

Psalm 10

“Psalm 10”:

In contrast to the prayer at the end of the preceding psalm, David now points to the present condition in the world, where God seems to have permitted the wicked to triumph over the righteous (verses 1-11).

He then appeals to the LORD to act, to set the matter right, confident that the King of the world will do so (verses 12-18).

Verses 1-18: Whereas psalm 9 started out with praise, Psalm 10 begins in despair.

In Psalm 9 the psalmist was confident of the sure coming of Divine justice; in Psalm 10 injustice; in Psalm 10 injustice is rampant and God seems disinterested.

However, the psalmist’s walking more by sight than by faith will slowly turn around as he shifts his focus from empirical observations to theological facts.

This is not an easy turn-around, especially since he is surrounded by so many practical atheists (compare verses 4, 11, 13).

But hope will begin to dawn for the helpless (e.g., verse 12).

In view of such kinds of general observations, the psalmist’s expressions (in Psalm 10), exemplify how true believers seem to live in two different worlds at the same time.

(1) From His World of Hostility, Discouragement (10:1-11);

(2) From His World of Hope, Encouragement (10:12-18).

Psalm 10:1 "Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? [why] hidest thou [thyself] in times of trouble?"

“Why ...? Why ...”:

Two “whys” of lament boldly blurt out the psalmist’s question: God, why do you remain aloof?”

(Compare Psalms 13:1; 22:11; 38:21; 44:24; 71:12; 88:14).

The question “why” sometimes signals a feeling of frustration or forsakenness.

The psalmist here shows his own impatience and despair.

I can see myself in David's cry to the LORD here, and probably you can see yourself as well. Sometimes we feel that God is so far away from us and that He is hiding from us.

This is just how it appears.

God is always near to His children, and He knows the pain we are going through.

We might find the answer to the question in the following verses.

Romans 5:3-5 "And not only [so], but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;" "And patience, experience; and experience, hope:" "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

Many times, what we call a problem, is really the LORD teaching us.

Trials must come to make us strong.

Thank God that He cares enough to let us learn in our trials.

Psalm 10:2 "The wicked in [his] pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined."

The pride of his heart which makes him forget God, despise the poor, and oppress others.

In his exaltation; persecutes the poor.

With great earnestness and burning fury, as the verb signifies: as if he had said, "the use which he makes of that power and authority to which thou hast advanced him is to persecute those whom he ought to protect and cherish".

"The poor":

To wit, me, who am through their tyranny poor, and destitute, and miserable, and therefore the more proper object for thy compassion, and others who favor my righteous cause.

"Let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined":

Compare (Psalm 35:8); "Let his net that he hath hid catch himself".

And (Psalm 141:10); "Let the wicked fall into their own nets" (see also Psalms 7:15-16; 9:15; Prov. 5:22; 26:27; Eccl. 10:8).

Some, however, translate, "They (i.e. the poor), are ensnared in the devices which they (i.e. the wicked), have imagined;" and this is certainly a possible rendering.

Hengstenberg regards it as preferable to the other "on account of the parallelism and connection."

The wicked in the verse above, is scheming against the poor.

The word pride shows us that the wicked thinks himself better than the poor.

David is saying in this, let this wicked person be caught in his own trap.

Luke 6:20 "And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed [be ye] poor: for yours is the kingdom of God."

Jesus was a friend to the poor.

We find, in the following Scriptures in Jesus' own words, the punishment those will receive who persecute the poor.

Matthew 25:41-45 "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:" "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:" "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." "Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" "Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did [it] not to one of the least of these, ye did [it] not to me."

Psalm 10:3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, [whom] the LORD abhorreth.

“Covetous ... abhorreth”:

The wicked's modus operandi is the opposite of what God demands (Deut. 25:1).

The word abhorreth goes further than to just dislike.

In this particular Scripture above, it means to scorn or detest.

To detest something is so strong that it is showing a sickening dislike for something.

The wicked above, are boasting about what they can do in their own power.

The only thing the wicked, or anyone else can do, is the things God allows them to do.

Coveting is a sin. Thou shalt not covet is one of the 10 commandments.

To want something or someone that belongs to someone else is coveting.

We Christians must be careful not to want things that are out of God's will for us to have.

Verses 4-11: The psalmist calls on God to punish the unbridled disrespect and scorn of the wicked, which has reached such a pitch that it seems as if God winks at evil (94:2). The wicked mistake God's patience with evil for disinterest in justice and the victims (14:1). Their boldness grows as they no longer sense any accountability for their actions (Eccl. 8:11).

Psalm 10:4 "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek [after God]: God [is] not in all his thoughts."

God's withdrawing is very grievous to his people, especially in times of trouble.

We stand afar off from God by our unbelief, and then complain that God stands afar off from us. Passionate words against bad men do more hurt than good.

If we speak of their badness, let it be to the LORD in prayer; he can make them better.

The sinner proudly glories in his power and success.

Wicked people "will not seek after God".

That is, will not call upon him.

They live without prayer, and that is living without God.

They have many thoughts, many objects and devices, but think not of the LORD in any of them.

They have no submission to his will, nor aim for his glory.

The cause of this is pride.

Men think it below them to be religious.

They could not break all the laws of justice and goodness toward man, if they had not first shaken off all sense of religion.

This is describing someone who is so caught up in himself that he does not realize any need for his God.

This person thinks he has everything under control himself.

He does not stop and realize that the most important thing in his life is preparing for an eternity with Jesus.

Pride goes before a fall.

This person's pride will keep him from humbling himself to receive the LORD.

Psalm 10:5 "His ways are always grievous; thy judgments [are] far above out of his sight: [as for] all his enemies, he puffeth at them."

"His ways are always grievous":

God seems to be rewarding the ruthless.

The psalmist's questioning insinuation is, "Has God also abandoned His own standards for retribution and reward?"

Compare other why-do-the-wicked-prosper inquires (in Job 20:2; Jer. 12:1).

This person is living in the here and now with no preparation for life after death.

He walks all over people he is dealing with.

This puffing at his enemies, just means that he fusses and fights with all who get in his way.

He insists on having his way in everything.

He thinks he is the boss.

He never once considers that there is a day of judgement coming, when he will stand before the judge of all the earth.

Psalm 10:6 "He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for [I shall] never [be] in adversity."

He thinks and persuades himself.

"I shall not be moved":

From my place and happy state.

I shall "never be in adversity":

Because I am not in adversity, I never shall be in it.

His present prosperity makes him secure for the future (compare Rev. 18:7).

"Prosperity," says Dr. Horne, "begets presumption, and he who has been long accustomed to see his designs succeed, begins to think it impossible they should ever do otherwise.

The long-suffering of God, instead of leading such a one to repentance, will only harden him in his iniquity."

He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.

The wicked person who has been successful in this world, thinks his success will continue.

He is like the man who says, you make your own breaks.

He believes hard times will never come his way, because he thinks he is so great.

His life is totally centered on self.

Verses 7-11:

Evidences of “hoof” and “mouth” disease (walk/talk), return in application to the wicked.

These are enhanced by a return also of the ungodly being described as stalking, rapacious beasts.

Psalm 10:7 "His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue [is] mischief and vanity."

Of oaths and blasphemies against God.

Of reviling and cursing of other men, especially of those that are good, and those that stand in his way, and hinder his wicked designs.

And, perhaps, also of oaths and a spoken curse against himself, by which he endeavors to gain credit, and to make his neighbors secure, and so to make way for the deceit and fraud here mentioned next.

He stops at nothing that may serve his ends.

For he makes no conscience of calling for one curse after another upon himself to confirm those promises which he never intends to keep.

Or to swear that which he knows is false, that by these impious means he may deceive those who rely on his word or oath.

"Under his tongue":

Under his fair and plausible speeches.

"Is mischief":

Mischievous wickedness lies hid.

"Vanity":

Or iniquity, as the word "aven" is often rendered.

Or injury; the vexation or oppression of other men, which he covers with these fair pretenses.

This is a man who is evil to the core of his being.

The following two verses pretty well cover what Jesus taught about evil men speaking evil.

Matthew 15:18-19 "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man." "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:"

Psalm 10:8 "He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor."

Not within the villages, which is not a fit place for lurking.

But about them, in the ways bordering them, or leading to them, as robbers used to do.

"In the secret places":

That he may avoid the shame and punishment of men.

Which is the only thing that he fears.

"Are privily set":

Hebrew; hide themselves.

To lay up in private; to hoard; to keep back or to hold back, etc.

Here it means to conceal, to lurk in ambush; and the idea is that his eyes will secretly watch, or keep a lookout for them.

That is, that his eyes, or that he himself will be concealed, that he may observe the goings of those whom he intends to make his prey.

The sense is either, he winked as men do when they shoot their arrows at a mark.

Or rather, he watched and looked out of his lurking-place, to spy what passengers come that way.

He alludes still to the practices of robbers.

"Against the poor":

Or, the wretched, the afflicted, the defenseless.

The meaning is, that instead of being a helper of the poor and wretched, he is disposed to take every advantage of them, and deprive them of all their rights and comforts.

Most of the dealings of this kind of man cannot take place out in the open.

He must hide his evil deeds.

This person has no dealings with strong upright people.

He preys on the weak of society.

He intends to take whatever belongs to them, even if he has to kill them in the process.

He does this in the secret places, so he will not be found out.

Psalm 10:9 "He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net."

"As a lion in his den":

Where he lurks and waits for prey.

"He doth catch":

Or snatch, or seize upon, to wit, with violence, and to devour or destroy him.

"When he draweth him":

Or, by drawing him; or, after he hath drawn him.

He lays snares for him, and when he takes him, tears him in pieces.

Psalm 10:10 "He croucheth, [and] humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones."

As the lion before he leaps and seizes on his prey, and as the fowler creepeth upon the ground to draw the bird into his net and catch it.

So the antichristian beast has two horns like a lamb.

Though he has the mouth of a lion, and speaks like a dragon.

He would be thought to be like the Lamb of God, meek, and lowly, and humble, and therefore calls himself "servus servorum", "the servant of servants"; but his end is;

"That the poor may fall by his strong ones":

The word for "poor" is here used, as before observed on (Psalm 10:8), in the plural number, and is read by the Massoretes as two words.

Though it is written as one, and is by them and other Jewish writers interpreted a multitude, company, or army of poor ones, whose strength is worn out.

These weak and feeble ones, antichrist causes to fall by his strong ones.

Either by his strong decrees, cruel edicts, and severe punishments, as by sword, by flame, or by captivity and by spoils (Dan. 11:33).

Or by the kings of the earth and their armies, their mighty men of war, their soldiers, whom he instigates and influences to persecute their subjects.

Who will not receive his mark in their right hands or foreheads (Rev. 13:15).

It is very observable, that those persecuted by antichrist are so often in this prophetic psalm called "poor".

And it is also remarkable, that there were a set of men in the darkest times of Roman Catholicism, and who were persecuted by the Roman Catholics, called the "poor" men of Lyons (Waldensians, who became part of the reformation in 1532).

The whole verse may be rendered and paraphrased thus, "he tears in pieces".

That is, the poor, whom he catches in his net.

"He boweth himself", as the lion does, as before observed.

"That he may fall", or rush upon; with his strong ones, his mighty armies, "upon the multitude of the poor".

Just as a lion gives no warning when he attacks his prey, this evil one attacks them unawares to them.

He does not play fair.

He pretends to be one of them and when they believe him, he destroys them.

Psalm 10:11 "He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see [it]."

Namely, the poor (Psalm 10:10), or the humble.

He forgets or neglects their oppressions and prayers, and doth not avenge their cause, as he hath said he would do.

"He hideth his face":

Lest he should see.

He takes no notice of their sufferings, lest he should be engaged to help them.

He will not encumber himself with the care of things done upon the earth, but leaves it wholly to men to manage their affairs as they think fit.

"He will never see it":

Namely, the oppression of the poor.

Or the design of oppressors against them.

When Cain killed Abel, he thought no one would know.

Well, that was almost true, no one but God knew.

God said, your brother's blood cries out to me from the earth.

We may hide our sin from the authorities here on the earth, but there is no hiding from God.

Verses 12-18:

The psalm concludes with a triumphant assertion of faith: despite all seeming challenges, "the Lord is King", and He does hear and answer the cry of the oppressed (9:12; 29:10).

Psalm 10:12 "Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble."

"Arise": The battle cry (of Numbers 10:35), also comes back again (compare Psalms 7:6; 9:19).

“Lift up thine hand”:

This is an idiom for God’s strength and power especially as it is used in the context of retaliation.

He has been describing the ways of the evil person in his dealings with the weak and poor living on the earth.

Now, he is saying; Lord help those who cannot help themselves.

The humble here, are speaking of people who have no earthly influence.

Their only help is the Lord.

Psalm 10:13 "Wherefore doth the wicked condemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require [it]."

God may be said to be despised, when his being, perfections, and providence are denied, called in question, or abused (Psalm 10:9).

When his word is derided, the great things of his law are counted as a strange thing (Hosea 8:12).

And the truths of his Gospel are reckoned foolishness.

And instead of these, the decrees, doctrines, and traditions of men, are set up, as by antichrist.

And when his ministers, and especially his Son, are treated with disdain (Luke 10:16).

"He hath said in his heart, thou wilt not require it":

Or "seek it"; or inquire after it, his iniquity.

The sense is, that God will make no inquiry after sin, and bring it into judgment, unto account, and under examination.

Or will not make inquisition, that is, for blood.

For the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, shed by antichrist. Or will not require it at his hands, or recompense vengeance for it.

All which is false and vain; the contrary to it will be found true.

The wicked cannot condemn God.

This seems to be happening in our society today.

All things pertaining to God and His holy ways are trying to be struck down by worldly courts.

This atheistic society of today does not recognize God at all.

They do not feel that godly teachings are in order, because they do not believe in God.

Since they do not believe in God, they do not believe that there is a day of judgement coming.

My, what a rude awakening they are in for!

Psalm 10:14 "Thou hast seen [it]: for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite [it] with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless."

“Helper of the fatherless”:

God is pictured as Helper or Advocate again, but this time in association with orphans.

He is the Defender par excellence of the defenseless (on the imagery, compare Exodus 22:2; Deut. 10:18; 1 Sam. 1:17; Jer. 7:6).

God fights the battles of the fatherless and the helpless.

This verse is saying to God, you are their only hope God.

In the study on the book of Revelation, we found that God has an all-seeing eye.

He sees everything, good or bad.

God will take vengeance on those who oppress those who cannot help themselves.

Romans 12:19 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but [rather] give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance [is] mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

Psalm 10:15 "Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil [man]: seek out his wickedness [till] thou find none."

“Break thou the arm of the wicked”:

The “hand” of God (verses 12, 14), is more than sufficiently strong to shatter the arm (another figure for power), of ungodly men.

We see a cry from the Psalmist for God to hurry up and bring judgement on these evil ones.

God judges however, when He is ready, not when we want Him to.

Verses 16-18:

The confident mood of this great climax outshines the psalm's introductory protestations.

The psalmist's great Lord listens (verse 17), and Acts (verse 18).

Psalm 10:16 "The LORD [is] King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land."

That is, he reigns, and he will reign forever.

This is one of the instances which frequently occur in the Psalms.

Where, though there is a desponding spirit, or an apprehension of danger expressed in the beginning of the poem, it ends with the language of exultation and triumph.

The psalmist speaks here as if what he had desired was actually accomplished.

And as if the enemies that had encompassed him, and all the enemies of the LORD, were actually overthrown, and God now reigned supreme.

He was so confident that this would be so, that he speaks of it as if it were already done (compare Rom. 4:17; Psalms 6:8-9; 7:17; 9:18).

"The heathen are perished out of his land":

That is, this would so certainly occur that he might speak of it as if it were actually done.

The word "heathen" here refers to the enemies of God and of his cause, who are the principal subjects of the psalm (compare Psalm 9:5).

The "land" here, refers to the land of Palestine or the holy land, regarded as a land sacred to God, or in the midst of which he himself dwelt.

The King mentioned here, is the King of kings and LORD of lords who will reign forever.

Those who receive Him as their Savior and LORD, will live with Him.

This of course, is speaking of the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, who Christians call Jesus Christ.

Psalm 10:17 "LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:"

And, therefore, wilt still hear it, being unchangeable, and the same for ever.

"Thou wilt prepare their heart":

By kindling therein holy desires by thy Holy Spirit, strengthening their faith, collecting their thoughts, and raising their affections to things above.

That they may so pray as that thou wilt hear.

Or, that they may be made fit to receive the mercies they desire, which, when they are, they shall have their prayers answered.

"Thou wilt cause thine ear to hear":

In due time, though, for a season, thou seem to turn a deaf ear to their requests.

To receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we must humble our self and repent of sins.

The thing that prepares our heart is to have our heart washed in the blood of the Lamb.

We must be willing to let self die, and Christ live in us.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

We must have our ears open to hear the things of God.

This does not mean just the outward ear, but the ear that receives within us, to truly understand this study about the priest having blood applied to his right ear at dedication.

Some have ears that do not hear.

God wants us not only to hear, but understand as well.

Psalm 10:18 "To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress."

I.e. to defend them, and give sentence for them, and against their enemies.

As this word is used (Deut. 32:36; Psalms 7:8; 135:14).

"The man of the earth":

I.e. earthly and mortal men, who are made of the dust, and must return to it.

Such as the oppressors of thy people are; who yet presume most audaciously and madly to contend with thee their Maker and Judge.

Therefore, it is time for thee to repress such insolvency, and to show how unable they are to stand before thee.

"May no more oppress":

To wit, the fatherless last mentioned.

Christians are in this world, but not of this world.

This then, is speaking of the unsaved who are living on this earth and the here and now.

There will come a time, when Jesus reigns, that there will be no more oppression of anyone.

Psalm 10 Questions

1. How can all believers relate to David's cry in verse 1?
2. What is possibly the reason that God does not always immediately answer our prayer?
3. What does tribulation bring that is beneficial to us?
4. In verse 2, what does the word pride show us about this wicked
5. Jesus was a friend to the _____.
6. The everlasting fire was prepared for whom?
7. What does the 25th chapter of Matthew teach us about doing for the poor?
8. What does the word, abhorreth mean?
9. What are the wicked boasting about in verse 3?
10. Coveting is a _____.
11. Where do we find the instructions not to covet?
12. _____ goes before a fall.
13. In verse 4, what keeps this person from humbling himself to receive the Lord?
14. What does puffing at them mean in verse 5?
15. What untruth does the evil person who has been successful believe?
16. The man in verse 6 is totally centered on whom?

17. Verse 7 tells us that the evil man's mouth is filled with what?
18. Words that come out of the mouth, originate where?
19. Where does the evil man stay to catch others unaware?
20. What is the evil man compared to in verse 9?
21. We may hide our sin from the earthly authorities, but who knows?
22. Who is David asking God to help in verse 12?
23. What kind of society are we living in today?
24. Who is God the helper of in verse 14?
25. What does Romans 12:19 tell us about vengeance?
26. Can we hurry God's judgement on anyone?
27. Who is verse 16 speaking of?
28. To receive Jesus as our Savior, we must _____ our self.
29. When will there be no oppression?