

The Kingdom Hope in the Psalms

Psalm 10 The King's Retribution

by Roger Samsel

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March 2008

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

This Psalm begins on a note of despair. It seems that God stands afar off, disinterested and unmindful of the suffering of the poor and righteous and of the prosperity and arrogance of the wicked. And the Psalmist asks, "Why?" Why does God appear to be nowhere in sight? The Psalmist then goes on to describe the prosperity and success of the wicked oppressor, concluding by teaching the hope that God will repay the wicked with retribution and deliver the righteous. But let us ask the question, "Is this Psalm prophetic?"

In answer to this question, we note that the LXX word for "trouble" in Verse 1 is the word for "Tribulation" in Matthew 24. In addition, this Psalm refers to "the wicked man" five times, in Verses 2, 3, 4, 13 and 15, always in the third person masculine singular. In Verse 15 he is called, "the wicked and evil man." In Verse 18 he is called, "the man of the earth." While every oppressor is of a kindred character, the primary reference here is to a specific wicked man, most likely the same wicked man whom Paul calls, "the man of sin." In addition, Verse 12 uses the expression "Arise O Lord." We have already demonstrated that this expression is a technical term referring to the Day of the Lord, that is, the Second Coming of Christ. And finally, Verse 16 refers to the eternal righteous reign of the Messiah immediately following the Day of the Lord. All of these facts taken together constitute overwhelming evidence that this Psalm is entirely prophetic. That being the case, let us examine it in more detail to see what we can learn.

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

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

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

*5 His ways are always prospering;
Your judgments are far above, out of his sight;*

*As for all his enemies, he sneers at them.
6 He has said in his heart, "I shall not be moved;
I shall never be in adversity."
7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression;
Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity
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.
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 So he crouches, he lies low,
That the helpless may fall by his strength.
11 He has said in his heart,
"God has forgotten;
He hides His face;
He will never see."*

The Psalmist describes the character of "the man of sin" in great detail including his pride and oppression (V 2); boasting, lust, greed and defiance (V 3), godlessness (V 4), prosperity and military might (V 5); self-confidence (V 6); arrogance and blasphemous speech (V 7); and predation against the weak and helpless (V 8 - 10). All of this is in perfect harmony with descriptions we read elsewhere of the Antichrist. According to Verse 11, the man of sin, (like every other oppressor) is a "fundamentalist" and his fundamental creed is "God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see... He will not require an account (V 13)." But he is mistaken. God will arise!

*12 Arise, O LORD!
O God, lift up Your hand!
Do not forget the humble.
13 Why do the wicked renounce God?
He has said in his heart,
"You will not require an account."*

The theme of Psalm 10 is the doctrine of Retribution. God will arise! The Lord Jesus will return and will take vengeance on every evil and bloodthirsty man who oppresses the weak and helpless, beginning with this archetype of all oppressors, the "man of sin." God is recording every act of cruelty, oppression, abuse, barbarity and injustice. It is all written down in a book. And the books will be opened! There will be a reckoning!

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.*

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

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

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

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

On that Day of Judgment, the helpless, the orphan, the widow, the poor the meek will all be avenged. On that Day, the Lord will be King forever and ever and never again will there be oppression, violence or injustice.

There is a significant difference in the LXX rendering of Verses 17 – 18 that is worth mentioning. In the LXX we have,

The Lord has heard the desire of the humble.
You have inclined your ear to listen to the preparation of their heart
to plead for the orphan and the afflicted,
in order that a man may no longer be set up to boast on the earth.

With this understanding, “*the humble*” in Verse 17 are the righteous. The Lord inclines His ear to listen to the “*desire*” and the “*pleading*” of the righteous. What do the righteous plead for? First of all, the word for “*plead*” is a judicial term. In other words, their “*pleading*” in this verse does not mean prayer to God. It means coming to the legal and physical defense of orphans and of the oppressed. Even though they themselves are oppressed, it is not for their own interests that they plead. Their desires and their pleadings are on behalf of orphans and the oppressed. Twice in Verse 17 we are told that God is listening to this. The result of God's listening to this is that one day, the wicked will perish out of the earth and a man will never again be set up to boast on the earth.