

Psalm 109:1-31
When Good is Punished, or The Psalm of the Betrayed

Introduction: This psalm is found in book 5 of the Psalms. It addresses the issue of painful public character assassination. The accusations and criticisms are unwarranted, but real nonetheless. Some have noted this as the most outspoken and violent of the imprecatory psalms, and that it should be condemned because it allegedly contradicts the teachings of Jesus. This is, however, an unthinking response. (Motyer)

This psalm is not about personal revenge. It is about God's justice being displayed for God's glory and the good of the one being exposed to malicious words. It displays the consequences of sin.

Superscription: *To the music director. A psalm of David.*

1) David expresses his hurt of his soul—109:1-5

- a) ¹ *O God of my praise* (cf. 30-31), *do not be silent*, ² *because ...*
- b) Why? (note the plural "they")
 - i) Their **words** are sinful: *they have opened a wicked and deceitful mouth against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.*
 - (1) Violating the 9th of the 10 commandments; cf. Deut. 19:16-19
 - (2) These are real people who were flouting the real law of a real God.
 - ii) Their **attitudes** are sinful: ³ *They have surrounded me with words of hatred and attack me without cause.*
 - iii) Their **actions** are sinful:
 - (1) ⁴ *In return for my love they accuse me, but I am prayer.*
 - (a) People may talk about you to others, but you **must** talk to God. David's reaction was prayer and only prayer. No retribution.
 - (2) ⁵ *And they reward me evil for good, and hatred for my love.*

2) David asks God fulfill the consequences of his accuser's sin—109:6-20

(shift to singular)

- a) It ruins his relationship with people: 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 be counted as sin.*
- b) It ruins his family life: ⁸ *May his days be few; may another take over his position.* ⁹ *May his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.* ¹⁰ *May his children wander and beg, searching for food far from their ruined homes.*
 - i) Applied to Judas in Acts 1:20
- c) It ruins his financial life: ¹¹ *May the creditor seize all that he has; may strangers plunder the product of his labor.* ¹² *May no one extend loyal-love to him, nor any to be gracious to his fatherless children.* ¹³ *May his posterity be cut off; may their name be blotted out in the next generation.*
- d) It ruins his relationship with God: ¹⁴ *May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before Yahweh; and may the sin of his mother not be blotted out.*

¹⁵ May they be before Yahweh continually, and may their memory be cut off from the earth;

- i) Why? *¹⁶ because he did not remember to show loyal-love, but he pursued a poor and needy man and the brokenhearted to put them to death.*
- e) It ruins his heart's desire: *¹⁷ And he loved to curse, so may it come on him; and he did not delight in blessing, so may it be far from him. ¹⁸ And he clothed himself with cursing as his coat; may it soak into his stomach like water and like oil into his bones. ¹⁹ May it be to him like a garment which he wraps around him, like a belt which he constantly wears.*
- f) Summary: *²⁰ May this be the reward of my accusers from Yahweh, and of those who are speaking evil against my life.*

3) David regains a Godward perspective of his circumstances—109:21-31

- a) For God's reputation and loyalty: *²¹ But **You** (emphatic), O Yahweh my Sovereign (Adonai), do on my behalf **for Your name's sake**, because Your **loyal-love** is good. Rescue me!*
- b) I am unable to defend myself: *²² Because I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. ²³ I fade away like a lengthening shadow; I am shaken off like a locust. ²⁴ My knees are weak through fasting and my body has lost its fat. ²⁵ And I am an object of scorn to them; when then see me, they wag their heads.*
- c) For God's glory: *²⁶ Help me, O Yahweh my God; rescue me according to Your **loyal-love**; ²⁷ and let them know that **this** (emphatic) is Your hand; **You** (emphatic), O Yahweh, have done it.*
 - i) Let them know that my restoration is no accident.
- d) Trusting God's justice: *²⁸ Let them curse, but You will bless; when they rise up, they will be put to shame, but Your servant will rejoice. ²⁹ May the ones accusing me be clothed with dishonor, wrapped in their own shame as with a robe.*
- e) Determination to publicly glorify God: *³⁰ I will give much thanks to Yahweh with my mouth; and I will praise Him in the midst of the crowd,*
 - i) Why? *³¹ because He stands at the right hand (cf. v. 6) of the needy to rescue him from those who are condemning him.*

4) Things we need to remember:

- a) If we are disgusted by this psalm, the problem is not the psalm itself but our poor understanding of God's justice and the sinfulness of sin. Jesus Himself used imprecatory speech (Matt. 23:13-36) when He pronounced woes on the scribes and Pharisees.
- b) David is clearly relying on God to deliver him from his difficult situation.
- c) O God my praise, help me to repent of my sinful desires, my acts of betrayal, and my share in the emotional suffering of Your precious children. Forgive my harshness and lack of gentleness for the sake of Him who has undone the ancient curse, my Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (Varner)