



Mapping the Psalms 
Week 8: Mapping Vindication(Imprecatory)
Wednesday Night Church Fall 2024 Series

Five Books:

- I. Psalms 1–41
- II. Psalms 42–72
- III. Psalms 73–89
- IV. Psalms 90–106
- V. Psalms 107–150

Doxologies:

- Psalm 41:13
- Psalm 72:18-20
- Psalm 89:52
- Psalm 106:48
- Psalm 150 [Doxology of entire Psalter]

This 5 Book division a shadow of the Torah? (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)¹

ASK for:

1 Corinthians 2:14NKJV	1 Corinthians 2:14 CEB
¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know <i>them</i> , because they are spiritually discerned .	But people who are unspiritual don't accept the things from God's Spirit. They are foolishness to them and can't be understood, because they can only be comprehended in a spiritual way.

Mapping Psalms 

Week : Mapping VINDICATION..or is it Mapping Retribution?
(Imprecatory)

Vindication:

noun: **vindication**; plural noun: **vindications**

- 1. the action of clearing someone of blame or [suspicion](#).
 - o proof that someone or something is right, reasonable, or [justified](#).
- "the results were interpreted as vindication of the company's policy"

Imprecatory: *noun*

- the act of calling down a curse(cursing) that invokes evil (and usually serves as an insult) "he suffered the imprecations of the mob" synonyms: malediction. condemnation, curse, execration. an appeal to some supernatural power to inflict evil on someone or some group.
- Imprecatory Psalms, contained within the Book of Psalms of the Hebrew Bible (Hebrew: תנ"ך), are those that imprecate – invoke judgment, calamity or curses upon one's enemies or those perceived as the enemies of God.

Retribution: retrə'byōōSH(ə)n/

noun

- 1. punishment [inflicted](#) on someone as [vengeance](#) for a wrong or criminal act.
Similar: punishment, penalty, nemesis, fate, doom, one's just deserts, due reward, just reward Wages, justice, retributive justice, poetic justice, judgment, reckoning, revenge, reprisal, requital Retaliation, payback, vengeance, tit for tat, measure for measure, redress, reparation, restitution Recompense, repayment, damages, satisfaction, remedy, comeback, atonement, amends, one's comeuppance, measure

¹ Kugler, R. A., & Hartin, P. J. (2009). [An Introduction to the Bible](#) (p. 197). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.



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Romans 12:18-20

¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, ^(A)live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, ^(B)do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ^(C)"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore ^(D)"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

Cross references

- A. [Romans 12:18](#) : [Heb. 12:14](#)
- B. [Romans 12:19](#) : [Lev. 19:18](#)
- C. [Romans 12:19](#) : [Deut. 32:35](#); [Ps. 94:1](#); [1 Thess. 4:6](#); [Heb. 10:30](#)
- D. [Romans 12:20](#) : [2 Kin. 6:22](#); [Prov. 25:21, 22](#); [[Matt. 5:44](#)]; [Luke 6:27](#)

Hebrews 12:14

¹⁴ ^(A)Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, ^(B)without which no one will see the Lord:

Leviticus 19:8

¹⁸ ^(A)You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, ^(B)but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the Lord.

Deuteronomy 32:35

^(A)Vengeance is Mine, and recompense(repay);
Their foot shall slip in *due* time;
^(B)For the day of their calamity *is* at hand,
And the things to come hasten upon them.'

Psalms 94:1

O Lord God, ^(A)to whom vengeance belongs—
O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth!

1 Thessalonians 4:6

⁶ that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord ^(A)is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.

Proverbs 25:21-22

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat;
And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink;
²² For so you will heap coals of fire on his head,
^(A)And the Lord will reward you.

Matthew 5:44

⁴⁴ ^(A)But I say to you, ^(A)love your enemies, bless those who curse you, ^(B)do good to those who hate you, and pray ^(C)for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

SO, what do we do with Imprecatory Psalms: 5, 12, 35, 52, 54, 56, 58, 79, 83, 88, 137, 140



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CHAPTER 24

Croteau, D. A., & Yates, G. (2019). [*Urban legends of the old testament: 40 common misconceptions*](#) (pp. 145–150). B&H Academic.

Imprecatory Psalms Are Horrible Models for Christian Prayer

Psalm 109

The Legendary Teaching on the Imprecatory Psalms

Many Christians regularly read the Psalms devotionally and find great comfort in promises that the Lord is a caring “shepherd” (Psalm 23) and “a refuge and strength” in times of trouble (Ps 46:1). Mixed into the beautiful poetry of the Psalms, however, are a number of shocking and disturbing prayers known as the “imprecatory psalms,” in which the psalmists petition God to bring curses and death upon their enemies.

- These vicious and vindictive prayers are reflective of the inferior ethos of the old covenant;
- even if they were appropriate prayers to the wrathful God of the Old Testament, they are not prayers that followers of Jesus should offer to the gracious and merciful God of the New.
- These prayers endorse a hatred that contradicts Jesus’s instructions to love one’s enemies and to pray for them (Matt 5:43–47; Luke 6:27–28)
- and are at odds with Paul’s exhortations to “bless and do not curse” (Rom 12:14).
- The inclusion of the imprecatory psalms within Scripture does not remove the fact that they are “barbarous” and “a disgrace to human nature.”

[C. S. Lewis wrote concerning the imprecatory psalms, “The hatred is there—festering, gloating, undisguised—and also we should be wicked if we in any way condoned or approved it, or (worse still) used it to justify similar passions in ourselves.” C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Collins, 1961), 22.]²

Is this a TRUE or FALSE accusation?

Imprecatory prayers:

40 different Psalms and in the prayers of Jeremiah and Lamentations.

These are prayers that ASK.

What are these prayers asking for?

² Croteau, D. A., & Yates, G. (2019). [*Urban legends of the old testament: 40 common misconceptions*](#) (pp. 145–150). B&H Academic.




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Psalm 5	NKJV	Psalm 5	CEB
A Prayer for Guidance To the Chief Musician. With ^{flutes} . A Psalm of David.		For the music leader. For the flutes. A psalm of David.	
5 Give ^{ear} to my words, O Lord, Consider my ^{meditation} . 2 Give heed to the voice of my cry, My King and my God, For to You I will pray. 3 My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; ^{In the morning} I will direct <i>it</i> to You, And I will look up. 4 For You <i>are</i> not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness , Nor shall evil ^{dwell} with You. 5 The ^{boastful} shall not ^{stand} in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity . 6 You shall destroy those who speak falsehood ; The Lord abhors the ^{bloodthirsty} and deceitful man. 7 But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; In fear of You I will worship toward ^{Your} holy temple. 8 ^{Lead me} , O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face. 9 For <i>there is</i> no ^{faithfulness} in their mouth; Their inward part <i>is</i> destruction; ^{Their throat} <i>is</i> an open tomb; They flatter with their tongue. 10 Pronounce them guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own counsels; Cast them out in the multitude of their		5 Hear my words, Lord! Consider my groans! 2 Pay attention to the sound of my cries, my king and my God, because I am praying to you! 3 Lord, in the morning you hear my voice. In the morning I lay it all out before you. Then I wait expectantly. 4 Because you aren't a God who enjoys wickedness; evil doesn't live with you. 5 Arrogant people won't last long in your sight; you hate all evildoers; 6 you destroy liars. The Lord despises people who are violent and dishonest. 7 But me? I will enter your house because of your abundant, faithful love; I will bow down at your holy temple, honoring you. 8 Lord, because of many enemies, please lead me in your righteousness. Make your way clear, right in front of me. 9 Because there's no truth in my enemies' mouths, all they have inside them is destruction. Their throats are open graves; their tongues slick with talk. 10 Condemn them, God! Let them fail by their own plans. Throw them out for their many sins	



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<p>transgressions, For they have rebelled against You. <i>11 But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You;</i> Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; <i>Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You.</i> <i>12</i> For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as <i>with</i> a shield.</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Psalm 5:1 Heb. <i>nehiloth</i> b. Psalm 5:1 Lit. <i>groaning</i> c. Psalm 5:4 Lit. <i>sojourn</i> d. Psalm 5:7 Lit. <i>the temple of Your holiness</i> e. Psalm 5:9 <i>uprightness</i> f. Psalm 5:11 <i>protect, lit. cover</i> <p>Cross references</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Psalm 5:1 : Ps. 4:1 B. Psalm 5:3 : Ps. 55:17; 88:13 C. Psalm 5:5 : [Hab. 1:13] D. Psalm 5:5 : Ps. 1:5 E. Psalm 5:6 : Ps. 55:23 F. Psalm 5:8 : Ps. 25:4, 5; 27:11; 31:3 G. Psalm 5:9 : Rom. 3:13 	<p>because they've rebelled against you. <i>11</i> But let all who take refuge in you celebrate. Let them sing out loud forever! Protect them so that all who love your name can rejoice in you. <i>12</i> Because you, Lord, bless the righteous. You cover them with favor like a shield.</p> <p>[Not earned righteousness but one of trust and love in Him. He shields the righteous.] yes, I can pray for that shield.</p>
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What are these prayers asking for?

WHO ARE PEOPLE GOD CONDEMNS IN TODAY'S CULTURE? *declare ... guilty* ARROGANT
 Takes pleasure in wickedness, Evil, Boastful, Workers of Iniquity, Those who speak falsehood,
 Bloodthirsty, Deceitful

WHO ARE PEOPLE GOD JUSTIFIES TODAY?

“There was much in the life of David, for example, that was not at all righteous. **But his heart was God's, and he bowed to God's authority.** That is the opposite of arrogance.”



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Psalm 12	NKJV	Psalm 12	CEB
Man's Treachery and God's Constancy To the Chief Musician. ^(A) On ^[a] an eight-stringed harp. A Psalm of David.		For the music leader. According to the Sheminith. ^[a] A psalm of David.	
<p>12 Help, ^[b]Lord, for the godly man ^(B)ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.</p> <p>² ^(C)They speak idly everyone with his neighbor; With flattering lips and ^[c]a double heart they speak.</p> <p>³ May the Lord ^[d]cut off all flattering lips, And the tongue that speaks ^[e]proud things,</p> <p>⁴ Who have said, "With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips <i>are</i> our own; Who <i>is</i> lord over us?"</p> <p>⁵ "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, Now I will arise," says the Lord; "I will set <i>him</i> in the safety for which he years."</p> <p>⁶ The words of the Lord <i>are</i> ^(D)pure words, Like silver tried in a furnace of earth, Purified seven times.</p> <p>⁷ You shall keep them, O Lord, You shall preserve them from this generation forever.</p> <p>⁸ The wicked prowl on every side, When vileness is exalted among the sons of men.</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <p>a. Psalm 12:1 Heb. <i>sheminith</i> b. Psalm 12:1 <i>Save</i> c. Psalm 12:2 An inconsistent mind d. Psalm 12:3 <i>destroy</i> e. Psalm 12:3 <i>great</i></p> <p>Cross references</p> <p>A. Psalm 12:1 : Ps. 6:title B. Psalm 12:1 : [Is. 57:1]; Mic. 7:2 C. Psalm 12:2 : Ps. 10:7; 41:6 D. Psalm 12:6 : 2 Sam. 22:31; Ps. 18:30; 119:140; Prov. 30:5</p>		<p>12 Help, Lord, because the godly are all gone; the faithful have completely disappeared from the human race!</p> <p>² Everyone tells lies to everyone else; they talk with slick speech and divided hearts.</p> <p>³ Let the Lord cut off all slick-talking lips and every tongue that brags and brags,</p> <p>⁴ that says, "We're unbeatable with our tongues! Who could get the best of us with lips like ours?"</p> <p>⁵ But the Lord says, "Because the poor are oppressed, because of the groans of the needy, I'm now standing up. I will provide the help they are gasping for."^(E)</p> <p>⁶ The Lord's promises are pure, like silver that's been refined in an oven, purified seven times over!</p> <p>⁷ You, Lord, will keep us,^[a] protecting us from this generation forever.</p> <p>⁸ The wicked roam all over the place, while depravity is praised by human beings.</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <p>a. Psalm 12:1 Perhaps a reference to an eight-string instrument; also in Ps 6 b. Psalm 12:5 Heb uncertain c. Psalm 12:7 LXX; MT <i>keep them</i></p>	



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What are these prayers asking for?

WHAT ARE WORDS OF GUILF IN TODAY'S CULTURE?

- *lies* means **empty talk**, *vanity* (AV/RV), words with no corresponding truth behind them.
- *Flattering lips* means **smooth talk**, not only insincere praise but plausibility in general.
- *Deception is double* talk: *a double heart* (NRSV), literally 'a heart and a heart', readily understood today as 'doublethink' and the speech in which it is expressed.
- **The boastful tongue** (v. 3) *makes great boasts* (NRSV)—**big talk**;
- and the phrase *lips which we own* (v. 4)—*who is our master?*—means irresponsible talk, for which no-one will call us to account.

It can have **considerable effects**. **Verse 5 is in no doubt that it leads to *the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy***, and superhuman power is necessary to *protect* us from it.

WHAT ARE WORDS OF TRUTH IN TODAY'S CULTURE?

vs5: The LORD says...

Psalm 12

Often in Old Testament times people might have spoken as the psalmist speaks here.

- Micah did: 'The godly have been swept from the land; not one upright man remains' (7:2).
- So did Isaiah: 'The righteous perish ... devout men are taken away' (57:1).
- So, most famously, did Elijah: 'I am the only one left' (1 Kgs. 19:10, 14).³

³ Wilcock, M. (2001). *The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God* (J. A. Motyer, Ed.; Vol. 1, pp. 48–50). Inter-Varsity Press.



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Psalm 35 NKJV	Psalm 35 CEB
The Lord the Avenger of His People A Psalm of David.	Of David. (David on the run from Saul)
<p>35 Plead [Ⓜ] my cause, O Lord, with those who strive with me; Fight against those who fight against me. ² Take hold of shield and [Ⓜ] buckler, And stand up for my help. ³ Also draw out the spear, And stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, "I <i>am</i> your salvation." ⁴ [Ⓜ] Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor Who seek after my life; Let those be [Ⓜ] turned back and brought to confusion Who plot my hurt. ⁵ [Ⓜ] Let them be like chaff before the wind, And let the [Ⓜ] angel of the Lord chase them. ⁶ Let their way be [Ⓜ] dark and slippery, And let the angel of the Lord pursue them. ⁷ For without cause they have [Ⓜ] hidden their net for me <i>in</i> a pit, <i>Which</i> they have dug without cause for my life. ⁸ [Ⓜ] Let [Ⓜ] destruction come upon him unexpectedly, And let his net that he has hidden catch himself; Into that very destruction let him fall. ⁹ And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord; It shall rejoice in His salvation. ¹⁰ [Ⓜ] All my bones shall say, "Lord, [Ⓜ] who <i>is</i> like You,</p>	<p>35 Lord, argue with those who argue with me; fight with those who fight against me! ² Grab a shield and armor; stand up and help me! ³ Use your spear and ax[Ⓜ] against those who are out to get me! Say to me:[Ⓜ] "I'm your salvation!" ⁴ Let those who want me dead be humiliated and put to shame. Let those who intend to hurt me be thoroughly frustrated and disgraced. ⁵ Let them be like dust on the wind— and let the Lord's messenger be the one who does the blowing! ⁶ Let their path be dark and slippery— and let the Lord's messenger be the one who does the chasing! ⁷ Because they hid their net for me for no reason, they dug a pit for me for no reason. ⁸ Let disaster come to them when they don't suspect it. Let the net they hid catch them instead! Let them fall into it—to their disaster! ⁹ But I will rejoice in the Lord; I will celebrate his salvation. ¹⁰ All my bones will say, "Lord, who could compare to you? You rescue the weak from those who overpower them; you rescue the weak and the needy from those who plunder them." ¹¹ Violent witnesses stand up. They question me about things I know</p>



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Delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him,
Yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?"

¹¹ Fierce witnesses rise up;
They ask me *things* that I do not know.

¹² [Ⓞ]They reward me evil for good,
To the sorrow of my soul.

¹³ But as for me, [Ⓞ]when they were sick,
My clothing *was* sackcloth;
I humbled myself with fasting;
And my prayer would return to my own [Ⓞ]heart.

¹⁴ I paced about as though *he were* my friend *or* brother;
I bowed down [Ⓞ]heavily, as one who mourns *for his* mother.

¹⁵ But in my [Ⓞ]adversity they rejoiced
And gathered together;
Attackers gathered against me,
And I did not know *it*;

They tore *at me* and did not cease;
¹⁶ With ungodly mockers at feasts
They gnashed at me with their teeth.

¹⁷ Lord, how long will You [Ⓞ]look on?
Rescue me from their destructions,
My precious *life* from the lions.

¹⁸ I will give You thanks in the great assembly;

I will praise You among [Ⓞ]many people.

¹⁹ [Ⓞ]Let them not rejoice over me who are wrongfully my enemies;
Nor let them wink with the eye who hate me without a cause.

²⁰ For they do not speak peace,
But they devise deceitful matters
Against *the* quiet ones in the land.

²¹ They also opened their mouth wide
against me,

nothing about.

¹² They pay me back evil for good,
leaving me stricken with grief.

¹³ But when they were sick, I wore clothes for grieving,
and I kept a strict fast.

When my prayer came back unanswered,[Ⓞ]

¹⁴ I would wander around like I was grieving a friend or a brother.

I was weighed down, sad, like I was a mother in mourning.

¹⁵ But when I stumbled, they celebrated and gathered together—

they gathered together against me!
Strangers[Ⓞ] I didn't know tore me to pieces and wouldn't quit.

¹⁶ They ridiculed me over and over again, like godless people would do,
grinding their teeth at me.

¹⁷ How long, my Lord, will you watch this happen?

Rescue me from their attacks;
rescue my precious life from these predatory lions!

¹⁸ Then I will thank you in the great assembly;

I will praise you in a huge crowd of people.

¹⁹ Don't let those who are my enemies without cause celebrate over me;
don't let those who hate me for no reason

wink at my demise.

²⁰ They don't speak the truth;
instead, they plot false accusations against innocent people in the land.

²¹ They speak out against me, saying, "Yes! Oh, yes! We've seen it with our own eyes!"



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And said, "Aha, aha!
 Our eyes have seen it."
 22 *This* You have seen, O Lord;
 Do not keep silence.
 O Lord, do not be far from me.
 23 Stir up Yourself, and awake to my
 vindication,
 To my cause, my God and my Lord.
 24 Vindicate me, O Lord my God,
 according to Your righteousness;
 And let them not rejoice over me.
 25 Let them not say in their hearts, "Ah, so
 we would have it!"
 Let them not say, "We have swallowed
 him up."
 26 Let them be ashamed and brought to
 mutual confusion
 Who rejoice at my hurt;
 Let them be clothed with shame and
 dishonor
 Who exalt themselves against me.
 27 Let them shout for joy and be glad,
 Who favor my righteous cause;
 And let them say continually,
 "Let the Lord be magnified,
 Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His
 servant."
 28 And my tongue shall speak of Your
 righteousness
 And of Your praise all the day long.

Footnotes

- a. [Psalm 35:1](#) *Contend for me*
- b. [Psalm 35:2](#) A small shield
- c. [Psalm 35:5](#) Or *Angel*
- d. [Psalm 35:8](#) Lit. *Let destruction he does not know come upon him,*
- e. [Psalm 35:13](#) Lit. *bosom*
- f. [Psalm 35:14](#) *in mourning*
- g. [Psalm 35:15](#) *limping, stumbling*
- h. [Psalm 35:18](#) *a mighty*

Cross references

- A. [Psalm 35:4](#) : [Ps. 40:14, 15](#); [70:2, 3](#)

22 But you've seen it too, Lord.
 Don't keep quiet about it.
 Please don't be far from me, my Lord.
 23 Wake up! Get up and do justice for me;
 argue my case, my Lord and my God!
 24 Establish justice for me
 according to your righteousness, Lord,
 my God.
 Don't let them celebrate over me.
 25 Don't let them say to themselves,
 Yes! Exactly what we wanted!
 Don't let them say, "We ate him up!"
 26 Let all those who celebrate my
 misfortune be disgraced and put to
 shame!
 Let those who exalt themselves over me
 be dressed up in shame and
 dishonor!
 27 But let those who want things to be set
 right for me
 shout for joy and celebrate!
 Let them constantly say, "The Lord is
 great—
 God wants his servant to be at
 peace."
 28 Then my tongue will talk
 all about your righteousness;
 it will talk
 about your praise all day long.

Footnotes

- a. [Psalm 35:3](#) Correction
- b. [Psalm 35:3](#) Or *my soul*; also in [35:4](#), [7, 9](#), [12](#), [13](#), [17](#), [24](#)
- c. [Psalm 35:13](#) Heb uncertain
- d. [Psalm 35:15](#) Correction



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<p>B. Psalm 35:4 : Ps. 129:5 C. Psalm 35:5 : Job 21:18; Ps. 83:13; Is. 29:5 D. Psalm 35:6 : Ps. 73:18; Jer. 23:12 E. Psalm 35:7 : Ps. 9:15 F. Psalm 35:8 : [Ps. 55:23]; Is. 47:11; [1 Thess. 5:3] G. Psalm 35:10 : Ps. 51:8 H. Psalm 35:10 : [Ex. 15:11]; Ps. 71:19; 86:8; [Mic. 7:18] I. Psalm 35:12 : Ps. 38:20; 109:5; Jer. 18:20; John 10:32 J. Psalm 35:13 : Job 30:25 K. Psalm 35:17 : Ps. 13:1; [Hab. 1:13] L. Psalm 35:19 : Ps. 69:4; 109:3; Lam. 3:52; [John 15:25] M. Psalm 35:26 : Ps. 109:29 N. Psalm 35:27 : Rom. 12:15</p>	
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What are these prayers asking for?

- A ‘poor man’ crying out for deliverance,
- and finding that the Lord’s eye was on him
- and that the angel of the Lord would protect ‘all his bones’.
- There is no rescue (like in 34) but there is confidence it will happen.

Ruinaton

Is this just O.T. speak?

Luke 6:24-26 NKJV	CEB
Jesus Pronounces Woes	
<p>24 "But^a woe to you^b who are rich, For^c you have received your consolation. 25 Woe to you who are full, For you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, For you shall mourn and weep. 26 Woe^d to you when^e all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets.</p> <p>Footnotes a. Luke 6:26 NU, M omit to you b. Luke 6:26 M omits all Cross references A. Luke 6:24 : Amos 6:1; Luke 12:21; James 5:1-6 B. Luke 6:24 : Luke 12:21 C. Luke 6:24 : Matt. 6:2, 5, 16; Luke 16:25 D. Luke 6:25 : [Is. 65:13] E. Luke 6:25 : [Prov. 14:13] F. Luke 6:25 : James 4:9 G. Luke 6:26 : [John 15:19; 1 John 4:5]</p>	<p>But how terrible for you who are rich, because you have already received your comfort. 25 How terrible for you who have plenty now, because you will be hungry. How terrible for you who laugh now, because you will mourn and weep. 26 How terrible for you when all speak well of you. Their ancestors did the same things to the false prophets.</p>



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MATTHEW 23 NKJV

Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees^(A)

23 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, ² saying: ^(B) “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat.³ Therefore whatever they tell you ^(C) to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for ^(D) they say, and do not do. ⁴ ^(E) For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men’s shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. ⁵ But all their works they do to ^(F) be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. ⁶ ^(G) They love the ^(H) best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,⁷ greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ ⁸ ^(I) But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your ^(J) Teacher, ^(K) the Christ, and you are all brethren. ⁹ Do not call anyone on earth your father; ^(L) for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. ¹⁰ And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. ¹¹ But ^(M) he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹² ^(N) And whoever exalts himself will be ^(O) humbled, and he who humbles himself will be ^(P) exalted.

¹³ “But ^(Q) woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in *yourselves*, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. ¹⁴ ^(R) Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ^(S) For you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore, you will receive greater condemnation.

¹⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of ^(T) hell as yourselves.

¹⁶ “Woe to you, ^(U) blind guides, who say, ^(V) ‘Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged *to perform it.*’ ¹⁷ Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold ^(W) or the temple that ^(X) sanctifies the gold? ¹⁸ And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged *to perform it.*’ ¹⁹ Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift ^(Y) or the altar that sanctifies the gift? ²⁰ Therefore he who ^(Z) swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. ²¹ He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by ^(AA) Him who ^(AB) dwells in it. ²² And he who swears by heaven, swears by ^(AC) the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

²³ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ^(AD) For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and ^(AE) have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. ²⁴ Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

²⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ^(AF) For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and ^(AG) self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

²⁷ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ^(AH) For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men’s* bones and all



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uncleanness. ²⁸ Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

²⁹ ^(W) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and ^[m] adorn the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰ and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'

³¹ "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that ^(X) you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³² ^(Y) Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' *guilt*. ³³ Serpents, ^(Z) brood ^[n] of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? ³⁴ ^(AA) Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: ^(AB) *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and ^(AC) *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, ³⁵ ^(AD) that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, ^(AE) from the blood of righteous Abel to ^(AF) the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Jesus Laments over Jerusalem ^(AG)

³⁷ ^(AH) "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets ^(AI) and stones those who are sent to her! How often ^(AJ) I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks ^(AK) under *her* wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸ See! Your house is left to you desolate; ³⁹ for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ^(AL) 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' "

Footnotes

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|--|---|
| a. Matthew 23:3 NU omits <i>to observe</i> | h. Matthew 23:15 Gr. <i>Gehenna</i> |
| b. Matthew 23:6 Or <i>place of honor</i> | i. Matthew 23:17 NU <i>sanctified</i> |
| c. Matthew 23:8 <i>Leader</i> | j. Matthew 23:20 Swears an oath |
| d. Matthew 23:8 NU omits <i>the Christ</i> | k. Matthew 23:21 M <i>dwelt</i> |
| e. Matthew 23:12 <i>put down</i> | l. Matthew 23:25 M <i>unrighteousness</i> |
| f. Matthew 23:12 <i>lifted up</i> | m. Matthew 23:29 <i>decorate</i> |
| g. Matthew 23:14 NU omits v. 14. | n. Matthew 23:33 <i>offspring</i> |

Cross references

- | | |
|--|---|
| A. Matthew 23:1 : Mark 12:38-40 ; Luke 20:45-47 | S. Matthew 23:23 : Matt 23:13 ; Luke 11:42 ; 18:12 |
| B. Matthew 23:2 : Deut. 33:3 ; Ezra 7:6, 25 ; Neh. 8:4, 8 ; [Mal. 2:7] ; Mark 12:38 ; Luke 20:45 | T. Matthew 23:23 : [1 Sam. 15:22] ; Hos. 6:6 ; Mic. 6:8 ; Matt. 9:13 ; 12:7 |
| C. Matthew 23:3 : [Rom. 2:19] | U. Matthew 23:25 : Mark 7:4 ; Luke 11:39 |
| D. Matthew 23:4 : [Matt. 11:29, 30] ; Luke 11:46 ; Acts 15:10 ; Rom. 2:17-24 ; [Gal. 5:1; 6:13; Col. 2:16, 17] | V. Matthew 23:27 : Luke 11:44 ; Acts 23:3 |
| E. Matthew 23:5 : [Matt. 6:1-6, 16-18] | W. Matthew 23:29 : Luke 11:47, 48 |
| F. Matthew 23:6 : Mark 12:38, 39 ; Luke 11:43 ; 20:46 ; 3 John 9 | X. Matthew 23:31 : Matt 23:34, 37 ; [Acts 7:51, 52] ; 1 Thess. 2:15 |
| G. Matthew 23:8 : [2 Cor. 1:24; James 3:1; 1 Pet. 5:3] | Y. Matthew 23:32 : Gen. 15:16 ; [1 Thess. 2:16] |
| H. Matthew 23:9 : [Mal. 1:6] ; Matt. 5:16, 48 ; 6:1, 9, 14, 26, 32 ; 7:11 | Z. Matthew 23:33 : Matt. 3:7 ; 12:34 ; Luke 3:7 |
| I. Matthew 23:11 : Matt. 20:26, 27 | AA. Matthew 23:34 : Matt. 21:34, 35 ; Luke 11:49 |
| J. Matthew 23:12 : Job 22:29 ; Prov. 15:33 ; 29:23 ; Luke 14:11 ; 18:14 ; James 4:6 ; 1 Pet. 5:5 | BB. Matthew 23:34 : John 16:2 ; Acts 7:54-60 ; 22:19 |
| K. Matthew 23:13 : Luke 11:52 | CC. Matthew 23:34 : Matt. 10:17 ; Acts 5:40 ; 2 Cor. 11:24, 25 |
| L. Matthew 23:14 : Mark 12:40 ; Luke 20:47 ; [2 Tim. 3:6; Titus 1:10, 11] | DD. Matthew 23:35 : Rev. 18:24 |
| M. Matthew 23:16 : Matt. 15:14 ; 23:24 | EE. Matthew 23:35 : Gen. 4:8 ; Heb. 11:4 ; 1 John 3:12 |
| N. Matthew 23:16 : [Matt. 5:33, 34] | FF. Matthew 23:35 : 2 Chr. 24:20, 21 |
| O. Matthew 23:17 : Ex. 30:29 | GG. Matthew 23:37 : Luke 13:34, 35 |
| P. Matthew 23:19 : Ex. 29:37 | HH. Matthew 23:37 : Luke 13:34, 35 |
| Q. Matthew 23:21 : 1 Kin. 8:13 ; 2 Chr. 6:2 ; Ps. 26:8 ; 132:14 | II. Matthew 23:37 : 2 Chr. 24:20, 21 ; 36:15, 16 ; Neh. 9:26 ; Matt. 21:35 ; 36 |
| R. Matthew 23:22 : Ps. 11:4 ; Is. 66:1 ; Matt. 5:34 ; Acts 7:49 | JJ. Matthew 23:37 : Deut. 32:11, 12 ; Matt. 11:28-30 |
| | KK. Matthew 23:37 : Ps. 17:8 ; 91:4 ; Is. 49:5 |
| | LL. Matthew 23:39 : Ps. 118:26 ; Matt. 21:9 |



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MT 23 CEB

Ways of the legal experts and the Pharisees

23 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and his disciples, ² “The legal experts and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat. ³ Therefore, you must take care to do everything they say. But don’t do what they do. ⁴ For they tie together heavy packs that are impossible to carry. They put them on the shoulders of others, but are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. ⁵ Everything they do, they do to be noticed by others. They make extra-wide prayer bands for their arms and long tassels for their clothes. ⁶ They love to sit in places of honor at banquets and in the synagogues. ⁷ They love to be greeted with honor in the markets and to be addressed as ‘Rabbi.’

⁸ “But you shouldn’t be called *Rabbi*, because you have one teacher, and all of you are brothers and sisters. ⁹ Don’t call anybody on earth your father, because you have one Father, who is heavenly. ¹⁰ Don’t be called *teacher*, because Christ is your one teacher. ¹¹ But the one who is greatest among you will be your servant. ¹² All who lift themselves up will be brought low. But all who make themselves low will be lifted up.

Condemnation of the legal experts and the Pharisees

¹³ “How terrible it will be for you legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You shut people out of the kingdom of heaven. You don’t enter yourselves, and you won’t allow those who want to enter to do so. ¹⁴

¹⁵ “How terrible it will be for you, legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You travel over sea and land to make one convert. But when they’ve been converted, they become twice the child of hell you are.

¹⁶ “How terrible it will be for you blind guides who say, ‘If people swear by the temple, it’s nothing. But if people swear by the gold in the temple, they are obligated to do what they swore.’ ¹⁷ You foolish and blind people! Which is greater, the gold or the temple that makes the gold holy? ¹⁸ You say, ‘If people swear by the altar, it’s nothing. But if they swear by the gift on the altar, they are obligated to do what they swore.’ ¹⁹ You blind people! Which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift holy? ²⁰ Therefore, those who swear by the altar swear by it and by everything that’s on it. ²¹ Those who swear by the temple swear by it and by everything that’s part of it. ²² Those who swear by heaven swear by God’s throne and by the one who sits on it.

²³ “How terrible it will be for you legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You give to God a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, but you forget about the more important matters of the Law: justice, peace, and faith. You ought to give a tenth but without forgetting about those more important matters. ²⁴ You blind guides! You filter out an ant but swallow a camel.



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²⁵ "How terrible it will be for you legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and plate, but inside they are full of violence and pleasure seeking. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup so that the outside of the cup will be clean too.

²⁷ "How terrible it will be for you legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs. They look beautiful on the outside. But inside they are full of dead bones and all kinds of filth. ²⁸ In the same way you look righteous to people. But inside you are full of pretense and rebellion.

²⁹ "How terrible it will be for you legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. ³⁰ You say, 'If we had lived in our ancestors' days, we wouldn't have joined them in killing the prophets.' ³¹ You testify against yourselves that you are children of those who murdered the prophets. ³² Go ahead, complete what your ancestors did. ³³ You snakes! You children of snakes! How will you be able to escape the judgment of hell? ³⁴ Therefore, look, I'm sending you prophets, wise people, and legal experts. Some of them you will kill and crucify. And some you will beat in your synagogues and chase from city to city. ³⁵ Therefore, upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been poured out on the earth, from the blood of that righteous man Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ I assure you that all these things will come upon this generation.

Crying over Jerusalem

³⁷ "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You who kill the prophets and stone those who were sent to you. How often I wanted to gather your people together, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you didn't want that. ³⁸ Look, your house is left to you deserted. ³⁹ I tell you, you won't see me until you say, *Blessings on the one who comes in the Lord's name.*"^[b]

Footnotes

- a. [Matthew 23:13](#) Most critical editions of the Gk New Testament omit [23:14](#) *How terrible it will be for you legal experts and Pharisees! You eat up widows' houses and make a show of praying long prayers. Therefore, you will receive greater judgment.*
- b. [Matthew 23:39](#) [Ps 118:26](#)

WHO ARE IMPRECATORY PSALMS FOCUSED ON IN TODAY'S CULTURE?

They are directed against those who reject what God has said.

God had spoken through his prophet Samuel to both Saul and David. Saul had disobeyed the word that had come to him,³⁰² and had refused to recognize the word that had come to David. That was why he was rejected. Perhaps it was because of the scruples which stopped David from killing Saul, when he twice had the opportunity, that the psalm never names an individual, but always speaks of enemies in the plural, and anonymously. It is nevertheless with Saul's downfall that David's prayer is answered, and the cause of his doom, spelt out for him by the spirit of the dead Samuel, is exactly what lies behind every imprecation in Scripture: 'Because you did not obey the LORD ... the LORD has done this to you.' **Not one disobedience, nor two, but a whole mindset which has turned against God, an inexorable wilful march to ruin.** *Wilcock, M. (2001). [The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God](#) (J. A. Motyer, Ed.; Vol. 1, pp. 118–124). Inter-Varsity Press.*



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<p>Psalm 54 NKJV CEB Answered Prayer for Deliverance from Adversaries</p>	<p>Psalm 54 CEB</p>
<p>To the Chief Musician. With ^[a]stringed instruments. A ^[b]Contemplation of David ^(A)when the Ziphites went and said to Saul, "Is David not hiding with us?"</p>	<p>For the music leader. With stringed instruments. A maskil^[a] of David, when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, "Isn't David hiding among us?"</p>
<p>54 Save me, O God, by Your name, And vindicate me by Your strength. ² Hear my prayer, O God; Give ear to the words of my mouth. ³ For strangers have risen up against me, And oppressors have sought after my life; They have not set God before them. <i>Selah</i> ⁴ Behold, God <i>is</i> my helper; The Lord <i>is</i> with those who ^[c]uphold my life. ⁵ He will repay my enemies for their evil. ^[d] Cut them off in Your ^[e]truth. ⁶ I will freely sacrifice to You; I will praise Your name, O Lord, for <i>it is good</i>. ⁷ For He has delivered me out of all trouble; ^[b] And my eye has seen <i>its desire</i> upon my enemies.</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <p>a. Psalm 54:1 Heb. <i>neginoth</i> b. Psalm 54:1 Heb. <i>Maschil</i> c. Psalm 54:4 <i>sustain my soul</i> d. Psalm 54:5 <i>Destroy them</i> e. Psalm 54:5 Or <i>faithfulness</i></p> <p>Cross references</p> <p>A. Psalm 54:1 : 1 Sam. 23:19 B. Psalm 54:7 : Ps. 59:10</p>	<p>54 God! Save me by your name; defend me by your might! ² God! Hear my prayer; listen to the words of my mouth! ³ The proud have come up against me; violent people want me dead. They pay no attention to God. <i>Selah</i> ⁴ But look here: God is my helper; my Lord sustains my life. ⁵ He will bring disaster on my opponents. By your faithfulness, God, destroy them! ⁶ I will sacrifice to you freely; I will give thanks to your name, Lord, because it's so good, ⁷ and because God has delivered me from every distress. My eyes have seen my enemies' defeat.^[d]</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <p>a. Psalm 54:1 Perhaps <i>instruction</i> b. Psalm 54:7 Heb lacks <i>defeat</i>.</p>



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Psalm 52 NKJV The End of the Wicked and the Peace of the Godly	Psalm 52 CEB For the music leader. A maskil ^[a] of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, "David has gone to Ahimelech's house."
<p>52 Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The goodness of God <i>endures</i> continually. ² Your tongue devises destruction, Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. ³ You love evil more than good, Lying rather than speaking righteousness. <i>Selah</i> ⁴ You love all devouring words, You deceitful tongue. ⁵ God shall likewise destroy you forever; He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your dwelling place, And uproot you from the land of the living. <i>Selah</i> ⁶ The righteous also shall see and fear, And shall laugh at him, <i>saying</i>, ⁷ "Here is the man <i>who</i> did not make God his strength, But trusted in the abundance of his riches, And strengthened himself in his wickedness." ⁸ But I <i>am</i> like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. ⁹ I will praise You forever, Because You have done <i>it</i>; And in the presence of Your saints I will wait on Your name, for <i>it</i> is good.</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <p>a. Psalm 52:1 Heb. <i>Maschil</i> b. Psalm 52:7 Lit. <i>desire</i>, in evil sense c. Psalm 52:9 Or <i>has a good reputation</i></p>	<p>52 Hey, powerful person! Why do you brag about evil? God's faithful love lasts all day long. ² Your tongue devises destruction: it's like a sharpened razor, causing deception. ³ You love evil more than good; you love lying more than speaking what is right. <i>Selah</i> ⁴ You love all destructive words; you love the deceiving tongue. ⁵ But God will take you down permanently; he will snatch you up, tear you out of your tent, and uproot you from the land of the living! <i>Selah</i> ⁶ The righteous will see and be in awe; they will laugh at those people: ⁷ "Look at them! They didn't make God their refuge. Instead, they trusted in their own great wealth. They sought refuge in it—to their own destruction!" ⁸ But I am like a green olive tree in God's house; I trust in God's faithful love forever and always. ⁹ I will give thanks to you, God, forever, because you have acted. In the presence of your faithful people, I will hope in your name because it's so good.</p> <p>Footnotes</p>



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Cross references A. Psalm 52:1 : 1 Sam. 22:9 B. Psalm 52:1 : Ezek. 22:9 C. Psalm 52:8 : Jer. 11:16	a. Psalm 52:1 Perhaps <i>instruction</i>
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What are these prayers asking for?

WHAT ARE TODAY'S CULTURE?

WHAT ARE IN TODAY'S CULTURE?

Psalm 54 NKJV CEB Answered Prayer for Deliverance from Adversaries	Psalm 54 CEB
To the Chief Musician. With ^[a]stringed instruments. A ^[b]Contemplation of David ^(A)when the Ziphites went and said to Saul, "Is David not hiding with us?"	For the music leader. With stringed instruments. A maskil^[a] of David, when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, "Isn't David hiding among us?"
<p>54 Save me, O God, by Your name, And vindicate me by Your strength. ² Hear my prayer, O God; Give ear to the words of my mouth. ³ For strangers have risen up against me, And oppressors have sought after my life; They have not set God before them. <i>Selah</i> ⁴ Behold, God <i>is</i> my helper; The Lord <i>is</i> with those who ^[c]uphold my life. ⁵ He will repay my enemies for their evil. ^[c]Cut them off in Your ^[e]truth. ⁶ I will freely sacrifice to You; I will praise Your name, O Lord, for <i>it</i> <i>is</i> good. ⁷ For He has delivered me out of all trouble; ^[e]And my eye has seen <i>its desire</i> upon my enemies.</p> <p>Footnotes f. Psalm 54:1 Heb. <i>neginoth</i> g. Psalm 54:1 Heb. <i>Maschil</i> h. Psalm 54:4 <i>sustain my soul</i></p>	<p>54 God! Save me by your name; defend me by your might! ² God! Hear my prayer; listen to the words of my mouth! ³ The proud have come up against me; violent people want me dead. They pay no attention to God. <i>Selah</i> ⁴ But look here: God is my helper; my Lord sustains my life. ⁵ He will bring disaster on my opponents. By your faithfulness, God, destroy them! ⁶ I will sacrifice to you freely; I will give thanks to your name, Lord, because it's so good, ⁷ and because God has delivered me from every distress. My eyes have seen my enemies' defeat.^[b]</p> <p>Footnotes c. Psalm 54:1 Perhaps <i>instruction</i> d. Psalm 54:7 Heb lacks <i>defeat</i>.</p>



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i. Psalm 54:5 <i>Destroy them</i> j. Psalm 54:5 <i>Or faithfulness</i> Cross references C. Psalm 54:1 : 1 Sam. 23:19 D. Psalm 54:7 : Ps. 59:10	
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What are these prayers asking for?

WHAT ARE TODAY'S CULTURE?

WHAT ARE IN TODAY'S CULTURE?

Psalm 56 NKJV Prayer for Relief from Tormentors	Psalm 56 CEB
To the Chief Musician. Set to ^[a]“The Silent Dove in Distant Lands.” A Michtam of David when the ^(A)Philistines captured him in Gath	For the music leader. According to “The Silent Dove of Distant Places.” A miktam^[a] of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath.
56 Be [Ⓞ] merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; Fighting all day he oppresses me. ² My enemies would [Ⓞ] hound <i>me</i> all day, For <i>there are</i> many who fight against me, O Most High. ³ Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. ⁴ In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; [Ⓞ] I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? ⁵ All day they twist my words; All their thoughts <i>are</i> against me for evil. ⁶ They gather together, They hide, they mark my steps, When they lie in wait for my life.	56 God, have mercy on me because I’m being trampled. All day long the enemy oppresses me. ² My attackers trample me all day long because I have so many enemies. Exalted one, ³ whenever I’m afraid, I put my trust in you— ⁴ in God, whose word I praise. I trust in God; I won’t be afraid. What can mere flesh do to me? ⁵ All day long they frustrate my pursuits; all their thoughts are evil against me. ⁶ They get together and set an ambush— they are watching my steps, hoping for my death. ⁷ Don’t rescue them for any reason! In wrath bring down the people, God!



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⁷ Shall they escape by iniquity?
In anger cast down the peoples, O God!
⁸ You number my wanderings;
Put my tears into Your bottle;
^{8a} *Are they not in Your book?*
⁹ When I cry out to You,
Then my enemies will turn back;
This I know, because ^{9a} God is for me.
¹⁰ In God (I will praise His word),
In the Lord (I will praise His word),
¹¹ In God I have put my trust;
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?
¹² Vows made to You are binding upon
me, O God;
I will render praises to You,
¹³ ^{13a} For You have delivered my soul from
death.
Have You not kept my feet from falling,
That I may walk before God
In the ^{13b} light of the living?

Footnotes

- a. [Psalm 56:1](#) Heb. *Jonath Elem Rechokim*

Cross references

- A. [Psalm 56:1](#) : [1 Sam. 21:11](#)
B. [Psalm 56:1](#) : [Ps. 57:1](#)
C. [Psalm 56:2](#) : [Ps. 57:3](#)
D. [Psalm 56:4](#) : [Ps. 118:6](#); [Is. 31:3](#); [[Heb. 13:6](#)]
E. [Psalm 56:8](#) : [[Mal. 3:16](#)]
F. [Psalm 56:9](#) : [[Ps. 118:6](#); [Rom. 8:31](#)]
G. [Psalm 56:13](#) : [Ps. 116:8, 9](#)
H. [Psalm 56:13](#) : [Job 33:30](#)

⁸ You yourself have kept track of my
misery.
Put my tears into your bottle—
aren't they on your scroll already?
⁹ Then my enemies will retreat when I cry
out.
I know this because God is mine.
¹⁰ God: whose word I praise.
The Lord: whose word I praise.
¹¹ I trust in God; I won't be afraid.
What can anyone do to me?
¹² I will fulfill my promises to you, God.
I will present thanksgiving offerings to
you
¹³ because you have saved my life from
death,
saved my feet from stumbling
so that I can walk before God in the
light of life.

Footnotes

- a. [Psalm 56:1](#) Perhaps *inscription*

What are these prayers asking for?

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Psalm 58 The Just Judgment of the Wicked NKJV	Psalm 58 CEB
To the Chief Musician. Set to ^[a]“Do Not Destroy.” A Michtam of David.	For the music leader. Do not destroy. A psalm of David, a miktam.^[a]
<p>58 Do you indeed speak righteousness, you silent ones? Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men? ² No, in heart you work wickedness; You weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth. ³ ^(A)The wicked are estranged from the womb; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. ⁴ ^(B)Their poison <i>is</i> like the poison of a serpent; <i>They are</i> like the deaf cobra <i>that</i> stops its ear, ⁵ Which will not ^(C)heed the voice of charmers, Charming ever so skillfully. ⁶ ^(D)Break^(E) their teeth in their mouth, O God! Break out the fangs of the young lions, O Lord! ⁷ ^(F)Let them flow away as waters <i>which</i> run continually; <i>When</i> he bends <i>his</i> bow, Let his arrows be as if cut in pieces. ⁸ <i>Let them be</i> like a snail which melts away as it goes,</p>	<p>58 Do you really speak what is right, you gods? Do you really judge humans fairly? ² No: in your hearts you plan injustice; your hands do violence on the earth. ³ The wicked backslide from the womb; liars go astray from birth. ⁴ Their venom is like a snake’s venom— like a deaf cobra’s—one that shuts its ears ⁵ so it can’t hear the snake charmer’s voice or the spells of a skillful enchanter. ⁶ God, break their teeth out of their mouths! Tear out the lions’ jawbones, Lord! ⁷ Let them dissolve like water flowing away. When they bend the bow, let their arrows be like headless shafts.^(G) ⁸ Like the snail that dissolves into slime, like a woman’s stillborn child, let them never see the sun. ⁹ Before your pots feel the thorns, whether green or burned up, God will sweep them away!^(H) ¹⁰ But the righteous will rejoice when they see vengeance done,</p>



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<p>⊖ Like a stillborn child of a woman, that they may not see the sun. ⁹ Before your ⊖pots can feel <i>the burning</i> thorns, He shall take them away ⊖as with a whirlwind, As in His living and burning wrath. ¹⁰ The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the ⊖vengeance; ⊖He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked, ¹¹ ⊖So that men will say, “Surely <i>there is</i> a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who ⊖judges in the earth.”</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <p>a. Psalm 58:1 Heb. <i>Al Tashcheth</i> b. Psalm 58:6 <i>Break away</i></p> <p>Cross references</p> <p>A. Psalm 58:3 : [Ps. 53:3; Is. 48:8] B. Psalm 58:4 : Eccl. 10:11 C. Psalm 58:5 : Jer. 8:17 D. Psalm 58:6 : Job 4:10 E. Psalm 58:7 : Josh. 2:11; 7:5; Ps. 112:10; Is. 13:7; Ezek. 21:7 F. Psalm 58:8 : Job 3:16 G. Psalm 58:9 : Ps. 118:12; Eccl. 7:6 H. Psalm 58:9 : Job 27:21; Prov. 10:25 I. Psalm 58:10 : [Deut. 32:43]; Jer. 11:20 J. Psalm 58:10 : Ps. 68:23 K. Psalm 58:11 : Ps. 92:15; Prov. 11:18; [2 Cor. 5:10] L. Psalm 58:11 : Ps. 50:6; 75:7</p>	<p>when they wash their feet in the blood of the wicked. ¹¹ Then it will be said: “Yes, there is a reward for the righteous! Yes, there is a God who judges people on the earth.”</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <p>a. Psalm 58:1 Perhaps <i>inscription</i> b. Psalm 58:7 Heb uncertain c. Psalm 58:9 Heb uncertain</p>
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Psalm 79 NKJV	Psalm 79 CEB
A Psalm of Asaph.	A psalm of Asaph.
A Dirge and a Prayer for Israel, Destroyed by Enemies	
<p>79 O God, the nations have come into Your inheritance; Your holy temple they have defiled; They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.</p> <p>2 The dead bodies of Your servants They have given as food for the birds of the heavens, The flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth.</p> <p>3 Their blood they have shed like water all around Jerusalem, And <i>there was</i> no one to bury them.</p> <p>4 We have become a reproach to our neighbors, A scorn and derision to those who are around us.</p> <p>5 How long, Lord? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy burn like fire?</p> <p>6 Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not know You, And on the kingdoms that do not call on Your name.</p> <p>7 For they have devoured Jacob, And laid waste his dwelling place.</p> <p>8 Oh, do not remember former iniquities against us! Let Your tender mercies come speedily to meet us, For we have been brought very low.</p> <p>9 Help us, O God of our salvation,</p>	<p>79 The nations have come into your inheritance, God! They've defiled your holy temple. They've made Jerusalem a bunch of ruins.</p> <p>2 They've left your servants' bodies as food for the birds; they've left the flesh of your faithful to the wild animals of the earth.</p> <p>3 They've poured out the blood of the faithful like water all around Jerusalem, and there's no one left to bury them.</p> <p>4 We've become a joke to our neighbors, nothing but objects of ridicule and disapproval to those around us.</p> <p>5 How long will you rage, Lord? Forever? How long will your anger burn like fire?</p> <p>6 Pour out your wrath on the nations who don't know you, on the kingdoms that haven't called on your name.</p> <p>7 They've devoured Jacob and demolished his pasture.</p> <p>8 Don't remember the iniquities of past generations; let your compassion hurry to meet us because we've been brought so low.</p> <p>9 God of our salvation, help us for the glory of your name! Deliver us and cover our sins</p>



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For the glory of Your name;
 And deliver us, and provide atonement
 for our sins,
 ☉ For Your name's sake!
 10 ☉ Why should the ☉ nations say,
 "Where is their God?"
 Let there be known among the nations in
 our sight
 The avenging of the blood of Your
 servants *which has been* shed.
 11 Let ☉ the groaning of the prisoner come
 before You;
 According to the greatness of
 Your ☉ power
 Preserve those who are appointed to die;
 12 And return to our neighbors ☉ sevenfold
 into their bosom
 ☉ Their reproach with which they have
 reproached You, O Lord.
 13 So ☉ we, Your people and sheep of Your
 pasture,
 Will give You thanks forever;
 ☉ We will show forth Your praise to all
 generations.

Footnotes

- a. [Psalm 79:1](#) *Gentiles*
- b. [Psalm 79:1](#) *in ruins*
- c. [Psalm 79:6](#) *Gentiles*
- d. [Psalm 79:8](#) *Or against us the iniquities of those who were before us*
- e. [Psalm 79:10](#) *Gentiles*
- f. [Psalm 79:11](#) *Lit. arm*

Cross references

- A. [Psalm 79:1](#) : [Ps. 74:2](#)
- B. [Psalm 79:1](#) : [2 Kin. 25:9, 10](#); [2 Chr. 36:17-19](#);
[Jer. 26:18](#); [52:12-14](#); [Mic. 3:12](#)
- C. [Psalm 79:2](#) : [Deut. 28:26](#); [Jer. 7:33](#); [19:7](#); [34:20](#)
- D. [Psalm 79:4](#) : [Ps. 44:13](#); [[Dan. 9:16](#)]
- E. [Psalm 79:5](#) : [Ps. 74:1, 9](#)
- F. [Psalm 79:5](#) : [[Zeph. 3:8](#)]
- G. [Psalm 79:6](#) : [Jer. 10:25](#); [[Zeph. 3:8](#)]
- H. [Psalm 79:6](#) : [Is. 45:4, 5](#); [1 Thess. 4:5](#); [[2 Thess. 1:8](#)]

for the sake of your name!
 10 Why should the nations say,
 "Where's their God now?"
 Let vengeance for the spilled blood of
 your servants
 be known among the nations before
 our very eyes!
 11 Let the prisoners' groaning reach
 you.
 With your powerful arm
 spare those who are destined to die.
 12 Pay back our neighbors seven times
 over,
 right where it hurts,
 for the insults they used on you, Lord.
 13 We are, after all, your people
 and the sheep of your very own
 pasture.
 We will give you thanks forever;
 we will proclaim your praises
 from one generation to the next.



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<p>I. Psalm 79:6 : Ps. 53:4 J. Psalm 79:8 : Is. 64:9 K. Psalm 79:9 : Jer. 14:7, 21 L. Psalm 79:10 : Ps. 42:10 M. Psalm 79:11 : Ps. 102:20 N. Psalm 79:12 : Gen. 4:15; Lev. 26:21; Prov. 6:31; Is. 30:26 O. Psalm 79:12 : Ps. 74:10, 18, 22 P. Psalm 79:13 : Ps. 74:1; 95:7 Q. Psalm 79:13 : Is. 43:21</p>	
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What are these prayers asking for?

WHAT ARE ... TODAY'S CULTURE?

Psalm 83 NKJV	Psalm 83 CEB
A Song. A Psalm of Asaph.	
Prayer to Frustrate Conspiracy Against Israel	A song. A psalm of Asaph.
<p>83 Do[Ⓜ] not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, And do not be still, O God! ² For behold, [Ⓜ]Your enemies make a [Ⓜ]tumult; And those who hate You have [Ⓜ]lifted up their head. ³ They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, And consulted together [Ⓜ]against Your sheltered ones. ⁴ They have said, "Come, and [Ⓜ]let us cut them off from <i>being</i> a nation, That the name of Israel may be remembered no more."</p>	<p>83 God, don't be silent! Don't be quiet or sit still, God, ² because—look!—your enemies are growling; those who hate you are acting arrogantly. ³ They concoct crafty plans against your own people; they plot against the people you favor. ⁴ "Come on," they say, "let's wipe them out as a nation! Let the name Israel be remembered no more!" ⁵ They plot with a single-minded heart; they make a covenant against you.</p>



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⁵ For they have consulted together with one ^aconsent;
They ^aform a confederacy against You:
⁶ ^aThe tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites;
Moab and the Hagrites;
⁷ Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek;
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;
⁸ Assyria also has joined with them;
They have helped the children of Lot. *Selah*
⁹ Deal with them as *with* ^aMidian,
As *with* ^aSisera,
As *with* Jabin at the Brook Kishon,
¹⁰ Who perished at En Dor,
^aWho became *as* refuse on the earth.
¹¹ Make their nobles like ^aOreb and like Zeeb,
Yes, all their princes like ^aZebah and Zalmunna,
¹² Who said, "Let us take for ourselves
The pastures of God for a possession."
¹³ ^aO my God, make them like the whirling dust,
^aLike the chaff before the wind!
¹⁴ As the fire burns the woods,
And as the flame ^asets the mountains on fire,
¹⁵ So pursue them with Your tempest,
And frighten them with Your storm.
¹⁶ Fill their faces with shame,
That they may seek Your name, O Lord.
¹⁷ Let them be ^aconfounded and dismayed forever;
Yes, let them be put to shame and perish,
¹⁸ ^aThat they may know that You,
whose ^aname alone *is* the Lord,
Are ^athe Most High over all the earth.

Footnotes

a. [Psalm 83:2](#) *uproar*

⁶ They are the clans of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
Moab and the Hagrites,
⁷ Gebal, Ammon, Amalek,
Philistia along with the citizens of Tyre.
⁸ Assyria too has joined them—
they are the strong arm for Lot's children. *Selah*
⁹ Do to them what you did to Midian,
to Sisera, and to Jabin at the Kishon River.
¹⁰ They were destroyed at Endor;
they became fertilizer for the ground.
¹¹ Make their officials like Oreb and Zeeb,
all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna—
¹² those who said, "Let's take God's pastures for ourselves."
¹³ My God, make them like tumbleweeds,
like chaff blown by wind.
¹⁴ Just like a fire consumes a forest,
just like flames set mountains ablaze,
¹⁵ pursue them with your storm,
terrify them with your hurricane.
¹⁶ Cover their faces with shame, Lord, so that they might seek your name.
¹⁷ Let them be shamed and terrified forever.
Let them die in disgrace.
¹⁸ Let them know that you—
your name is the Lord!—
you alone are Most High over all the earth.



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<p>b. Psalm 83:2 Exalted themselves</p> <p>c. Psalm 83:5 Lit. <i>heart</i></p> <p>d. Psalm 83:5 Lit. <i>cut a covenant</i></p> <p>e. Psalm 83:17 <i>ashamed</i></p> <p>Cross references</p> <p>A. Psalm 83:1 : Ps. 28:1</p> <p>B. Psalm 83:2 : Ps. 81:15; Is. 17:12; Acts 4:25</p> <p>C. Psalm 83:3 : [Ps. 27:5]</p> <p>D. Psalm 83:4 : Esth. 3:6, 9; Jer. 11:19; 31:36</p> <p>E. Psalm 83:6 : 2 Chr. 20:1, 10, 11</p> <p>F. Psalm 83:9 : Num. 31:7; Judg. 7:22</p> <p>G. Psalm 83:9 : Judg. 4:15–24; 5:20, 21</p> <p>H. Psalm 83:10 : Zeph. 1:17</p> <p>I. Psalm 83:11 : Judg. 7:25</p> <p>J. Psalm 83:11 : Judg. 8:12–21</p> <p>K. Psalm 83:13 : Is. 17:13</p> <p>L. Psalm 83:13 : Job 21:18; Ps. 35:5; Is. 40:24; Jer. 13:24</p> <p>M. Psalm 83:14 : Ex. 19:18; Deut. 32:22</p> <p>N. Psalm 83:18 : Ps. 59:13</p> <p>O. Psalm 83:18 : Ex. 6:3</p> <p>P. Psalm 83:18 : [Ps. 92:8]</p>	
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What are these prayers asking for?
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Psalm 88 NKJV	Psalm 88 CEB
A Prayer for Help in Despondency	
A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. To the Chief Musician. Set to "Mahalath Leannoth." A ^[a]Contemplation of ^(A)Heman the Ezrahite.	A song. A psalm of the Korahites. For the music leader. According to "Mahalath Leannoth."^[a] A maskil^[b] of Heman the Ezrahite.
88 O Lord, [ⓐ] God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You. ² Let my prayer come before You; [ⓑ] Incline Your ear to my cry. ³ For my soul is full of troubles, And my life [ⓒ] draws near to the grave. ⁴ I am counted with those who [ⓓ] go [ⓓ] down to the pit; [ⓔ] I am like a man <i>who has</i> no strength, ⁵ [ⓕ] Adrift among the dead, Like the slain who lie in the grave,	88 Lord, God of my salvation, by day I cry out, even at night, before you— ² let my prayer reach you! Turn your ear to my outcry ³ because my whole being ^[c] is filled with distress; my life is at the very brink of hell. ^[d] ⁴ I am considered as one of those plummeting into the pit. I am like those who are beyond help,



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Whom You remember no more,
And who are cut off from Your hand.
6 You have laid me in the lowest pit,
In darkness, in the depths.
7 Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
And You have afflicted *me* with all ⑥ Your waves. *Selah*
8 ⑥ You have ③ put away my acquaintances
far from me;
You have made me an abomination to
them;
④ *I am* shut up, and I cannot get out;
9 My eye wastes away because of
affliction.
⑦ Lord, I have called daily upon You;
I have stretched out my hands to You.
10 Will You work wonders for the dead?
Shall ④ the dead arise *and* praise
You? *Selah*
11 Shall Your lovingkindness be declared
in the grave?
Or Your faithfulness in the place of
destruction?
12 Shall Your wonders be known in the
dark?
And Your righteousness in the land of
forgetfulness?
13 But to You I have cried out, O Lord,
And in the morning my prayer comes
before You.
14 Lord, why do You cast off my soul?
Why do You hide Your face from me?
15 I *have been* afflicted and ready to die
from *my* youth;
I suffer Your terrors;
I am distraught.
16 Your fierce wrath has gone over me;
Your terrors have ④ cut me off.
17 They came around me all day long like

5 drifting among the dead,
lying in the grave, like dead bodies—
those you don't remember anymore,
those who are cut off from your power.
6 You placed me down in the deepest pit,
in places dark and deep.
7 Your anger smothers me;
you subdue me with it, wave after
wave. *Selah*
8 You've made my friends distant.
You've made me disgusting to them.
I can't escape. I'm trapped!
9 My eyes are tired of looking at my
suffering.
I've been calling out to you every
day, Lord—
I've had my hands outstretched to you!
10 Do you work wonders for the dead?
Do ghosts rise up and give you
thanks? *Selah*
11 Is your faithful love proclaimed in the
grave,
your faithfulness in the underworld? ④
12 Are your wonders known in the land of
darkness,
your righteousness in the land of
oblivion?
13 But I cry out to you, Lord!
My prayer meets you first thing in the
morning!
14 Why do you reject my very being, Lord?
Why do you hide your face from me?
15 Since I was young I've been afflicted,
I've been dying.
I've endured your terrors. I'm lifeless.
16 Your fiery anger has overwhelmed me;
your terrors have destroyed me.
17 They surround me all day long like
water;



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<p>water; They engulfed me altogether. ¹⁸ [Ⓞ] Loved one and friend You have put far from me, <i>And my acquaintances into darkness.</i></p> <p>Footnotes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Psalm 88:1 Heb. <i>Maschil</i> b. Psalm 88:2 Listen to c. Psalm 88:4 Die d. Psalm 88:5 Lit. <i>Free</i> e. Psalm 88:8 <i>taken away my friends</i> f. Psalm 88:10 <i>shades, ghosts</i> g. Psalm 88:16 <i>destroyed me</i> <p>Cross references</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Psalm 88:1 : 1 Kin. 4:31; 1 Chr. 2:6 B. Psalm 88:1 : Ps. 27:9; [Luke 18:7] C. Psalm 88:3 : Ps. 107:18 D. Psalm 88:4 : [Ps. 28:1] E. Psalm 88:4 : Ps. 31:12 F. Psalm 88:7 : Ps. 42:7 G. Psalm 88:8 : Job 19:13, 19; Ps. 31:11; 142:4 H. Psalm 88:8 : Lam. 3:7 I. Psalm 88:9 : Ps. 86:3 J. Psalm 88:18 : Job 19:13; Ps. 31:11; 38:11 	<p>they engulf me completely. ¹⁸ You've made my loved ones and companions distant. My only friend is darkness.</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Psalm 88:1 Heb uncertain b. Psalm 88:1 Perhaps <i>instruction</i> c. Psalm 88:3 Or <i>soul</i>, also in 88:14 d. Psalm 88:3 Heb <i>Sheol</i> e. Psalm 88:11 Heb <i>Abaddon</i>
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What are these prayers asking for?

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Psalm 137 NKJV	Psalm 137 CEB
Longing for Zion in a Foreign Land	
<p>137 By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down, yea, we wept When we remembered Zion. ² We hung our harps Upon the willows in the midst of it. ³ For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, And those who [Ⓜ]plundered us <i>requested</i> mirth, <i>Saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"</i></p>	<p>Alongside Babylon's streams, there we sat down, crying because we remembered Zion. ² We hung our lyres up in the trees there ³ because that's where our captors asked us to sing; our tormentors requested songs of joy: "Sing us a song about Zion!" they said. ⁴ But how could we possibly sing the Lord's song on foreign soil?</p>



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<p>⁴ How shall we sing the Lord’s song In a foreign land? ⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem, Let my right hand forget <i>its skill!</i> ⁶ If I do not remember you, Let my [Ⓜ]tongue cling to the roof of my mouth— If I do not exalt Jerusalem Above my chief joy. ⁷ Remember, O Lord, against [Ⓜ]the sons of Edom The day of Jerusalem, Who said, [Ⓜ]“Raze it, raze it, To its very foundation!” ⁸ O daughter of Babylon, [Ⓜ]who are to be destroyed, Happy the one [Ⓜ]who repays you as you have served us! ⁹ Happy the one who takes and [Ⓜ]dashes Your little ones against the rock!</p> <p>Footnotes a. Psalm 137:7 Lit. <i>Make bare</i></p> <p>Cross references A. Psalm 137:3 : Ps. 79:1 B. Psalm 137:6 : Job 29:10; Ps. 22:15; Ezek. 3:26 C. Psalm 137:7 : Jer. 49:7–22; Lam. 4:21; Ezek. 25:12–14; 35:2; Amos 1:11; Obad. 10–14 D. Psalm 137:8 : Is. 13:1–6; 47:1 E. Psalm 137:8 : Jer. 50:15; Rev. 18:6 F. Psalm 137:9 : 2 Kin. 8:12; Is. 13:16; Hos. 13:16; Nah. 3:10</p>	<p>⁵ Jerusalem! If I forget you, let my strong hand wither! ⁶ Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I don’t remember you, if I don’t make Jerusalem my greatest joy. ⁷ Lord, remember what the Edomites did on Jerusalem’s dark day: “Rip it down, rip it down! All the way to its foundations!” they yelled. ⁸ Daughter Babylon, you destroyer,[Ⓜ] a blessing on the one who pays you back the very deed you did to us! ⁹ A blessing on the one who seizes your children and smashes them against the rock!</p> <p>Footnotes a. Psalm 137:8 Sym, Tg, Syr; MT <i>the devastated</i></p>
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What are these prayers asking for?

WHAT ARE TODAY’S CULTURE?

WHAT ARE IN TODAY’S CULTURE?

<p>Psalm 140 NKJV To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.</p>	<p>Psalm 140 CEB For the music leader. A psalm of David.</p>
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Prayer for Deliverance from Evil Men	
<p>140 Deliver me, O Lord, from evil men; Preserve me from violent men, ² Who plan evil things in <i>their</i> hearts; [Ⓐ] They continually gather together <i>for</i> war. ³ They sharpen their tongues like a serpent; The [Ⓢ]poison of asps <i>is</i> under their lips. <i>Selah</i> ⁴ [Ⓒ]Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; Preserve me from violent men, Who have purposed to make my steps stumble. ⁵ The proud have hidden a [Ⓢ]snare for me, and cords; They have spread a net by the wayside; They have set traps for me. <i>Selah</i> ⁶ I said to the Lord: "You <i>are</i> my God; Hear the voice of my supplications, O Lord. ⁷ O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, You have [Ⓢ]covered my head in the day of battle. ⁸ Do not grant, O Lord, the desires of the wicked; Do not further his <i>wicked</i> scheme, [Ⓢ]<i>Lest</i> they be exalted. <i>Selah</i> ⁹ "As <i>for</i> the head of those who surround me, Let the evil of their lips cover them; ¹⁰ [Ⓢ]Let burning coals fall upon them; Let them be cast into the fire, Into deep pits, that they rise not up again. ¹¹ Let not a slanderer be established in the earth; Let evil hunt the violent man to overthrow <i>him</i>."</p>	<p>140 Rescue me from evil people, Lord! Guard me from violent people ² who plot evil things in their hearts, who pick fights every single day! ³ They sharpen their tongues like a snake's; spider poison[Ⓢ] is on their lips. <i>Selah</i> ⁴ Protect me from the power of the wicked, Lord! Guard me from violent people who plot to trip me up! ⁵ Arrogant people have laid a trap for me with ropes. They've spread out a net alongside the road. They've set snares for me. <i>Selah</i> ⁶ I tell the Lord, "You are my God! Listen to my request for mercy, Lord!" ⁷ My Lord God, my strong saving help— you've protected my head on the day of battle. ⁸ Lord, don't give the wicked what they want! Don't allow their plans to succeed, or they'll exalt themselves even more![Ⓢ] <i>Selah</i> ⁹ Let the heads of the people surrounding me be covered with the trouble their own lips caused![Ⓢ] ¹⁰ Let burning coals fall on them! Let them fall into deep pits and never get out again! ¹¹ Let no slanderer be safe in the land. Let calamity hunt down violent people—and quickly![Ⓢ] ¹² I know that the Lord will take up the case of the poor</p>



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<p>12 I know that the Lord will maintain The cause of the afflicted, <i>And</i> justice for the poor. 13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; The upright shall dwell in Your presence.</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <p>a. Psalm 140:7 <i>sheltered</i></p> <p>Cross references</p> <p>A. Psalm 140:2 : Ps. 56:6 B. Psalm 140:3 : Ps. 58:4; Rom. 3:13; James 3:8 C. Psalm 140:4 : Ps. 71:4 D. Psalm 140:5 : Ps. 35:7; Jer. 18:22 E. Psalm 140:8 : Deut. 32:27 F. Psalm 140:10 : Ps. 11:6 G. Psalm 140:12 : 1 Kin. 8:45; Ps. 9:4</p>	<p>and will do what is right for the needy. 13 Yes, the righteous will give thanks to your name, and those who do right will live in your presence.</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <p>a. Psalm 140:3 <i>LXX snake poison</i> b. Psalm 140:8 <i>Heb uncertain</i> c. Psalm 140:9 <i>Heb uncertain</i> d. Psalm 140:11 <i>Heb uncertain</i></p>
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What are these prayers asking for?

WHAT ARE TODAY'S CULTURE?

CLOSING:

Countering the Legendary Teaching

There are imprecatory prayers and curses against the enemies of the psalmists in at least forty different psalms, and imprecations are also prominent in the prayers of Jeremiah and Lamentations.

In the more severe imprecations, the psalmist asks God to destroy not only his enemy but also his enemy's family (109:6–20), looks forward to the righteous bathing their feet in the blood of the wicked (58:10), and pronounces blessing on those who bash the skulls of infants (137:9).

Rather than expressions of venomous hatred or “curses parading as prayers,” **imprecations in the Old Testament are cries for God’s judgment in times of extreme injustice and violent oppression. The downtrodden and oppressed cry out when divine intervention is their only recourse against their powerful enemies.** Erich Zenger observes that these psalms often reflect a conflict “between the powerless poor and the too-powerful rich.”³ Those who pray for the destruction of Edom and Babylon in Psalm 137 are survivors of the fall of Jerusalem who have



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lived through the atrocities of military siege and the trauma of deportation. Zenger notes that this psalm “is not the song of people who have the power to effect a violent change in their situation of suffering, nor is it the battle cry of terrorists.” In Psalm 58, the psalmist prays for God to knock out the teeth of his enemies because they are like powerful lions in their assaults on him (v. 6). **Rather than taking the punishment of the wicked into his own hands, the psalmist is giving judgment over to God in recognition that vengeance belongs to him (see Deut 32:35, 41, 43; Rom 12:19).** Gordon Wenham notes that nothing suggests in these prayers that the psalmist himself “will take revenge or even dictate a time table for divine retribution.”

Intense and Passionate Cries for Justice

In assessing the imprecations, we need to remember that **the psalmists often express their prayers to God in highly figurative and hyperbolic language.** Rather than reading the curses and imprecations in the Psalms in a strictly literal manner, the interpreter recognizes the psalmist to be expressing the depth of his emotion, the severity of his suffering, and the urgency of the need for divine intervention. The psalmist no more expects God to literally cause his enemy to melt away “like a slug that moves along in slime” (58:8) than he is wanting God to believe that he is swimming in a bed of tears (6:6) or eating a meal of tears and ashes (42:3; 102:9). Curse language was incorporated into various types of covenantal relationships within the ancient Near East, including the one between Yahweh and Israel (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28). It is thus only natural that divine judgment of the wicked would be conceived of in these terms as well.

Although the punishments prayed for by the psalmists are often harsh and severe, these requests were informed by God’s own revealed standards of justice. God had promised Abraham that he would “bless those who bless you and curse anyone who treats you with contempt” (Gen 12:3). In petitioning for the curses of divine judgment against those who had mistreated them, the psalmists were praying for God to fulfill his covenant promises. The Mosaic Law had also established the principle of *lex talionis* (“eye for eye, tooth for tooth”) (Deut 19:16–21) as a standard of justice and retribution, and the imprecatory prayers of the Old Testament regularly ask God to act in accordance with this standard as he redresses wrong. As horrific as the imprecation calling for the death of Babylonian infants in Ps 137:9 may appear, the Babylonians had committed similar atrocities in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. The principle of *lex talionis* is not God’s final ethical word or ultimate standard of righteousness, but it was one that God himself had established to regulate the punishment of crimes in ancient Israel.

The imprecatory prayers in the Old Testament are not reflective of an ethic that allowed Israel to hate its enemies. Imprecations are not the only prayers that the people of God pray in the Hebrew Bible concerning the wicked or their enemies. In Psalm 35, David prays for God to judge his enemies (vv. 4–10) because of the duplicitous way in which they had repaid evil for good by seeking David’s downfall after he had prayed and grieved for them when they were gravely ill (vv. 11–16; compare Ps 109:4–5). Jeremiah instructed the exiles to pray for the “peace of Babylon” (Jer 29:7) in the same way that faithful Israelites were to pray for the “peace of Jerusalem” (Ps 122:6). As Michael Widmer has noted, this directive from the prophet is amazingly a call to pray for those “who have killed your kin, destroyed your home, and given your land to others.” These



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Old Testament examples reflect an ethic in line with Jesus's instruction for his disciples to pray for their enemies (Matt 5:44–47; Luke 6:27–29).

The Imprecatory Psalms from a New Testament Perspective

Although the imprecatory prayers in the Old Testament remain instructive for the church today, there are elements of discontinuity, important covenantal shifts, and aspects of progressive revelation that inform the Christian application of the imprecatory psalms. Ancient Near Eastern curse language no longer carries the same cultural significance as it did in the world of the Old Testament. Israel as the people of God in the Old Testament was a national entity that was promised security in its land and military victory over its enemies as a reward for obedience to Yahweh's commands. Israel's military victories were important moments in redemptive history. In contrast, the church exists among the nations and is no longer called to advance God's kingdom purposes through war and military conquest. Jesus radically alters the concept of holy war in his willingness to die for his enemies, and disciples of Jesus follow his example in their willingness to lay down their lives rather than take lives for the advancement of the gospel. Rather than a holy war against human enemies and armies, followers of Jesus are now engaged in a spiritual battle against Satan and the forces of evil (Eph 6:12–18).

Although the people of God were called to love their enemies under the old covenant, new covenant believers have an even higher ethic of love in light of how God has demonstrated his love through the cross. Stephen reflects the highest imitation of Jesus when he prays for God to forgive his persecutors (Acts 7:60), just as Jesus prayed for God's forgiveness of his enemies responsible for his death (Luke 23:34). The progressive revelation of the New Testament concerning the afterlife also adds needed perspective on the working out of God's judgment of the wicked. This fuller revelation clarifies that the ultimate judgment of the ungodly will occur in the final judgment, and thus believers can pray for this final reckoning as the means by which God will make right all injustices rather than praying for physical death and retribution in this life against the wicked (see 2 Thess 1:6–10).

In spite of these discontinuities, there remains a legitimate place for imprecation as a righteous response to the extreme evil and injustice that exists in our fallen world. The coming of Jesus did not eradicate human wickedness, and thus these prayers give continued expression to the valid desire of Christians to see God act as a righteous judge in redressing these wrongs and bringing an end to evil. Christians in the West may not resonate with these psalms as much as believers in other parts of the world who regularly encounter violent opposition and persecution. In Rev 6:10–11, Christian martyrs gathered around the throne of God continue to cry out to God for vindication and for his vengeance against those responsible for shedding their blood. Followers of Jesus in the New Testament express imprecations against those who actively pervert or oppose the gospel message (Gal 1:8–9; 5:12; 1 Cor 16:22). It would even seem that praying for the final judgment of the wicked would be one of the ways that God's people hasten the coming of God's kingdom of peace and righteousness to earth (see 2 Pet 3:12).

Application



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Because of their own experience of divine grace, followers of Jesus give priority to prayers for divine grace and mercy for even the worst of their enemies. The fact that Paul was a violent persecutor of the church before his conversion reminds us that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace. When Simon attempted to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter responded to him, "May your silver be destroyed with you" (Acts 8:20), but he also called for the sorcerer to repent and pray for the forgiveness of his sins (v. 22). Although love and blessing are the primary disposition of followers of Christ, prayers for divine judgment and justice are particularly appropriate "in extreme circumstances against hardened, deceitful, violent, immoral unjust sinners."

Believers should rightly feel anger, just as God does over mass shootings or the beheading of Christians in the Middle East. To feel nothing or to become desensitized to such horrific evil is the worst possible response. Rather than acting on their anger in an escalating cycle of violence and retribution, the faithful trust God to defend their cause. By praying the imprecatory psalms, Christians learn to empathize with the oppressed and are reminded of their responsibility to relieve suffering in every way they possibly can.

The imprecatory psalms also have value for Christians today in reminding them of God's holy hatred of sin, evil, and injustice. Christians not only petition for the judgment of the wicked but also for sin and evil to be expunged from their own hearts. After asking for God to slay the wicked in Psalm 139, David asks for God to search his heart for any sin and wickedness (vv. 23–24). God's people cannot genuinely pray for the judgment of the wicked without hating their own sinfulness and lack of righteousness.

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⁴ Croteau, D. A., & Yates, G. (2019). *Urban legends of the old testament: 40 common misconceptions* (pp. 145–150). B&H Academic.