

* The Heights Baptist Church * Series: The Psalms *
* Topic: A Call for Judgment * Psalm 109 * 5/11/25 *

MAIN POINT

When others treat us poorly based on our love for Jesus, we can trust that God is in control, that He will take care of us, and that He will deal justly with those who reject Him.

INTRODUCTION

How do you typically respond when others speak poorly of you, especially when their claims are false?

When have you ever been mocked due to your faith in Christ?

Jesus told His followers to expect persecution from others. In Matthew 5:11, He said that those who are treated poorly because of Him are blessed. As many of us know from experience, it is often hard to remember this promised blessing in the moment of persecution. We are often tempted to respond back with an attack, or to seek to defend our name quickly. Yet, we are called to trust in the Lord, who loves us, is sovereign, and will always act justly. Today we will look at one such instance in the life of David.

Note to study leader: On his sermon outline, Pastor Randy Hahn titled Psalm 109 as an “imprecatory” Psalm, which means it invokes curses on the enemies of God. We will be considering this through the following four perspectives:

1. The perspective of David
2. The perspective of God’s holiness and mankind’s sinfulness
3. The perspective of God’s people undergoing persecution by unbelievers
4. The perspective of this Psalm being a prophecy about the Messiah

UNDERSTANDING

Note to study leader: The introduction to this Psalm tells us it is a Psalm of David. Commentators speculate that this Psalm might have been written about Ahithophel, David’s advisor who betrayed him during Absalom’s revolt (2 Samuel 15-17).

1. THE PERSPECTIVE OF DAVID

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 109:1-5: DAVID’S CRISIS

What was David’s complaint before God in these verses?

David made it clear that he was being treated wrongly. Where he had shown love, he received hate. Where he had displayed goodness, he was returned evil by others.

What indication is there from these verses that the poor treatment of David was unmerited?

Verse 3 tells us they attack him without cause. Verse 4 tells us these attacks are in return for David’s friendship. Verse 5 tells us they are repaying evil for good.

What are some reasons those who are rejecting Christ might respond with hostility to the gospel?

The message of grace includes the fact that we are all sinners in need of grace. People who want to continue living in sin have no desire to accept that are evil deserving of God’s judgment.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 109:6-20: DAVID'S PRAYER AGAINST HIS BETRAYER

How would you summarize David's requests before God in verses 6-15?

David is calling for God to judge the one who betrayed him (Verse 7), including taking his life (Verse 9), losing all his possessions (Verse 11), cutting off his descendants (Verses 12-13), and blotting their names out from history (Verse 15), and for their sins not to be forgiven (Verse 15).

What reasons does David list in verses 16-20 for calling on God to judge David's foe?

David's foe is cruel and abuses the poor and needy and habitually curses others.

What is your initial response to the things David requested of God in these verses?

In these verses we see the fact that sin requires judgment from God, but it is difficult to reconcile David's prayer with the commands Jesus gives us to be merciful and pray for those who persecute us.

*"The Psalms give us permission to tell God what we're really thinking and feeling."
Pastor Randy Hahn, The Heights Baptist Church, March 9th, 2025*

"We confess that as we read some of these verses, we have need of all our faith and reverence to accept them as the voice of inspiration, but the exercise is good for the soul, for it educates our sense of ignorance, and tests our teachability. Yes, Divine Spirit, we can and do believe that even these dread words from which we shrink have a meaning consistent with the attributes of the Judge of all the earth, though his name is LOVE. How this may be we shall know hereafter." Charles Spurgeon

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 109:21-29: DAVID'S PRAYER FOR VINDICATION

How did David's request for himself contrast with those toward his enemy?

On what basis did David ask God to deal kindly with him? How has God dealt kindly with us for His name's sake and because His faithful love is good?

David asked God to deal kindly with him for God's His name's sake and for His faithful love. We can be certain that God will deal for the good of His people based on the completed work of Christ. For those who have accepted Jesus, God has poured out His judgment completely on Jesus. And as His beloved children, we can be confident that sorrow and injustice will not reign. God's love and justice will prevail.

"This Psalm is not about a personal vendetta between two individuals; it is about a traitor who puts the knife to the throat of the king: the king who is the only hope of all the people." Christopher Ash, Psalms for You

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 109:30-31: DAVID'S SONG OF WORSHIP

How did David conclude his Psalm?

David ends his Psalm with praise, as he looks forward to the day when he will be worshipping God with a great throng of fellow worshippers. He praises God for helping the needy, and for saving their lives.

*"Psalms are a beautiful song of faith that breaks into a song of worship."
Pastor Randy Hahn, The Heights Baptist Church, March 9th, 2025*

2. THE PERSPECTIVE OF GOD'S HOLINESS AND LOVE, AND MANKIND'S SINFULNESS

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 2 PETER 2:4-9

How do these verses provide perspective on David's call to God to have mercy on him while judging the sin of wicked people?

God is holy, and He a righteous judge. It is His nature to judge sin (Psalm 7:11). And we are desperately wicked sinners, who deserve His judgment. 2 Peter shows us that while God is merciful to those who place themselves under the blood of Christ, those who reject the means of salvation that God has provided will be required to face God's righteous wrath.

3. THE PERSPECTIVE OF GOD'S PEOPLE UNDERGOING PERSECUTION BY UNBELIEVERS

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ 2 TIM. 3:12, MATT. 5:11, LUKE 6:27-28, AND REV. 6:9-11

How do these verses provide perspective on our being persecuted by wicked people?

Jesus promised His followers that they would face persecution in the world as ambassadors of Christ. This hardship can be difficult to endure, but we can take heart in knowing that we look forward to eternity with Jesus, and that will one day righteousness will be the scepter of Christ's kingdom.

What do these verses tell us about the idea of praying for God to curse and kill our enemies?

These verses tell us that we are to pray for those that persecute us and do good to those who harm us. As Jesus was dying on the cross, he prayed, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). And as Stephen was being stoned, he prayed, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60). All of us are deserving of death and damnation. All of us need a Savior.

"...there is a deep truth that when... a persecutor repents... their sins are indeed paid for at the cross. So the prayer of this Psalm is always answered, whether in the judgment on the persecutor or in the wounds of the Savior who pays for them." Christopher Ash, Psalms for you

4. THE PERSPECTIVE OF THIS PSALM AS A PROPHECY ABOUT THE MESSIAH

"These Psalms are not only stories about David & others, but they also represent... David's Lord & David's King, Jesus Christ." Rev. Rico Patterson, Sermon notes from The Heights, March 23rd. 2025

"He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.' Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures." Luke 24:44-45

Psalm 109 is a messianic Psalm. Matt. 27:39 references Psalm 109:25, and in Acts 1:20, Peter quotes Psalm 109:8 when referring to Judas. How does Psalm 109 prophesy about the people, the religious leaders and Judas at the time of Jesus' crucifixion?

Wicked people slandered Him and attacked him without cause. They repaid evil for good. And the days of Judas were few, as he hung himself (Matt. 27:3-5). And Judas did not repent of his sin like Peter did, as he is called "the son of perdition" (John 17:12), which means he was doomed to destruction.

"Whoever it was who betrayed king David all those centuries before, it was a terrible foreshadowing of Judas." Christopher Ash, Psalms for You

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ JOHN 17:8-9, HEB. 2:3, HEB. 10:26-27, AND REV. 22:11 and 17

How do these verses help us understand God's perspective on unrepentant sinners?

We as sinful people are very, very blessed that our Holy God who by His nature is required to judge sin made even one way back to Him available for us. And although our salvation is free to us, it required God to sacrifice His only Son Jesus, whom He loved. God knows who will accept His Son, and who will reject Him. And anyone who rejects His Son has only the fearful expectation of judgment to come.

APPLICATION

How does this passage encourage you to continue to show love and goodness to those opposed to the gospel? How does this compel us to desire further that these individuals come to know Christ?

PRAYER

Thank God that He is perfectly righteous and just. Thank Him that He is also loving and merciful. Pray that He will help us endure hardship and trust Him when others treat you wrongly, reflecting Christ to these needy people.

COMMENTARY

Psalm 109

109:1-2. David began, O God, whom I praise, addressing God as worthy of his praise, even in this painful hour. Do not remain silent, he pleaded, petitioning God to answer him in this excruciating ordeal. Wicked and deceitful men had risen up to falsely accuse him. Their mouths were twisted, wicked, and evil in what they were saying against him. These false accusations against him were spoken with lying tongues, assassinating his character, impugning his motives, and slandering his life.

109:3. On every side, David was met with words of hatred against him. This verbal assault against him was without cause, completely unjustified. He was innocent and blameless yet being wrongly accused as if he were guilty.

109:4-5. David had extended his foes only friendship while they, in turn, had shown him evil and hatred. Throughout this painful ordeal, David committed this matter to God in prayer. Literally, “But I am prayer,” that is, “I am all prayer.” While David’s enemies were spewing false words against him, he was speaking to God. David had done them good, showing them friendship, but they had shown him evil and hatred.

109:6. References to David’s enemies now change from the plural “they” (vv. 2-5) to the singular “him” and “his” (vv. 6-19). Not until verse 20 do they return to the plural again (“accusers”). These singular pronouns point to the ringleader of this opposition against David. He pleaded with God for this one man, his wicked accuser, to find himself on the receiving end of similar slander. May God appoint an evil man to be his accuser (Satan), David asked God. At his right hand, where a defendant would stand in a law court, let him face an adversary.

109:7-8. David desired that the ringleader of this slanderous attack against him be found guilty. Let the truth about his accuser’s own evil character be made known. May the prayers of his accuser come back to condemn him. He prayed, may his days be few, so that no more harm may be done to the Lord’s work. Let another take his place of leadership. This verse was later quoted by Peter regarding Judas forfeiting his position among the twelve disciples (Acts 1:20).

109:9-11. The phrase may his children be fatherless expresses this thought: “Cut short his days; cause him to die soon.” David did not request that his children be killed but only their father. When this accuser died, his children would be left as wandering beggars, leaving them without a father to provide for them. David asked that a creditor seize all his possessions, the result of this adversary dying soon. May he die now, unexpectedly, and strangers plunder all his property.

109:12-15. Because of the greatness of this accuser’s sin, divine judgment must come to him soon. May his surviving children be spared pity after his death. May his descendants be cut off, not to spread their father’s influence of evil. Because children are often like their father, let their names be blotted out. David prayed that all influences of this evil man’s life be stopped, even through his surviving children. May the iniquity of this accuser’s fathers be remembered. He requested that the guilt of his mother never be blotted out. May their sins always remain before the Lord. If there is to be no repentance, then let them be put to death by God lest they cause the righteous any more harm.

109:16-20. The evil man should be judged by God because he never thought of doing a kindness. He showed much hatred, oppression, and persecution of the godly. He persecuted the righteous man and hounded him to death like prey. The false accuser loved to pronounce a curse. May the cursing that he pronounced on others come back to curse him. The cursing of the righteous was such a part of his everyday life that it was as his garment, a constant covering and companion. He drank it up like water. His life was saturated with these curses like oil, seeping into his innermost being, down to his bones. David pleaded for divine justice and vindication to be exercised toward this evil man, the leader of those who speak evil of me.

109:21. In this desperate strait, David turned to the Sovereign Lord for delivery from his false accuser. Deal well with me, he appealed to God, asking for divine protection and escape from the relentless attacks of this evil man. David's appeal was for your name's sake, that God might be glorified by showing mercy to him. He wanted God to do something so wonderful that it would be clear that this was the hand of God. David desired that God show his great love by delivering him from this attack.

109:22-23. David told God that he was poor and needy with a wounded, broken heart. This ordeal was deeply hurtful, caused by his enemies. His life's strength was flowing out of him, like the disappearance of a fleeting evening shadow. He was like a dreaded locust, the enemy of the farmer. Farmers would shake the locusts off their trees and shrubs to destroy them. This was how David felt, as one who had been shaken off and had fallen to the ground, leaving him cast down and weakened.

109:24-25. David's knees were weary from fasting, which was associated with prayer. He had been pleading with God for divine strength and help, so much so that he was physically weak and lean from all the prayer and fasting. He was dishonored by their many lies against him, the object of scorn. They shook their heads at him, a gesture of scorn.

109:26-27. David concluded with a passionate plea for God's hand to deliver him from the ruthless attacks. Only God could defend him, so he called out to God for protection and deliverance from his enemies. He appealed to God to intervene in such a powerful way that even his enemies must acknowledge that it was God who had acted so decisively in rescuing him.

109:28. Let them continue to curse me, David declared. It would only serve to bring God's actions toward him to bless him. The more they cursed him, the more it would force the hand of God to favor him. They would realize that they had been opposing God by opposing God's servant, causing them to be ashamed of their evil conspiracy. David would rejoice as he realized that he was aligned with God.

109:29. When God acts, his accusers will surely be clothed with disgrace before men. The shame and dishonor his accusers sought to bring upon David are set to recoil and come back upon their own heads. 109:30. David now extolled the greatness of God with his mouth. He would give thanks for the fact that God would hear him and help him. He will publicly offer his praise in the great throng.

109:31. Earlier, David asked that an accuser might stand at the right hand of the one doing evil to accuse him of wrong (v. 6). Here, the accuser is replaced by God, who stands at the right hand of his own beloved to defend and save them.