be forced to worship the state religion on penalty of death, and they will be forced to buy into the government's monitoring and tracking system in order to engage in any kind of commerce. It will be the worst government man has ever devised, and yet the leaders will think it is the best government man has ever devised.

Knowing that time is creeping ever closer, it does not surprise me that we see vestiges or premonitions of that government elsewhere in the world and even work insidiously in our own country.

So when I pray against the machinations of the "Progressives," I realize that God in His sovereignty may not see fit to respond positively to my prayer because of His time-table and His master plan.

I cannot become bitter or disrespectful, but I believe I must pray intelligently and sensitively that God will do good for our country. After all, through Jeremiah the prophet, Jewish exiles deported to Babylon were instructed by God to pray for the welfare of the city (of Babylon) to which they were being deported for seventy years (Jeremiah 29:4-11). I should think that we could justifiably also pray for the welfare of America.

So while maintaining respect for our leaders, I believe I am justified in praying that others will be elected to office in their stead - others who will do a better job of seeking the welfare of our country.

As far as Psalm 109 is concerned, David was praying against the enemies of God's theocracy,

which is what the Nation of Israel was. He saw his own enemies as the enemies of God. And that's exactly what they were.

Right now, we do not live in a theocracy. That will happen when Jesus returns to this earth to reign. Then, I suspect, we will be justified in praying those kind of prayers again. But right now Jesus has us in the business of recruiting people for His Kingdom (Matthew 28:18-20), the Kingdom of God's Son, which is a Kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13).

Right now we live in the day of grace and invitation, the Church Age. But the day is coming when the church is raptured, and the Day of the Lord will commence with the Tribulation, a day of judgment and the wrath of God and the Lamb (Rev. 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16: 1, 19; 19:15). Then, I suspect, those kind of prayers, the imprecatory prayers of Psalm 109 will be justified.

Until then, I think we had better be a little cautious.

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109:6-15
- A3 CATALOGUE OF THE SINS OF THE ADVERSARY 109:16-20
- A4 PLEA FOR DELIVERANCE AND RETRIBUTION 109:21-29
- A5 VOW OF PRAISE 109:30-31

Major Divisions of Psalm 109
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Condensed Outline of Psalm 109

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