

Lament Psalms

Asking God the Hard Questions

Psalms 10 & 73:

**WHY DO
'THE WICKED**

Prosper!

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Psalm 10 (KGF)

1 Why, Yahweh, do you stand afar off?
(Why) do you hide in times of distress?

COMPLAINT

“You”-God

2 In pride (the) wicked hotly-pursues (the) afflicted.

A. Afflicted

“They”
- Wicked

Let them be caught in the plots which they have thought-up.

PETITION

3 For (the) wicked boasts about the desire of his soul;
and the one-who-gains-by-violence curses (and) spurns Yahweh.

4 (The) wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance (lit., “nose”), does not seek (God).

“There is no God” are all of his devious-thoughts.

B. Yahweh

5a His ways are strongly-firm at all times,
(for) on high are your judgments, from before him.

5b (With respect to) all his adversaries, he snorts at them.

6 **He says in his heart, “I will not be shaken;
from generation to generation, there will not be calamity.”**

C. All Adversaries

7 (With) curses, his mouth is filled,
and (with deceit) and oppression;
under his tongue is trouble-making and iniquity.

8 He sits in a place-of-ambush (in the) villages;
in the hiding-places, he slays (the) innocent;
his eyes wait-concealed for the unfortunate.

9 He ambushes in the hiding place
like a lion in his lair;
he ambushes to catch (the) afflicted;
he catches (the) afflicted by drawing them into his net.

A'. Afflicted

10 He crouches; he bows down,
and, by his mighty ones [i.e., his claws] (the) unfortunate fall.

11 **He says in his heart, “God has forgotten.
He has hidden His face;
he never saw (it).”**

B'. Yahweh

¹² Arise, Yahweh!
 God, lift up your hand!
 Do not forget (the) **afflicted**.

PETITION

¹³ Over what has (the) wicked spurned God?

He has said in his heart, "You will not seek (it out)."

COMPLAINT 'They' - Wicked

¹⁴ (But) you have seen;
 for You have beheld trouble-making and vexation
 (so as) to take (it) into your hand.
 To you, (the) **unfortunate** abandonly-commit (themselves).
 (For the) **orphan**, (surely) you, have been (their) helper.

CONFIDENCE

¹⁵ Break the arm of (the) wicked and (the) evildoer,
 May you seek his wickedness, (until) none you find.

PETITION

¹⁶ Yahweh is king forever and ever.
 Nations have perished from his earth.

¹⁷ The desire of (the) **afflicted**, you have heard, Yahweh;
 you will strengthen their heart;
 you will incline Your ear--

¹⁸ to execute-judgment (for the) **orphan** and (the) **oppressed**,
 (so that) man who is from the earth [i.e., mere earthlings] will no longer cause terror.

CONFIDENCE

Psalm 10

- ▶ For the Psalmist, the issue is God’s inactivity in doing anything against the wicked, which let’s the wicked do as they please without any consequences or any justice being executed against them

1 Why, Yahweh, do you stand afar off?
(Why) do you hide in times of distress?

- which parallels the perspective that the wicked have, which is their justification for not ceasing their actions

4b **“There is no God” are all of his devious-thoughts**

5a His ways are strongly-firm at all times,
(for) on high are your judgments, from before him.

6 **He says in his heart, “I will not be shaken;
from generation to generation, there will not be calamity.”**

11 **He says in his heart, “God has forgotten.
He has hidden His face; he never saw (it).”**

13 Over what has (the) wicked spurned God?
He has said in his heart, “You will not seek (it out).”

- Concluding perspective is:

14 (But) you [Yahweh] have seen;
for you have beheld trouble-making and vexation
(so as) to take (it) into your hand.

Psalm 73 (KGF)

A Psalm of Asaph

Psalmist speaking about Self

Psalmist speaking about Wicked

1 Surely good to Israel is God,
to those pure of heart.

2 And/but (as for) me, my feet almost stumbled;
nearly slipped did my steps.

3 For I was envious at the **boasters**,
(when the) well-being of the **wicked**, I saw.

4 For there are no pangs at their death,
and healthy is their body.

5 The trouble(s) of man, they do not have;
and along-with (other) humans,
they are not disease-stricken.

6 Therefore, serving-as-their-necklace is pride;
a garment of violence envelopes them.

7 From the (stomach-)fat goes out their iniquity*;
their idolatrous-imaginings overflow
(from) their heart.

8 They scoff and speak in evil;
oppression from (the) height (of heaven)
they speak.

9 They set against the heavens their mouth;
and their tongue, walks on the earth.

10 Therefore his people turn-away here
(to them),
and waters of abundance are drained out
for/by them.

11 And they say: "How does God know?
And (how) is there knowledge
in the Most High?"

12 Behold, these are (the) **wicked**,
and **those-that-are-at-ease** forever;
they increase wealth.

13 Surely (for) nothing,
have I cleansed my heart,
and I have washed in innocence my hands.

14 And I have been disease-stricken
all the day;
and my chastisement is in the mornings.

15 If I had said:
"I will recount like this",
behold, (to) the generation of your children,
I would have acted-treacherously..

16 And (as) I thought (how) to know this,
troublesome it was in my eyes,

17 until I came into the sanctuaries of God;
(Then) I understood their **end**(-destiny).

18 Surely, in slippery-places you will set them;
you cast-them-down them to destruction.

19 How they become a desolation in a moment!
They come-to-an-end completely by terrors.

20 (They are) like a dream when (one) awakes--
Lord, in arousing, their semblance
you will despise.

21 For my heart was soured,
and (in) my kidneys, I was pierced.

22 And (surely) I was brutishly-stupid,
and I did not know;
(like) The Beast was I with you.

23 And/but (surely) I am always with you;
you have grasped my right hand.

24 With your counsel,
you will guide me;
and afterward, (with) honour
you will receive me.

25 Who is for me in the heavens
(but you)?
and (being) with you, I do not desire
(anyone else) on the earth.

26 (Even though) my flesh and my heart
come-to-an-end,
the rock of my heart and my portion
is God, forever.

27 For, **behold, those-far-from-you**,
will perish;
you annihilate all **those-who-
go-a-whoring** from you.

28 And/but (as for) me,
the nearness of God to me is **good**;
I have made the Lord, Yahweh,
my refuge,
(so as) to recount all your works.

▶ the **COMPLAINT** part of Lament Psalms,
as it speaks of the potential future
is solely based on an analysis of the present circumstances
--takes the current trends and based on those, postulates
what will happen in the future
--& that prognosis of the future may be very dim
e.g., Ps 6, 88, “I am suffering,
and if things continue this way,
I will die”

▶ but the **CONFIDENCE** part of Lament Psalms,
as it speaks of and anticipates the future,
views the potential future through the lens of
covenant expectations & promises
--re-imagines the future in light of who God is & what God can do

--so the future imagined is quite different from the future postulated
on the current trends of the present
e.g., Yahweh will intervene,
Yahweh will deliver,
Yahweh will judge the wicked

- ▶ when we lament, we are always viewing the circumstances through the lens of our limited human perspective
(*& there is nothing wrong from doing so;
in fact, we can do nothing other than that*)
 - so we need to acknowledge that:
 - ◆ we do have all the information re: circumstances
 - ◆ we do not have the divine perspective of what is happening
 - ◆ we do not have knowledge of how Yahweh is working
or intends to work
 - ◆ our prognosis of the future is based on
the current trending of the situation

- ▶ thus, our lament must always be counter-balanced by biblical theology of who God is & how God works
--that perspective (as reflected in the Lament Psalms) provides:
 - confirmation of our lament
(it is okay to pray from our human perspective)
 - corrective to our lament
(there is a divine perspective that needs to be taken into consideration)
 - hope in the midst of the lament
(biblical theology gives an anticipation of future divine working)