

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

Bereans Sunday School  
Placerita Baptist Church  
2007

by  
William D. Barrick, Th.D.  
Professor of OT, The Master's Seminary



## Psalm 94 — When Anxiety Attacks

### 1.0 Introducing Psalm 94

- Placed among the theocratic psalms (Psalms 93–100), Psalm 94 deals with the problem of wickedness. As King, it is a righteous God's responsibility to execute justice.
- On Wednesdays, according to Rabbinical tradition, Psalm 94 was read in the post-exilic Temple. The Greek Septuagint supplied a heading: "A psalm of David for the fourth day of the week."
- This psalm reminds us that believers in Old Testament times often suffered for their faith (Hebrews 11:35-38).
  - ✓ "We are more than conquerors *in* our afflictions, not by avoiding them."— John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 92 (commenting on Romans 8:37).

### 2.0 Reading Psalm 94 (NAU)

- 94:1** O LORD, God of vengeance,  
God of vengeance, shine forth!
- 94:2** Rise up, O Judge of the earth,  
**Render recompense to the proud.**
- 94:3** How long shall the wicked, O LORD,  
How long shall the wicked exult?
- 94:4** They pour forth *words*, they speak arrogantly;  
All who do wickedness vaunt themselves.
- 94:5** They crush Your people, O LORD,  
And afflict Your heritage.
- 94:6** They slay the widow and the stranger  
And murder the orphans.

- 94:7** They have said, “The LORD does not see,  
Nor does the God of Jacob pay heed.”
- 94:8** Pay heed, you senseless among the people;  
And when will you understand, stupid ones?
- 94:9** He who planted the ear, does He not hear?  
He who formed the eye, does He not see?
- 94:10** He who chastens the nations, will He not rebuke,  
*Even* He who teaches man knowledge?
- 94:11** The LORD knows the thoughts of man,  
That they are a *mere* breath.
- 94:12** Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O LORD,  
And whom You teach out of Your law;
- 94:13** That You may grant him relief from the days of adversity,  
Until a pit is dug for the wicked.
- 94:14** For the LORD will not abandon His people,  
Nor will He forsake His inheritance.
- 94:15** For judgment will again be righteous,  
And all the upright in heart will follow it.
- 94:16** Who will stand up for me against evildoers?  
Who will take his stand for me against those who do wickedness?
- 94:17** If the LORD had not been my help,  
My soul would soon have dwelt in *the abode of* silence.
- 94:18** If I should say, “My foot has slipped,”  
Your lovingkindness, O LORD, will hold me up.
- 94:19** When my anxious thoughts multiply within me,  
Your consolations delight my soul.
- 94:20** Can a throne of destruction be allied with You,  
One which devises mischief by decree?
- 94:21** They band themselves together against the life of the righteous  
And condemn the innocent to death.
- 94:22** But the LORD has been my stronghold,  
And my God the rock of my refuge.
- 94:23** **He has brought back** **their wickedness upon them**  
And will destroy them in their evil;  
The LORD our God will destroy them.

### 3.0 Understanding Psalm 94

#### 3.1 Outline

- I. Petition for Divine Action (vv. 1-7)
- II. Proclamation of Divine Knowledge (vv. 8-11)
- III. Promise of Divine Presence (vv. 12-15)
- IV. Provision of Divine Deliverance (vv. 16-19)
- V. Promise of Divine Recompense (vv. 20-23)



### 3.2 Notes

- **v. 1** “vengeance”
  - “*Avenge* is generally used in the sense of achieving justice, whereas *revenge* (verb) stresses retaliation.”—William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979), 91.
  - “Vengeance” consists of the Lord Himself avenging wrongdoing.
  - Compare Romans 12:18-19; 1 Thessalonians 4:6.
  - See the messianic relationship in Isaiah 61:1-6.
- **vv. 1** “shine forth”
  - OT writers reserve this terminology for theophany (the appearance of God). God’s presence will resolve the problem of wickedness.
  - See Deuteronomy 33:2 and Psalm 50:2.
- **v. 2** “O Judge of the earth”
  - When justice seems absent, the cry is for God Himself to provide it.
  - See Genesis 18:25; Psalm 82:8.
- **v. 2** “Render recompense to the proud”
  - This theme forms an inclusio with which to frame this psalm (vv. 2 and 23). It is the theme of the psalm.
- **v. 5** “Your people . . . Your heritage”
  - Note the inclusio with verse 14. The injustices specifically target the Lord’s own covenant people whom He cannot abandon.
  - Compare Psalms 28:9 and 78:62, 71.
- **v. 6** “widow . . . stranger . . . orphans”
  - Care for these vulnerable individuals is at the core of true faith.
  - Compare Psalm 146:9 and Deuteronomy 10:18; 24:17, 19-21; 27:19; James 1:27.
- **v. 7** “The LORD does not see”
  - Wicked people reject the truth that God sees all and knows all.
  - This attitude and mindset is at the heart of practical atheism.
- **v. 8** “senseless . . . stupid”
  - Psalm 92:6 employs the same two words. See the notes for Psalm 92.
- **vv. 9-11** Divine Omniscience
  - Three rhetorical questions expect an affirmative answer.
  - Indeed, God even knows an individual’s thoughts. No evil can be done in total secrecy—God sees and will judge accordingly.
    - ✓ See Proverbs 20:12.
  - Compare Matthew 10:26.
- **v. 11** “a mere breath”
  - “Breath” is the same word as “vanity” in Ecclesiastes.



- See quotation of this verse in 1 Corinthians 3:20 and the reference to the concept in Romans 1:21.
- **v. 12** “Blessed is the man . . . Your law”
  - See Psalm 1:1-2 and Hebrews 12:5-6.
- **vv. 13-15** Divine Promises
  - God promises that the righteous will find rest from adversity and He promises to punish the wicked (v. 13).
  - God, in His loyal love, will never abandon the righteous (v. 14; cf. Hebrews 13:5 with quote from Deuteronomy 31:6, 8).
  - Righteous judgment will ultimately be executed on the wicked (v. 15).
- **vv. 16-19** The Psalmist’s Experience
  - Asking who will come to his aid (v. 16), the psalmist testifies concerning the deliverance the Lord had supplied (vv. 17-19).
  - “Consolations” (v. 19) is used in Isaiah 66:11-13 to describe the comfort a nursing infant finds in his/her mother.
    - ✓ See 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.
  - The psalmist speaks of the supreme “delight” (a rare verb; see Psalm 119:16, 47, 70) he has in the comfort that the Lord provides when “anxious [disquieting] thoughts” (only here and 139:23) fill his mind.
- **vv. 20-23** Divine Justice
  - The Lord is no ally to wicked rulers who harass, oppress, and destroy the righteous and the innocent (vv. 20-21).
  - The righteous, like the psalmist, trust the Lord for protection (v. 22).
  - The Lord will execute the wicked in the midst of their evil deeds—their just recompense (v. 23).



#### 4.0 Singing Psalm 94

##### O Lord, Thou Judge of All the Earth

(Tunes: “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” or “He Leadeth Me” or “Sweet Hour of Prayer” or “And Can It Be That I Should Gain?”)



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|---|---|
| <p><b>1</b> O Lord, Thou Judge of all the earth,<br/>To Whom all vengeance doth belong,<br/>Arise and show Thy glory forth,<br/>Requite the proud, condemn the wrong.</p> | <p><b>2</b> How long, O Lord, in boastful pride<br/>Shall wicked men triumphant stand?<br/>How long shall they afflict thy saints<br/>And scorn Thy wrath, Thy dreadful<br/>hand?</p> |
| <p><b>3</b> The widow and the fatherless<br/>They slay, and helpless strangers smite;<br/>The faithful God they do not fear,<br/>They say the Lord will not requite.</p>  | <p><b>4</b> Be wise, ye fools and brutish men;<br/>Shall not He see Who formed the eye?<br/>Shall not He hear Who formed the ear,<br/>And judge, Who reigneth, God most<br/>high?</p> |

- 5** The Lord will judge in righteousness,  
From Him all truth and knowledge flow;  
The foolish thoughts of wicked men,  
How vain they are the Lord doth know.
- 6** That man is blest whom Thou, O Lord,  
With chastening hand dost teach Thy  
will,  
For in the day when sinners fall  
That man in peace abideth still.
- 7** The Lord will not cast off His own,  
Nor His inheritance forsake;  
Just judgment shall at length prevail,  
And upright hearts shall courage take.
- 8** Who will arise for my defense  
Against the wicked in the land?  
Against iniquity and wrong  
What main for me will valiant stand?
- 9** Unless the Lord had been my Help,  
My life had quickly passed away;  
But when my foot had almost slipped,  
O Lord, Thy mercy was my stay.
- 10** Amid the doubts that fill my mind  
Thy comforts, Lord, bring joy to me;  
Can wickedness, though throned in  
might,  
Have fellowship, O Lord, with Thee?
- 11** The wicked, in their might arrayed,  
Against the righteous join their power,  
But to the Lord I flee for help,  
He is my Refuge and my Tower.
- 12** Our God, the Refuge of His saints,  
Will fight against iniquity;  
Avenger of the innocent  
The Lord omnipotent will be.

— *The Psalter*, 1912

## 5.0 Praying Psalm 94

- Give justice to Your people, Lord. [vv. 1-5]
- Thank You, God, for seeing everything that happens to me. [vv. 7-9]
- Father, teach me from Your Word. [v. 12]
- Thank You for never forsaking Your people. [v. 14]
- Teach me to delight in Your comfort when my mind is troubled. [v. 19]
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## 6.0 Applying Psalm 94

- Take trouble and persecution to the Lord in prayer.
- Count yourself blessed when God disciplines you.
- God will never abandon His people.
- Delight in God's comfort when troubled by disquieting thoughts.

“The whole psalm reads like a commentary on the teaching of Psalm 1 and on the theological issues which that psalm raises.”

— Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Book of Psalms*  
(Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 311