

STUDIES IN PSALMS

5 His glory is far more vast than the heavens! It towers above the earth.

6 Hear the cry of Your beloved child—come with mighty power and rescue me.

7 God has given sacred promises; no wonder I exult! He has promised to give us all the land of Shechem, and also Succoth Valley!

8 "Gilead is Mine to give to you," He says, "and Manasseh as well; the land of Ephraim is the helmet on My head. Judah is My scepter.

9 But Moab and Edom are despised; and I will shout in triumph over the Philistines."

10 Who but God can give me strength to conquer these fortified cities? Who else can lead me into Edom?

11 Lord, have You thrown us away? Have You deserted our army?

12 Oh, help us fight against our enemies, for men are useless allies.

13 But with the help of God we shall do mighty acts of valor! For He treads down our foes.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why is this psalm a composite of two earlier ones? i.e. what is the occasion for its composition?
2. Is there any danger here of "vain repetition"? Discuss. Read: Phil. 4:4; Gal. 1-9; Phil. 3:1.

PSALM 109

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

David, Rehearsing how His Enemies have Cursed him,
Refers his Cause to Jehovah.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-5, The Psalmist Entreats Jehovah to speak up for him against his Accusers, of whose Groundless Hatred he Complains. Stanzas II.-VI., vers. 6-15, He Records, at length, his Enemies' Imprecations; and, Stanza VII., vers. 16-19, Their False Accusations, regarding these as Permitted

1. Literally, "Moab is my washbasin; upon Edom I cast My shoe."

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by Jehovah. In Stanzas VIII-XII., vers. 21-31, the Psalmist prays for rescue from Troubles inflicted by Jehovah's Own Hand, for which he Promises to Render Public Thanks.

(Lm.) By David—Psalm.

- 1 O God of my praise do not be silent:
- 2 For the mouth of a lawless one and a mouth of deceit
against me are open,
They have spoken with me with a tongue that is false;
- 3 And with words of hatred have they compassed me about,
and have made war upon me without cause:
- 4 For my love they accuse me though I am all prayer,¹
- 5 Yea they have returned² unto me evil for good, and hatred
for my love [saying:—]
- 6 "Set in charge over him a lawless one,
and let an accuser take his stand at his right hand:
- 7 When he judged let him go forth condemned,
and his prayer become sin.³
- 8 "Let his days become few,
His oversight let another take:
- 9 Let his children become fatherless,
and his wife a widow.
- 10 "And let his children wander and beg,
and be driven out⁴ of their desolate homes:
- 11 Let the creditor strike in at all that he hath,
and strangers prey upon his toil.
- 12 "Let him have none to prolong kindness,
and be there none to be gracious unto his fatherless children:
- 13 Let his posterity⁵ be for cutting off,
In a⁶ generation let his⁷ name be wiped out.
- 14 "Remembered be the iniquity of his fathers unto Jehovah,
and the sin of his mother—let it not be wiped out:
- 15 Let them be in the sight of Jehovah continually,
that he may cut off out of the earth their memory.
- 16 "Because he remembered not to do a kindness,

1. So Del. "But I am (given unto) prayer"—Dr. "But I (give myself unto) prayer"—Per. And cp. ver. 7.

2. So it shd. be (w. Syr.)—Gn.

3. "And let the decision of his case be his guilt."—Br.

4. So it shd. be. (w. Sep. and Vul.)—Gn. And so O.G., Br.

5. Or: "latter end."

6. M.T.: "another." Sep. and Vul.: "one."

7. Some cod. (w. Sep. and Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "their."

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- but pursued the man who was humbled and needy,
and the downhearted was ready to slay outright,—
- 17 And loved cursing and so it hath come upon him,
and delighted not in blessing, and so it hath gone far from
him,
- 18 And clothed himself with cursing as his outer garment
and so it hath entered like water into his inward parts,
and like oil into his bones
- 19 Be it his, as a garment he wrappeth around him,
and for the girdle he at all times girdeth on.”
- 20 This is the recompense of mine accusers from Jehovah,
and of them who are bespeaking calamity upon my soul.⁸
- 21 But thou Jehovah Sovereign Lord deal effectually with me
for the sake of thy name;
because good is thy kindness O rescue me;
- 22 For humbled and needy am I,
and my heart is wounded within me.
- 23 As a shadow when it stretcheth out have I vanished,
I am shaken out like a locust:⁹
- 24 My knees totter from fasting,
and my flesh hath become lean after fatness;¹⁰
- 25 And I have become a reproach to them,
they see me they shake their head.
- 26 Help me Jehovah my God,
save me according to thy kindness:
- 27 That they may know that thine own hand is this,—
Thou Jehovah hast done it.
- 28 They will curse but thou wilt bless,
mine assailants will be put to shame but thy servant will
rejoice:
- 29 Mine accusers will be clothed with confusion,
and will wrap about them as a cloak their own shame.
- 30 I will give great thanks¹¹ unto Jehovah with my mouth,
Yea amidst multitudes will I praise him;
- 31 Because he taketh his stand at the right hand of the needy,
to save [him] from them who would judge his soul.

(Nm.)

8. Cp. 105:18 (note).

9. “I am shaken when the light grows stronger”—Br.

10. “And my flesh without oil is as one hastening away.”—Br.

11. So Dr., after P.B.V.

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PARAPHRASE

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0 God of my praise, don't stand silent and aloof

2 While the wicked slander me and tell their lies.

3 They have no reason to hate and fight me, yet they do!

4 I love them, but even while I am praying for them, they are trying to destroy me.

5 They return evil for good, and hatred for love!

* * * * *

6 Show him how it feels!¹ Let lies be told about him, and bring him to court before an unfair judge.

7 When his case is called for judgment, let him be pronounced guilty! Count his prayers as sins!

8 Let his years be few and brief; let others step forward to replace him.

9, 10 May his children become fatherless and his wife a widow, and be evicted from the ruins of their home.

11 May creditors seize his entire estate and strangers take all he has earned.

12, 13 Let no one be kind to him; let no one pity his fatherless children. May they die. May his family name be blotted out in a single generation.

14 Punish the sins of his father and mother. Don't overlook them.

15 Think constantly about the evil things he has done, and cut off his name from the memory of man.

16 For he refused all kindness to others, and persecuted those in need, and hounded brokenhearted ones to death.

17 He loved to curse others; now You curse him. He never blessed others; now don't You bless him.

18 Cursing is as much a part of him as his clothing, or as the water he drinks, or the rich food he eats!

19 Now may those curses return and cling to him like his clothing or his belt.

20 This is the Lord's punishment upon my enemies who tell lies about me and threaten me with death.

* * * * *

21 But as for me, O Lord, deal with me as Your child, as one who bears Your name! Because You are so kind, O Lord, deliver me.

1. Implied.

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22, 23 I am slipping down the hill to death; I am shaken off from life as easily as a man brushes a grasshopper from his arm.

24 My knees are weak from fasting and I am skin and bones.

25 I am a symbol of failure to all mankind; when they see me they shake their heads.

26 Help me, O Lord my God! Save me because You are loving and kind.

27 Do it publicly, so all will see that You Yourself have done it.

28 Then let them curse me if they like—I won't mind that if You are blessing me! For then all their efforts to destroy me will fail, and I shall go right on rejoicing!

29 Make them fail in everything they do. Clothe them with disgrace.

30 But I will give repeated thanks to the Lord, praising Him to everyone.

31 For He stands beside the poor and hungry to save them from their enemies.

EXPOSITION

The key which opens this psalm to general edification is the perception that its long string of curses are those of David's enemies and not his own. The considerations which lead to this conclusion are the following:—(1) The sudden and sustained change from the plural of vers. 1-5 (*they*) to the singular of vers. 6-19 (*he, his, him*); the former referring to David's enemies, the latter referring to David himself on his accusers' *false tongue*. (2) The fierce and sweeping vindictiveness which piles up imprecations against father, mother, wife, children, possessions and memory in a manner unexampled in any other utterance attributable to David. (3) The similarity of tone between the verses which lead up to the cursing and those which follow after it — a tone of humble and prayerful trust in Jehovah, whose *effectual working* is not only strongly urged but patiently awaited: suggesting how unlikely it is that the cursing of the middle of the psalm proceeds from the same mind as the dignified predictions of its close. (4) The devotion to *prayer* claimed by the psalmist in ver. 4 as making his enemies' hatred without excuse, seems to be hurled back by his enemies in mockery in ver. 7. (5) The *recompense* of ver. 20 seems like a resumption of the *return of evil for good* mentioned in

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ver. 5; as much as to say: *This—the long string of curses*—is how they *recompense* me for my past kindness; the allusion taking on a striking verisimilitude when the known kindness of David for the house of Saul is recalled, and when we think how easily Shimei the Benjamite might in his bitterness have exaggerated some oversight on David's part to shew his wonted kindness to some member of Saul's family: the addition *from Jehovah* in ver. 20, being a recognition such as we have in 2 Sam. 16:5-13, that David's enemies had been permitted by Jehovah to do him this wrong, leaving the wrong remaining as wrong, the cursing being still theirs and not his. (6) On the background of his enemies' cursing there is something peculiarly lifelike and pathetic in the unrestrained prayer which he pours out before Jehovah as to his whole position: his position, as he is driven from Jerusalem, is indeed desperate, and he may well pray for *rescue*; he is *poor and needy*, and will soon be glad to accept of hospitality from one of his subjects; his *heart* was *wounded within him*, as well it might, with memories of Uriah and Bathsheba recalled, the revolt of Absalom staring him in the face, and now the cursing of Shimei to add bitterness to his cup. These verses, 20-25, compel us to think of David's journey up the slope of Mt. Olivet. Then there is the distinct recognition of Divine chastisement, lying behind the cursing (ver. 27) and as we read on, *They will curse, but thou wilt bless*, we feel certain that the lips that utter these words of resignation are not the same as those which have just been cursing so very fiercely.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. There is a "key which opens this psalm to general edification". What is it?
2. Give and discuss at least two of the reasons given for attributing the curses to David's enemies.
3. What circumstance in David's life best fits this psalm?

PSALM 110

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Revelation, THROUGH DAVID TO his "lord," the Messiah.