

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

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Psalm 10 — God Sees and Hears

1.0 Introducing Psalm 10

1.1 Psalms 9 and 10

- See notes on Psalm 9.
- Parallels:
 - ✓ God enthroned as judge (9:4, 7-8) and king (10:16).
 - ✓ God does not forsake or forget His people (9:10, 12, 18; 10:14, 17, 18).
 - ✓ The deeds of the wicked come back upon their own heads (9:15-16; 10:2).
 - ✓ The nations will be judged and destroyed (9:5, 15, 17-20; 10:16).
 - ✓ Human beings are mere mortals (9:20; 10:18).
 - ✓ Wicked men ignore God (9:17; 10:4).
 - ✓ God sees the troubles of the righteous (9:13; 10:14) and hears their prayers (9:12; 10:17).
 - ✓ “Arise, O LORD!” (9:19; 10:12; cf. notes on 3:7; 7:6).

1.2 Psalm 10

- Two big questions:
 - ✓ Where is God when bad things happen to good people (v. 1)?
 - ✓ Where is God when bad people do such terrible things (vv. 2-11)?

- Two dependable answers:
 - ✓ God knows even the thoughts of the wicked (vv. 4, 6, 11, 13).
 - ✓ God sees and hears (vv. 14, 17), regardless of what the righteous (v. 1) or the wicked (vv. 11, 13) may think.

2.0 Reading Psalm 10

↳ **10:1** Why do You stand afar off, O LORD?
Why do You hide in times of trouble?

10:2 The wicked in *his* pride persecutes the poor;
Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.

10:3 For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire;
He blesses the greedy *and* renounces the LORD.

10:4 The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek *God*;
God is in none of his thoughts.

10:5 His ways are always prospering;
Your judgments *are* far above, out of his sight;
As for all his enemies, he sneers at them.

10:6 **He has said in his heart,** "I shall not be moved;
I shall never be in adversity."

10:7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression;
Under his tongue *is* trouble and iniquity.

10:8 He sits in the lurking places of the villages,
In the secret places he murders the innocent;
His eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless.

10:9 He lies in wait secretly, as a lion in his den;
He lies in wait to catch the poor;
He catches the poor when he draws him into his net.

10:10 So he crouches, he lies low,
That the helpless may fall by his strength.

10:11 **He has said in his heart,**
"God has forgotten;
He hides His face;
He will never see."

⤴ **10:12** Arise, O LORD!
O God, lift up Your hand!
Do not forget the humble.

10:13 Why do the wicked renounce God?
He has said in his heart,
"You will not require *an account*."



7 **10:14** But You have seen, for You observe trouble and grief,
To repay *it* by Your hand.

The helpless commits himself to You;
You are the helper of the fatherless.

8 **10:15** Break the arm of the wicked and the evil *man*;
Seek out his wickedness *until* You find none.

10:16 The LORD *is* King forever and ever;
The nations have perished out of His land.

9 **10:17** LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble;
You will prepare their heart;
You will cause Your ear to hear.

10:18 To do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed,
That the man of the earth may oppress no more.

To the Chief Musician. On an eight-stringed harp.

3.0 Understanding Psalm 10

3.1 Outline

- I.** Plea/Complaint (vv. 1-11)
- II.** Prayer/Commitment (vv. 12-15)
- III.** Praise/Confidence (vv. 16-18)

3.2 Notes

- **v. 1** “Why ...?”
 - See Psalm 2:1, “Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?”
 - The problem of **theodicy** (= God’s justice).
- **v. 4** “God *is* in none of his thoughts”
 - Compare:

And in his pride the impious man declares:
“No question of revenge!
There is no God!” Such is the sum of his philosophy!

— James A. Kleist and Thomas J. Lynam,
The Psalms in Rhythmic Prose
 - Practical (or, functional) atheists?
 - ✓ Unbelievers choose to live without God because they think that God is powerless to stop them and that God really doesn’t care what they do.
 - ✓ Believers sometimes choose to live as though they must take care of all their own problems and troubles.

- **v. 8** “In the secret places he murders the innocent”
 - “The decibels of moral indignation are reserved for genocides, usually called ‘ethnic cleansing,’ but not consistently. Some people are more expendable than other people. And ‘the murder of the innocent,’ an expression of this psalm, is not a label to be used in ‘nice’ circles in reference to partial birth abortion.”
— Stanley L. Jaki, *Praying the Psalms*, 52
 - Note the words used for defenseless people in this psalms: “poor” (vv. 2, 9), “innocent” (v. 8), “humble” (vv. 12, 17), “fatherless” (vv. 14, 18), “oppressed” (v. 18).
- **v. 9** “as a lion”
 - Compare 1 Peter 5:8 – “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”
- **v. 18** “the man of the earth”
 - “[T]hey strut in the earth as if they own the permanence that belongs alone to the reign of the LORD (10:5-6 and 10:16).” – James L. Mays, *Psalms*, 74.

4.0 Singing Psalm 10

- “The last twenty years or so have seen a marked shift in many churches to the use of contemporary praise choruses rather than the classic hymns of the faith. One consequence of this shift has been that, because most choruses are concerned with a more limited spectrum of human experience (praise), the community gathered to worship is led to a rather one-sided experience of Christian faith. Early criticism of the praise-chorus movement, to the effect that they were superficial and did not reflect a sufficiently biblical foundation, was blunted by the introduction of more and more choruses relying primarily on scriptural texts (especially the psalms!).
“But the problem is that even these biblically based choruses are selective—choosing bits of psalms rather than the whole. They are still praise-oriented, often ignoring those portions of psalms that reflect anger, confession, sin, and need. By quoting snippets of Scripture as they do, choruses can leave the impression that they proved a more comprehensive understanding of the Christian faith than their selective approach makes

possible, leaving the singer and the community with the false impression that worship is only (or primarily) praise and thanksgiving.”

— Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms*, NIV Application Commentary, 244-45

(Tune: “O God, Our Help in Ages Past”)

1 O God, the help of all Thy saints,
Our hope in time of ill;
We trust Thee, though Thy face be hid,
And seek Thy presence still.

2 Why should the men of pride and sin
Thy truth and power defy;
And boast, as if their evil way
Were hidden from Thine eye?



3 Lord, Thou hast seen; arise and save.
To Thee our cause we bring;
Reign Thou in righteousness and power,
For Thou alone art King.

4 All our desires to Thee are known;
Thy help is ever near;
O first prepare our hearts to pray,
And then accept our prayer!

— Author: Edward Osley, 1836
— Music: William Croft, 1708

5.0 Praying Psalm 10

- Father, do not hide Your face from my troubles.
- Lord, remove our indifference to evil and immorality.
- “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done ...”
- Remove the Gentile nations from Your land, O God.
- Thank You, Father, for seeing my troubles and hearing my prayer.
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6.0 Applying Psalm 10

- God knows, sees, and hears all things.
- The wicked put God out of their minds and lives.
- God helps the helpless.