

PSALMS 10

This Psalm is not titled and is thought to be a continuation of the previous Psalm. It follows the same general theme of impiety, blasphemy, and atheism of the man of sin: his pride, haughtiness, boasting of himself, and presumption of security; his persecution of the poor, and murder of innocents. However, in the end of all things, God's justice will be manifested and the righteous will be vindicated.

PLEA FOR DELIVERANCE:

{10:1} Why, O LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

When we think God has gone away and is not there when we need Him, we must be careful to **not** give up hope. For example, when Lazarus died, Jesus had gone away from Judea and both Martha and Mary said "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Just as Jesus knew the situation with His friends, He knows our condition and He is working out a solution to our trouble that will bring greater glory to His name and greater good for us. When God does not act immediately, then we must remember that though He seems far off, He is always for us and wants what is best for us. God sees the "big picture" of all that is happening and we are very limited in our perspective.

C. H. Spurgeon wrote that to ask the question in the second part of this verse (Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?) is as if we were to ask, "Why doesn't the sun shine at night." There could be no night if the sun were shining. In the same way, there could be no times of troubles if God did not allow it to happen. We might then ask, "Why?" In the words of Spurgeon: "If there be no pain, there will be no profit. If there be no hiding of God, there will be no bitterness, and consequently no purging efficacy in his chastisements."

PRAYER: Lord, help us to see what is happening from Your perspective. If we cannot be shown the big picture, then increase our faith and trust in You as our Help in times of trouble.

CHARACTER OF THE OPPRESSORS

{2} In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises. {3} He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD.

The "times of trouble" are sometimes caused by wicked men. The actions of the wicked are motivated by his fallen nature (cravings of his heart - pride of life, lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes [1 John 2:16]) and this nature is many times manifest in what we commonly refer to as "moral issues." Others may rise above the blatant "moral" sins and become engaged in actions motivated by greed (materialism, control, and desire for prominence). These things may seem (at first glance) to be "victimless" crimes. However, the pathway to satisfying greed that produces excesses in materialism, excesses in control of our sphere of influence and excessive prominence is usually on the backs of others and at the expense of others. Both groups are acting contrary to the principles of the Lord and by their very actions revile or blaspheme God.

When we see the prosperity of the wicked we are often discouraged in our struggles to do what is right. It is during these times we are tempted to think God doesn't know what is happening. We should take confidence in knowing that God is "all-knowing" and nothing escapes Him. We also know that God is not mocked and those who revile Him will be punished. Those who revel in and excuse the immoral are coworkers with them and will be judged along side of them.

Interestingly, in our present-day culture, those who manifest their rebellion against God in disregard for "morality issues" are very critical of those who oppress the poor because of greed issues. In the same way, the "greed" crowd are bewildered by the disregard for "morality" but cannot

see that their own actions are just another expression of immorality.

PRAYER: Lord, deliver us from the ways of the wicked so that we will not be their victims and that we will not be tempted to oppress others.

{4} In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. {5} His ways are always prosperous; he is haughty and your laws are far from him; he sneers at all his enemies. {6} He says to himself, "Nothing will shake me; I'll always be happy and never have trouble." {7} His mouth is full of curses and lies and threats; trouble and evil are under his tongue.

Those who ignore God's ways and chose to "do their own thing" are called wicked. Man's ways are full of pride and boasting and an attitude of living for the pleasure of the moment without a thought of the consequences. Many people engage in patterns of behavior that ruin their lives and since the results are not immediately evident, they continue blindly down the path that leads to destruction. It is like the thrill the sky diver experiences when free falling; however, if there is no parachute then the impact will bring a sudden end to the elation of the moment.

{8} He lies in wait near the villages; from ambush he murders the innocent, watching in secret for his victims.

{9} He lies in wait like a lion in cover; he lies in wait to catch the helpless; he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net. {10} His victims are crushed, they collapse; they fall under his strength. {11} He says to himself, "God has forgotten; he covers his face and never sees."

The wicked not only harm themselves in their rebellion against God, they also (either coincidentally or deliberately) harm others. For example, the person who drinks and drives may not intend to kill, but that matters little to the victim of such an act.

How a person responds to God's mercy and grace is evidence of his character. Those people Jesus described as poor in spirit, meek, pure in heart, etc will see God's mercy as a chance to repent, while those described as wicked see God's mercy as a chance to commit more sin.

PRAYER: Father, we recognize that we live in a world that has wicked people who would harm others just because they can. We need your protection from such people and we need your direction for our lives that we do not become as they are.

RENEWED CRY FOR HELP

{12} Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God. Do not forget the helpless. {13} Why does the wicked man revile God? Why does he say to himself, "He won't call me to account"?

The root cause of one person harming another person is a disregard for God and either being ignorant of or arrogant about their ultimate accountability to God for all he says and does. In most parts of the world, the majority of people feel helpless and powerless since they do not have the means to influence or control their circumstances. If protection cannot be found in civil or religious institutions (because they are sometimes the oppressors), then appeal will be made directly to God.

In our present-day situation where the civil government is strong and (supposedly) benevolent, then the appeal of the oppressed will usually go to those in civil authority and redress for wrongs will be addressed in the courts. We tend to forget about God and to ask for His intervention. Since the source of the problem is that the wicked are showing contempt and indifference to God, then our first appeal should be for God to intervene and change the heart of the wicked.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S JUSTICE

{14} But you, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in hand. The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless. {15} Break the arm of the wicked and evil man; call him to account for his wickedness that would not be found out.

Because of the presence of evil and the indiscriminate commission of violence, we can do little to protect ourselves and must rely on God for protection. Even with a strong government and programs that attempt to protect the victims of violence and abuse, there are situations where people are still being hurt. Even if they are not physically hurt they can be hurt emotionally and scarred for life. Only God can change the heart and sometimes it requires that the person be broken and confronted with what he is doing to himself and to others (conviction). This principles also applies to each of us in our individual rebellion against God.

PRAYER: Lord, help us to realize that the solution to the problems in the world is Your salvation that changes the hearts of men. Bring conviction to those who disregard You and Your laws. Use us to share the good news of Jesus with those who are lost.

ANTICIPATED JOY IN THE ULTIMATE VICTORY OVER EVIL:

{16} The LORD is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land.

Our sense of justice and fairness calls for retribution for those who are blatantly wicked. History confirms that nations who abandon God will pay the price for their wickedness. The Psalmists was likely concerned with the various tribal nations who were persecuting the people of Israel from within their own country. Many of these nations were already in the area when the Israelites came to and conquered the land of Canaan. The problem was that not all those were removed and they were as source of problems and oppression for centuries.

We can apply the same idea to our personal lives. We have various areas in and of ourselves that have strongholds of pride, rebellion, resentment, etc. that need to perish from our lives because they have no place where Jesus is reigning as Lord.

{17} You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, {18} defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.

We cry to God for relief from oppression and do not understand why help does not respond immediately. We can not always know the purpose of what happens around us and to us; however, faith calls for us to trust in the goodness and love of God knowing He will use even the acts of the wicked for His ultimate purposes. As Joseph told his brothers, “You thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good . . .” (Gen 50:20)

PRAYER: Father, help us to recognize areas of our lives that are hindrances to your Lordship and to put them away so that Jesus is Lord of all we are.