

Psalm 94:1-23

Yahweh, the Sovereign and Wise Judge

Introduction: Have you ever heard the unwise statement, “If God does not judge America for its sin, He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah”? There is indication from history that this psalm was read every Wednesday in the temple. It was no doubt a good reminder in the middle of the busy work week.

1) He asks God to act suitably toward the proud ones—94:1-3

- a) Three requests for Yahweh to display His character and power—94:1-2
 - i) *1 O Yahweh, God of vindication^{pl}, God of vindication^{pl}, shine forth.*
 - (1) The English term **vengeance** is often associated with cruelty, insensitivity, and unreasonable or excessive retribution for some perceived injustice. This is not the meaning of the Hebrew term, which indicates strictly and justifiably upholding or carrying out justice or righteousness against wrongdoing. (Moody BC)
 - ii) *2 Rise up, O Judge of the earth,*
 - (1) Yahweh judges with perfect knowledge, wisdom, and justice.
 - (2) This theme is repeated in 96:10, 13; 97:8, 10-12; 98:9; and 99:4.
 - iii) *repay upon the proud what is deserved.*
- b) One question concerning God’s apparent delay—94:3
 - i) *3 How long the wicked, how long with the wicked be jubilant?*
 - ii) The nights are long as one awaits the demonstration of God’s justice.

2) He explains why the proud deserve their punishment—94:4-7

- a) Arrogantly unrestrained verbally—94:4 *4 They gush, they speak arrogant words; all the evildoers boast about themselves.*
- b) Oppressively callous toward God’s people—94:5 *5 They crush Your people, O Yahweh; and they afflict Your inheritance.*
 - i) The wicked are acting in defiance, knowingly or not, of God’s covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with regard to both His choice of Israel and His faithfulness to His people. (Moody BC)
- c) Violently hardhearted toward the vulnerable—94:6 *6 They kill widow and foreigner, and they murder the fatherless.*
- d) Insolently careless to accuse Yahweh of ignorance—94:7 *7 and they say, “Yah does not see,” and “The God of Jacob does not perceive.”*
 - i) They not only defy God’s laws, they also mock God’s ability to judge them. (FSB) They are home-grown spiritual terrorists.

3) He corrects the Jews for their bad theology about God’s wisdom—94:8-11

- a) He rebukes the foolish Jews—94:8
 - i) With a command: *8 Perceive* (cf. v.7), *O senseless ones among the people* (of Israel).
 - ii) With a question: *And insolent fools, when will you^{pl} gain insight?*

- b) He teaches the Jews about their God—94:9-10
 - i) With questions—94:9-10
 - (1) God the all-knowing creator: *9 Will He who planted the ear not listen? Will He who formed the eye not observe?*
 - (2) God the all-wise judge: *10 Will He who instructs the nations not accuse, He who teaches humanity knowledge?*
 - ii) With statements—94:11
 - (1) *11 Yahweh knows the intentions of humanity* (seen in v. 7), *that they are futile / absurd.* (cf. 1 Cor. 3:20)
 - c) God's knowledge is perfect and complete.
- 4) He explains the blessing for the humble—94:12-15**
- a) The blessing pronounced—94:12-13 *12 Blessed is the person whom You instruct and teach* (cf. v. 10) *from Your instruction, 13 to give him relief from days of trouble, until a pit is dug for the wicked.*
 - i) The pit dug for the wicked is often dug by the wicked (cf. 9:15).
 - ii) The nation's present affliction was an expression of God's discipline rather than His inability to protect them against the wickedness of their enemies. (Moody BC)
 - b) The blessing explained—94:14-15
 - i) God's faithfulness: *14 For Yahweh will not abandon His people, nor forsake His inheritance* (cf. v. 5). (cf. Rom. 11:1-2)
 - ii) God's justice: *15 For judgment / legal decision will return to righteousness, and all the upright in heart* (those who trust, love, and obey Yahweh) *after it.*
- 5) He states his confident Godward perspective concerning a troubled society—94:16-23**
- a) Rhetorical questions—94:16-17
 - i) Asked: *16 Who rises up for me against evildoers? Who stands up for me against the workers of wickedness?*
 - ii) Answered: *17 If Yahweh had not been my help, my soul would have soon dwelt in silence.*
 - b) Imaginary situations—94:18-19
 - i) Despair from a sense of insecurity: *18 When I said, "My foot has slipped," Your loyal love [hesed], O Yahweh, sustained me.*
 - ii) Anxiety / disturbing thoughts: *19 When my troubled thoughts were many within me, Your encouragements brought delight to my soul* (like a child being cuddled).
 - c) Unrighteous government—94:20-21
 - i) Twisted legislation: *20 Can there be allied with You a throne of destruction, one who is fashions trouble based on statute?*
 - (1) Just because something is legal doesn't make it right or just.
 - ii) Twisted sense of justice: *21 They conspire against the soul of the righteous, and they declare the blood of the innocent "guilty."*

- d) His statement of faith—94:22-23
 - i) The necessity of suffering: *22 Yahweh has become my stronghold / security, and my God (has become) my rock of refuge / safety.*
(1) Suffering is designed to show us the attractiveness of Yahweh.
 - ii) The certainty of God's justice: *23 And He will return (cf. v. 2, 15) onto them their evil (cf. vv. 4, 16), and in their wickedness He will destroy them. Yahweh our God will destroy them.*
(1) God's judgment is never more than what people truly deserve.

6) Things to remember (believe, feel, do):

- a) The principle is still the same today. See John 12:46-48.
 - i) As Matthew Henry once said, "Those who will not deliver themselves into the hand of God's mercy cannot be delivered out of the hand of His justice."
- b) Someone has said, "The kingdom of man is destructive, bringing death and anarchy. The kingdom of God is restorative, bringing life and order." To which kingdom do you belong today?