

Lament Psalms

Asking God the Hard Questions

“May the enemies be blotted out!”
Imprecations –
Is it okay for us to Pray that Way?
Session 11 – 28 November 2021



1st Baptist Church – Regina, SK L4L Fall 2021

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“By the Rivers of Babylon We Sat and Wept” (1938) by Moshe Rynecki

<https://rynecki.org/wp-content/themes/rynecki/images/npi1938nr32-e1418056288987.jpg>

Psalm 137 (KGF)

1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat—
also, we wept in our remembering Zion.

2 Upon the poplars in its midst, we hung our lyres.

3 For there our captors asked us (for) words of a song,
and our tormentors, (for words of) joy:

“Sing us one from the songs of Zion.”

4 How can we sing a song of Yahweh
in a foreign land?

5 If I forget you, Jerusalem,
may my right hand forget
(how to function).

6 May my tongue
cleave to my palate
if I do not remember you,
if I do not raise-up Jerusalem
above my chief joy.



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Psalm 137 (KGF)

7 Remember, Yahweh, against the children of Edom
the day of Jerusalem ('s fall),
who said: "Raze it!

Raze it to its foundations!"

8 Daughter Babylon,
(who will be) devastated—
Oh the blessedness
of the one who repays you
your recompense
that you recompensed to us.

9 Oh the blessedness
of the one who seizes and dashes
your little-ones
against the rock(s).



2 Kings 8:12 (NASB) -- Against Northern Kingdom, Israel:

Then he [Elisha] answered, “Because I know the evil that you [commander of Syrian army] will do to the sons of Israel:

 their strongholds you will set on fire,
 and their young men you will kill with the sword,
 and their little ones you will dash in pieces,
 and their women with child you will rip up.”

Against Northern Kingdom, Israel

Hosea 10 (NASB)

¹³ You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped injustice;
you have eaten the fruit of lies.

Because you have trusted in your way, in your numerous warriors,
¹⁴ therefore a tumult will arise among your people,
and all your fortresses will be destroyed,
as Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel on the day of battle,

When mothers were dashed in pieces with *their* children.

¹⁵ Thus it will be done to you at Bethel because of your great wickedness.
At dawn the king of Israel will be completely cut off.

Hosea 13:16 [Heb 14:1]

¹⁶ Samaria [capital of Northern Kingdom] will be held guilty,
for she has rebelled against her God.
They will fall by the sword;
their little ones will be dashed in pieces,
and their pregnant women will be ripped open.

Against Nineveh (Assyrian capital)

Nahum 3:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ Yet she became an exile.

She went into captivity;

also her small children were dashed to pieces at the head of every street;

They cast lots for her honorable men,

and all her great men were bound with fetters.

Against Babylon

Isaiah 13 (NASB) (c. 700 B.C.)

¹⁵ Anyone who is found will be thrust through,
and anyone who is captured will fall by the sword.

¹⁶ Their little ones also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes;
their houses will be plundered
and their wives ravished.

Psalm 137 (KGF) -- Post- 586 B.C.

⁸ Daughter Babylon, (who will be) devastated—

Oh the blessedness of the one who repays you
your recompense that you recompensed to us.

⁹ Oh the blessedness of the one who seizes and dashes
your little-ones against the rock(s).

Psalm 109 (NASB, with modifications)

PETITION

1 God of my praise,
do not be silent!

COMPLAINT
“They-”

2 For they have opened the wicked and deceitful mouth against me;
they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.
3 They have also surrounded me with words of hatred,
and fought against me without cause.
4 In return for my love they act as my accusers;
but I am *in* prayer (for them).
5 Thus they have repaid me evil for good
and hatred for my love.

PETITION
(Imprecation)

⁶ Appoint a wicked man over him,
and let an accuser stand at his right hand.
⁷ When he is judged, let him come forth guilty,
and let his prayer become sin.
⁸ Let his days be few;
let another take his office.
⁹ Let his children be fatherless
and his wife a widow.
¹⁰ Let his children wander about and beg;
and let them seek *sustenance* far from their ruined homes.
¹¹ Let the creditor seize all that he has,
and let strangers plunder the product of his labor.
¹² Let there be none to extend lovingkindness to him,
nor any to be gracious to his fatherless children.
¹³ Let his posterity be cut off;
in a following generation let their name be blotted out.
¹⁴ Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before Yahweh,
and do not let the sin of his mother be blotted out.
¹⁵ Let them be before Yahweh continually,
that He may cut off their memory from the earth:

Reason

¹⁶ Because he did not remember to show lovingkindness,
but persecuted the afflicted and needy man,
and the despondent in heart, to put *them* to death.
¹⁷ He also loved cursing, so it came to him;
and he did not delight in blessing, so it was far from him.
¹⁸ But he clothed himself with cursing as with his garment,
and it entered into his body like water
and like oil into his bones.

¹⁹ Let it be to him as a garment with which he covers himself,
and for a belt with which he constantly girds himself.

PETITION

²⁰ Let this be the reward of my accusers from Yahweh,
and of those who speak evil against my soul.

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20109&version=NIV,NASB1995,NRSV,CEV

Psalm 109 ∨ New International Version ∨	Psalm 109 ∨ New American Standard Bible 1995 ∨	Psalm 109 ∨ New Revised Standard Version ∨
Psalm 109 For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.	Vengeance Invoked upon Adversaries. For the choir director. A Psalm of David.	Psalm 109 Prayer for Vindication and Vengeance
To the leader. Of David. A Psalm.	To the leader. Of David. A Psalm.	To the leader. Of David. A Psalm.
1 My God, whom I praise, do not remain silent,	1 109 O God of my praise, Do not be silent!	1 Do not be silent, O God of my praise.
2 for people who are wicked and deceitful have opened their mouths against me;	2 For they have opened the ^[a] wicked and deceitful mouth against me; They have spoken ^[a] against me with a lying tongue.	2 For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me, speaking against me with lying tongues.
3 they have spoken against me with lying tongues.	3 They have also surrounded me with words of hatred, And fought against me without cause.	3 They beset me with words of hate, and attack me without cause.
3 With words of hatred they surround me;	4 In return for my love they act as my accusers;	4 In return for my love they accuse me,
4 they attack me without cause.	4 But I am <i>in</i> prayer.	4 even while I make prayer for them. ^[a]
4 In return for my friendship they accuse me,	5 Thus they have ^[a] repaid me evil for good	5 So they reward me evil for good, and hatred for my love.
5 but I am a man of prayer.	5 And hatred for my love.	5
5 They repay me evil for good, and hatred for my friendship.	6 Appoint a wicked man over him, And let an ^[a] accuser stand at his right hand.	6 They say, ^[a] "Appoint a wicked man against him; let an accuser stand on his right.
6 Appoint someone evil to oppose my enemy;	7 When he is judged, let him come forth guilty,	7 When he is tried, let him be found guilty;
7 let an accuser stand at his right hand.	7 And let his prayer become sin.	7 let his prayer be counted as sin.
7 When he is tried, let him be found guilty,		8

**Imprecation against the “Enemies”
by the Psalmist (vv. 6-19)**

**Quotation of the “Enemies”
against the Psalmist (vv. 6-19)**

- 1) One being cursed = 3rd person singular (“he”);
vv. 2-5, 20, 27-29, “enemies”= 3rd person plural (“they”)
- 2) Yahweh spoken about in 3rd person (“he”)
vv. 1, 21, 26—28, Yahweh spoken to in 2nd person (“you”)

Psalm 109 (NASB)

PETITION

21 But You, Yahweh, Lord, deal *kindly* with me
for Your name's sake!
Because Your lovingkindness is good, deliver me!

COMPLAINT

"I-"

22 For I am afflicted and needy,
and my heart is wounded within me.
23 I am passing like a shadow when it lengthens;
I am shaken off like the locust.
24 My knees are weak from fasting,
and my flesh has grown lean, without fatness.
25 I also have become a reproach to them;
when they see me, they wag their head.

PETITION

26 Help me, Yahweh my God!
Save me according to Your lovingkindness!

CONFIDENCE

27* And they will know that this is Your hand;
 You, Yahweh, have done it.
 28 They will curse, but You will bless;
 they have arisen, but they will be ashamed,
 but Your servant will be glad.
 29 My accusers will be clothed with dishonor,
 and they will cover themselves with their own shame
 as with a robe.

* NASB translates these
 verses, as jussives
 (“Let them ...”),
 thus **PETITIONS**

**Affirmation
 of Praise**

30 With my mouth I will give thanks abundantly to Yahweh;
 and in the midst of many I will praise Him.

CONFIDENCE

31 For He stands at the right hand of the needy,
 to save him from those who judge his soul.

Contemporary Use of Imprecations

1) Therapeutic Value

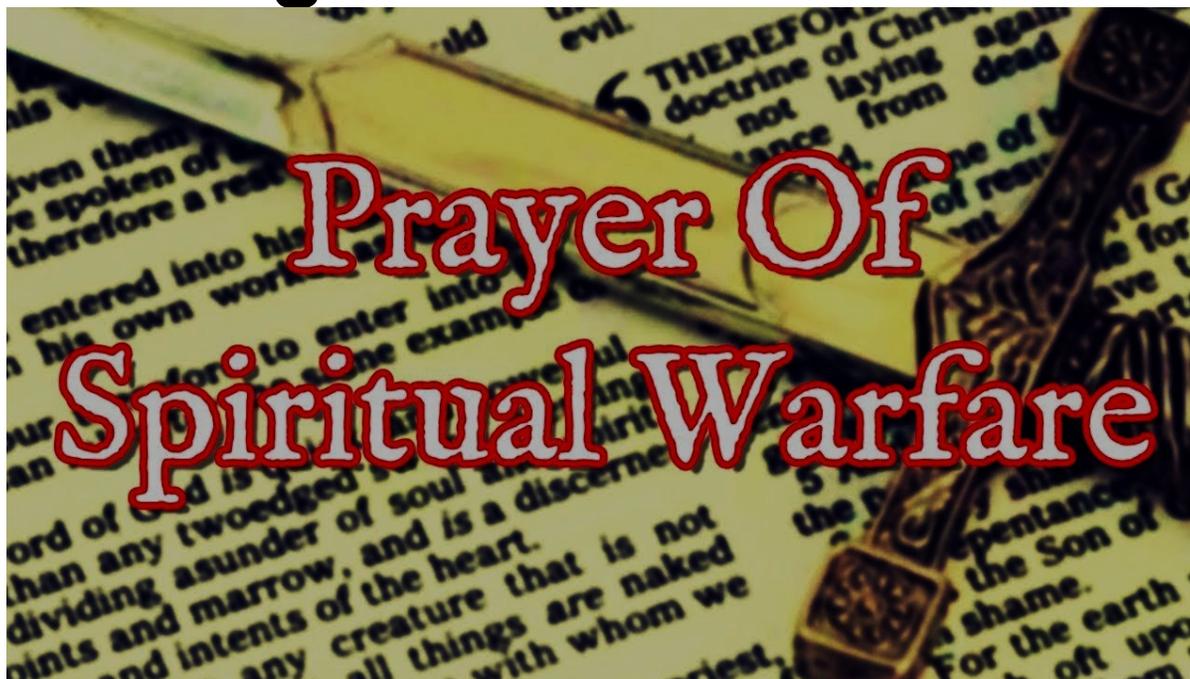
(a) in our
Venting
the Feelings
to God

(b) in God
Responding by
Correcting
& Healing
the Feelings

Contemporary Use of Imprecations

2) De-Personalize & Spiritualize them & Pray them against “Sin”

(rather than against persons)
or against the Forces of Evil



<https://i.vtime.com/vi/OaEKSS0oDNY/maxresdefault.ioe>

Contemporary Use of Imprecations

3) Pray them

**against the Enemies of God,
but NOT against Personal Enemies**



<https://assets.ozy.com/ozy-prod/2019/07/gettyimages155371886.jpg?width=4216&height=2800&fit=cover>

Contemporary Use of Imprecations

3) Pray them against the Enemies of God

- a) Discern whether an Imprecatory Prayer is Appropriate
- b) Do a Self-Examination to Make sure we are Living in Righteousness & have Pure Motives
- c) Always Pray First for the Person's Salvation
- d) Always Leave it to God to Deal with the Person
- d) Know that Justice may Not Occur in this Life

