



Plea For Judgment
Psalms 58 & 59,
referencing other Imprecatory Psalms
#18 in a series on the Psalms
Pastor Lyle L. Wahl
August 22, 2010

Some Problems We May Have With The Imprecatory Psalms.

1. Reconciling them with the rest of Scripture.
(cp. Leviticus 19:17-18; Proverbs 25:21-22; Matthew 5:43-48; 23:1-33; Luke 6:27-38; 18:1-8; Romans 2:4-5; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; 2 Timothy 4:14; Revelation 6:9-11; 18:20; 19:1-6)
2. Reconciling them with the predominant view of the *civilized world* and *civilized behavior*.
3. Reconciling them with our personal angry and vindictive feelings.
(Psalm 58:1-2; 59:12; 139:19-23; cp. Romans 12:17-21; Galatians 5:13-15, 20; Ephesians 4:25-32; Colossians 3:5-11; James 1:19-20)

The Nature And Purpose Of The Imprecatory Psalms.

1. They are grounded in God's sovereignty.
(59:8, 13; cf. 79:9-11; 139:1-16)
2. They are a plea for God's righteous judgment.
(58:1-9; 59:1-15; cf. 7:3-11; 35:1-8, 17-21; 79:1-7; 109:1-20, 21; 139:19-20; 140:1-5, 9-11; Matthew 23:1-33; Romans 2:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Hebrews 10:26-31; Revelation 20:10-15)
3. They are a means to praying and working through our frustrations and anger. (58:6-9; 59:1-13)
4. They are a channel to submitting to God and returning to praise.
(58:10-11; 59:16-17; cf. 7:17; 35:9-10, 27-28; 69:30-36; 79:13; 109:30-31; 140:13)

In My Life This Week

(As you use this daily guide, write out your observations and responses on a separate piece of paper and save them with this sheet for reference.)

Monday. Imprecatory Psalms, such as Psalms 58 & 59, call for judgment and punishment on one's enemies. But more importantly, they call for judgment and punishment on those who have made themselves enemies of God by their wickedness. These Psalms are not calls for personal revenge, but calls to God to vindicate His holiness and display His sovereignty and glory as He delivers the righteous and judges the wicked.

Other imprecatory Psalms are 7, 35, 69, 79, 109, 137, 139 and 140 (all except 70 & 137 being written by King David). What are some of your thoughts and feelings when you read phrases such as Psalm 58:6, 59:13, 137:7-9, and 139:19-22?

Tuesday. To understand the imprecatory Psalms rightly we must separate them from our personal angry and vindictive feelings. Rushing to recite Psalm 58:6-9 or 59:13 when someone cuts you off in traffic, unfairly criticizes you or hurts you in some other way is a misuse of these Psalms. Always remember that the ultimate call was for God to vindicate His holiness and display His sovereignty and glory. Review the verses listed in the outline about our anger (under "3. Reconciling them with our personal angry and vindictive feelings.").

Wednesday. The imprecatory Psalms are grounded in God's sovereignty and so plead for His righteous judgment. Why is God's sovereignty an essential foundation to these prayers? How easy, or difficult, is it for you to be truly concerned for God's righteous judgment and glory in light of both your own feelings and the more than terrifying thought of people coming under God's just judgment?

Thursday. The imprecatory Psalms can help us pray and work through our frustrations and anger as we move to fully submitting to God and so return to praise. See the last two points in the outline for Biblical references on this. When bad things happen in the world, around you, to you, remember this process *and*, while asking the deep and hard questions, don't get hung up or stuck on your own hurt and angry feelings.

Friday–Saturday. On Sunday we plan to look at Psalm 49. Read and think through this Psalm as you prepare for our time of worship together.

© 2010 Lyle L. Wahl