

* The Heights Baptist Church * Series: The Psalms *
* Topic: God Knows Us * Psalm 9-10 * 6/29/25 *

MAIN POINT

In our fallen world, the wicked sometimes prosper. But we can take comfort in the fact that one day, evil will be judged by God, and we will dwell with Him forever.

INTRODUCTION

If you could right one wrong in the world, what would it be? Why?

Trusting in God's sovereignty over the earth is easier said than done; and trusting in His sovereignty over our individual lives can be even more difficult. It is easy to shift our focus off of God and onto the circumstances in our life and the wickedness in the world.

In today's lesson, we will be reading Psalms 9 and 10. In Psalm 9, David praises God for God's victory over the wicked. Psalm 10 begins by describing the conditions that exist in this sinful world as we await God's final victory and ends with a prayer imploring God to judge the wicked and deliver the oppressed.

UNDERSTANDING

Note to study leader: Psalms 9 and 10 are separated into two Psalms in the Hebrew Old Testament but are included together as one Psalm in the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Old Testament translated in Egypt for Greek-speaking Jews around 200 BC). The main evidence supporting it as being two separate Psalms is the fact Psalm 9 is a Psalm of praise, and Psalm 10 is a Psalm of lament. Evidence for them being one Psalm are that Psalm 9 has an introduction while Psalm 10 doesn't, the subjects of Psalms 9 and 10 are closely related, and more significantly, together they form one alphabetic acrostic poem (a poem where each line starts with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet).

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 9:1-12

Why has David resolved to praise the LORD?

What are the specific aspects of God's character brought out in this passage?

God's faithful actions led David to respond in praise. His enemies were no match for the LORD who is enthroned forever. David had witnessed the LORD acting as the true and righteous judge over all things, so he put his trust in God. Because God has judged the wicked in the past, we can trust that He will bring ultimate judgment over sin and death. In His sovereignty, we will not be forsaken when we place our trust in Him. He hears the cries of those in pain and will not let them perish. All of this should usher us into praise for who God is and what He has done.

What thoughts come to your mind as this Psalm reminds us that one day God the righteous judge will one day judge all things?

- Comfort that one day, evil will be done away with.
- Gratitude that God's just judgment for our sins has been poured out on Jesus on the cross.
- Urgency to lovingly share the good news of Jesus with our family, friends, co-workers and neighbors.

What in your current season of life do you need to remember to praise God for?

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 9:13-20

How does the emphasis of the second half of this Psalm differ from the first half??

David moved from praise to fervent prayer for God to judge the wicked and deliver the oppressed.

In what ways was David counting on God to act?

Even in David's dire circumstances, he prayed in confidence to the God who had lifted him from death. David prayed expectantly so that he could declare the Lord's faithfulness to those around him.

How should this Psalm give us confidence in the character of God, even in difficult circumstances?

We can trust that ultimate justice will prevail, because God sees all and holds all in His hands. David reminds us that understanding who God is should lead us to praise and expectant prayer.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 10:1-11

How would you describe "the wicked man" in these verses?

Wicked people chasing sin may harbor an attitude of indifference toward God.

For what sins is the wicked man condemned?

He is convinced that God doesn't see him and therefore will not judge him. Toward other people, the wicked man is guilty of cursing, deceit, oppression, mischief, murder, ambush, and injustice.

Where do you see this kind of injustice happening in our world today?

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 10:12-18

How is God identified in these verses?

God is King for ever and ever. He sees our troubles and is the helper of the helpless.

How would you describe David's request? What is he hoping would happen?

Help the afflicted, and call the evildoers to account for their wickedness.

CONSIDERING PSALMS 9 AND 10 TOGETHER

What themes or key words appear in both Psalm 9 and 10?

Throughout the Book of Psalms, God is described as a good King who rules over all the world. The righteous are those who humbly look to Him to promote peace and justice, while the wicked are those who oppress their fellow subjects or refuse to submit to God's reign. The psalms include many cries of "Why?" and "How long?" as people groan under hardship and injustice.

Why is it important to acknowledge God's goodness and faithfulness when making a request for Him to act justly? How do these two Psalms illustrate this together?

We are sinners who deserve hell just like everyone else. It is only by God's love and mercy that we are saved through Christ's work on the cross. The phrase, "Break the arm of the wicked" in Psalm 10:15 is not just about revenge. It relates to breaking the power of those who resist God's coming righteous reign.

How do these Psalms ultimately point us to Jesus?

These two Psalms find deeper meaning when we read them in light of Christ. God, the eternal and true King, became a man and suffered unjustly. Jesus was also the answer to these prayers in that He will one day usher in His kingdom of righteousness, and wickedness will be done away with forever.

APPLICATION

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JOHN 16:33

How can we better incorporate a pattern of praising God for the faithfulness He has shown us in our daily walk with Him?

How can we better incorporate a pattern of trust in God for His promise of completely removing wickedness from His kingdom in the future?

PRAYER

Pray that God's kingdom would come, and His will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. Praise God for who He is and for His faithfulness in our lives. Thank Him for the specific ways He has intervened in our lives to redeem us. Pray we would be comforted by the fact that He is coming soon to establish Christ's kingdom on earth and that one day, He will eliminate wickedness forever.

COMMENTARY

Psalm 9

Ps 9 title. The Hebrew word Muth-labben could be related to alamoth, which appears in the title of Psalm 46. It could be translated as “for the death of a son” in the sense of being used for that occasion. More likely it identifies a specific tune or style of music. Psalm 10 does not have a title and is joined to this psalm in the Septuagint and the Vulgate. Together, Psalms 9 and 10 form an acrostic poem (each verse starts with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet). But the two Psalms stand apart in that their mood, as Psalm 9 focuses on thanksgiving whereas Psalm 10 is a lament.

9:1 “With all my heart” means “sincerely” (86:12; 111:1; 119:10). Wonderful works is unspecified here, but elsewhere it refers to God’s acts of creation (136:4), His works in the natural order (Job 5:9), or the redemptive acts performed on behalf of His people (Ex 3:20).

9:2-3 The retreat and stumbling of enemies describes either an event recently experienced or a frequent situation brought about by God (27:2; 56:4).

9:4-6 The verbs in these verses express completed action, indicating the confidence of David that the execution of God’s justice was certain. In this context, the throne describes God’s judgment (v. 7; 11:4) more than His rule, as it is sometimes used (45:6). Their name being erased and their memory perishing refer to complete annihilation and the destruction of one’s existence (21:10; 83:4; Dt 32:26).

9:7-8 Yahweh is enthroned forever (29:10; 93:2) and is portrayed as judging the world. Even though there will be a final judgment of the world in the future (96:13; 98:9), God is currently executing His justice on the world as well since He is and has always been the Judge of the earth (94:2).

9:9-10 The fact that Yahweh is on His throne is a comfort to the oppressed because He offers them protection from the wicked who afflict them. The phrases know Your name and trust in You and seek You describe those who have personal, experiential knowledge of Yahweh (“know” is connected with love in 91:14), and who depend on Him and look to Him in times of need.

9:11 Sing and proclaim are parallel commands indicating the responsibility of those who know God and His works to tell others (30:4; 1Ch 16:8; Isa 12:4)

9:12 Bloodshed is literally “bloods”; describing the avenging of murder (Gen 9:5; 42:22; Ezek 33:6).

9:13-14 The purpose of the plea in verse 13 is to declare praises to God. This further expands the commands in verse 11 and shows how the psalmist’s deliverance will be used to tell others about God’s goodness. Rescue from the gates of Sheol will allow him to enter the gates of Daughter Zion, which is a description of Jerusalem. It refers to more than the city itself, including its inhabitants as well.

9:15-16 The idea of enemies suffering the same fate that they had planned for someone else is found in other psalms (7:15-16; 35:8; 57:6). In this case, the enemies are the nations who are being judged by God for their rebellion against Him (2:1), as seen in verse 16. Higgsion comes perhaps from a Hebrew root meaning “murmur.” It might refer to the use of quieter instruments.

9:17-18 There is a play on the word “forget” in these verses. Those who forget God will go to Sheol, a place where they are forgotten (88:5), a concept similar to that of 9:5-6. In contrast, the future is bright for those who trust in Yahweh even though they are currently being persecuted by others.

9:19-20 “Rise up” is a martial call for the Lord to act. More specifically, He is asked to put terror in them. This is not the “fear of the Lord” that is characteristic of those who believe in Yahweh but the terror of people at the approach of an army (Dt 2:25; 11:25).

Psalm 10

Psalm 10 does not have a title and is joined to Psalm in the Septuagint and the Vulgate. Another reason for seeing Psalms 9 and 10 as one is that there is an alphabetic acrostic that begins in Psalm 9 and is continued in Psalm 10. However, there is a sufficient change that takes place, especially in terms of mood and form (Ps 9 focuses on thanksgiving whereas Ps 10 takes the form of a lament psalm).

10:1-2 The perceived absence of Yahweh in the psalmist's suffering is described as standing far away (35:22; 38:21) and hiding (13:1). This is another way of saying that God has not yet delivered the psalmist, although there is an implication of rejection as expressed more forcefully in other lament psalms (22:1). The specific affliction here is identified in 10:2 in the request for the wicked to be caught in their own schemes.

10:3-6 The arrogance of the wicked one climaxes in a statement denying God's existence. This is not metaphysical atheism, in which there is absolute unbelief in God's existence, but practical atheism, which denies that God pays any attention to what people are doing (14:1; 53:1). The enemy's security rests on his thinking, which is that he can get away with anything his own cravings allow. He will never be moved (15:5; 16:8; 21:7; 62:2; 112:6) in the sense that no higher being will divert him from doing what he desires.

10:7 Mouth and tongue are used for speech, describing the deadly arsenal of the enemy's words (5:9; 140:3). A similar image appears in 64:3 where a tongue is a sword and speech is an arrow.

10:8-10 The image of a wild animal, specifically a lion, is commonly used for the wicked. He preys on the innocent (94:21; 106:38) and the helpless. This second term is used only in this psalm (vv. 10,14).

10:11 God's inactivity is evidence enough for the wicked that He has forgotten the righteous, reinforcing the practical atheism expressed in verse 4. This is coupled with the assumption that God was hiding Himself. For the afflicted, this apparent situation was a perplexing question (v. 1).

10:12-15 What is true in Psalm 9 is now in conflict with what appears to be happening in Psalm 10. God is asked not to forget the afflicted, but in 9:12, 18 He does not forget them. Here the wicked think that God will not demand an account, but in 9:12 He clearly does. The tension is between appearance and reality, a common situation in the lament psalms. Fatherless is a better rendering than "orphan," since in Hebrew society it was the lack (or loss) of a father that made a person helpless by not having property or rights. Breaking the arm of the wicked would make them helpless as well (37:17), allowing them to be called into account.

10:16-18 Since Yahweh is sovereign forever, His justice will triumph. The statement that nations will perish from His land is reminiscent of the annihilation of the Canaanites from the promised land, a land that belonged to Yahweh and was given to His people (Dt 7). The final result is that the wicked will no longer terrify others but will themselves be terrified (9:20).