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Praying Against the Wicked

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



147

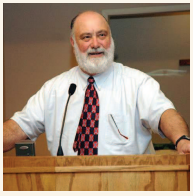
Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.

PSALM 59:1

How should believers pray when confronted with evil? John Weaver considers the imprecatory prayers of Scripture, the character of divine justice, and the responsibility to seek righteousness rather than private revenge. These messages ask readers to examine both the purpose of their prayers and the biblical standards by which they judge opposition.

"It is time to pray against the wicked when they seek to overthrow the trust and faith of God's people."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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New Testament Studies

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Praying Against the Wicked

John Weaver

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Edited from the sermon corpus of John Weaver.

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CHAPTER 1

Praying Against the Wicked -1

December 9, 2012

Praying Against the Wicked

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 37:1-10 (KJV)

Introduction: The Need to Pray Against the Wicked

Isaiah 37. The title of the message is "Praying Against the Wicked."

"And it came to pass when King Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priest, covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and a rebuke, and a blasphemy, for the children are come to birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to

> reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard. Wherefore, lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left."
>
> So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, "Thus shall you say unto your master, Thus saith the Lord, be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me."
>
> "Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumor, and return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword at his own land." So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, and he heard that he had departed from Lachish. And he heard it say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "He has come forth to make war with thee." And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah, king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands by destroying them utterly. And shalt thou be delivered?"

"Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden, which are in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah?" And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it. Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, saying, "O Lord God of Israel, O Lord God of hosts, God of Israel, thou that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone in all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear, and open thine eyes, O Lord, and see, and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations in their countries, and they have cast their gods into the fire. For they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they have destroyed them. Now

therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou only."

Then Isaiah, the son of Amoz, sent him to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib, king of Assyria." Notice that Hezekiah prayed against the king of Assyria. So did Isaiah.

Praying against the wicked is almost foreign to the mindset of most Christians. We have been so programmed to pray for the lost that we cannot discern between someone who is unsaved and someone who is simply positively evil and wicked, and who is the enemy of God. We even twist the words of our Lord to love our enemies and pray for those that despitefully use us in Matthew chapter 5.

Distinction Between Our Enemies and God's Enemies

You must understand the context: He is not only rebuking the Pharisees, but is also giving the correct interpretation of God's law. Our Lord says, "You've heard that it had been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

Before looking at this verse, understand that there is a huge difference between our enemies and the enemies of the Lord. They should be one and the same; however, that is not usually the case. Our enemies are usually enemies of our own making. We make enemies because of our own pride, stubbornness, rebellion, carelessness, and inconsideration for others. It is all of our sins that make our own enemies.

In Matthew chapter 5, our Lord tells us how we are to respond to our enemies. In Matthew 5:44, He shows us that men may be enemies to us in at least three different ways. First, they may be our enemy in their heart by hatred. Secondly, they may be our enemy in words, simply by cursing or using direful imprecations against us. Thirdly, they may be our enemy in their actions by continually

harassing and abusing us. Our Lord tells us how we are to respond to our enemies—not His, but our enemies.

First, He tells us to meet their hatred with biblical love: "do good to them that hate you." We are to respond to their hatred with biblical love. Love is the fulfilling of the law. Our Lord is not commanding us to have certain feelings or emotions toward our enemies; He is commanding us to do right, to obey His law and His Word toward our enemies, no matter how they hate us. Love has nothing to do with emotions or sentimentality. Just because my enemy does wrong against me does not give me the right to violate the law of God. I must still do right for him. Obviously, we are to return biblical love for unbiblical hatred.

Secondly, they may be our enemy by cursing. He says in verse 44, "love your enemies and bless them that curse you." What He is teaching us is what the rest of the Word of God says: we are not to return evil for evil. Instead of cursings, we are to return blessings. First Peter 3:9 says, "not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, knowing that ye are called thereunto, that ye should inherit a blessing."

So how are we to respond to someone cursing us? If Frank stood up and cursed me this morning, would that give me the right to curse him back? The answer is no, obviously not. I am to return hatred with biblical love and cursing with blessing.

Romans chapter 12 states it plainly: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

Here is biblical love in action: "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him." It does not say to buy him a steak; if all you have is beans, give him beans. "If he thirst, give him drink." It does not say to buy him the finest bottle of wine; give him a glass of water. "For in doing so, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

When God commands us to return blessing for cursing, it is not necessarily just for the benefit of our enemy. It is for our own benefit, that we not fall into the same sins as our enemy.

Thirdly, repeated injurious acts are to be met with continual prayer for the one who is oppressing us, for Matthew 5:44 says, “and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.” Why should we pray for the enemy who is harassing us? First, we must remember that it is God who saves. Secondly, according to Romans chapter 12, it is God who vindicates or avenges us. When someone is constantly and consistently persecuting and prosecuting us, we must turn that person over to God. He may either save him or give retribution upon him. Salvation and retribution are in His hand.

That is how God tells us to respond to our enemies. We may act biblically toward them, pray for them, bless them, and do good to them. But what about God’s enemies? According to the Word of God, we do not only pray against them; we fight against them.

In Psalm 94:16, God said, “Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?” Thus God is asking individuals to rise up against evildoers and against the workers of iniquity. God's enemies must be confronted, dealt with, and prayed against.

Biblical Basis for Imprecatory Prayers

Many prayers against God's enemies are recorded in the Bible, and these prayers are referred to as imprecatory prayers. I preached a series of four sermons on imprecatory prayers a year or two ago. My third book is titled The Biblical Truth Concerning God's Righteous Vengeance, and it also deals with imprecatory prayers. There are many imprecatory prayers in the Bible, and they are just as valid, applicable, biblical, and scriptural today as they were in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

Praying against the wicked is a godly act. The truth is that we are sinful and rebellious when we fail to pray against the wicked. Our Lord made this exceedingly clear in Matthew 12:30: “He that is not with me is against me. And he that gathereth not with me scattereth

abroad." If we fail to pray against the wicked, we are evidencing the fact that we are really not for Christ.

Which kingdom would you prefer to see prosper—the kingdom of God or the kingdom of evil? Our Lord taught us to pray in Luke 11: "When you pray, you say, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." When we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we are in essence praying against all the other kingdoms: the kingdom of man, the kingdom of Satan, and the new world order. We are saying, "Lord, we do not want all of these other kingdoms to prosper. We do not want them to conquer or have dominion. We want Your kingdom to conquer and have dominion." When we pray, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," we are saying, "I don't care what other men will or want."

I do not care what the New World Order crowd wants or wills. I do not care what the socialists want, or the communists want, or the Marxists want. I want the will of God done in earth as it is in heaven. When you pray that, you are actually praying against the wills and wants of other men. Obviously, when we pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done," we are praying for the extension and dominion of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you are not praying against the wicked, which kingdom do you really want to prosper and succeed? For whom do you really pray? We tend to forget that a holy, righteous, and just God has enemies. In a very general sense, all who are unconverted are the enemies of God. Romans 5:10 says, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Even we who are now His friends and children were once enemies. Colossians 1:21 says, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled."

We must pray for God's elect, whoever they are and wherever they are. Even though, in their unconverted state, they are still enemies of Christ, you were an enemy of Christ, and God saved you. God can save His enemies. In that sense, there is a general sense in which even the elect are enemies before their conversion.

However, there is a distinct difference between those who are enemies by nature and those who are deliberately, premeditatedly seeking to overthrow His kingdom, His throne, His rule and His reign, and destroy His people. These individuals are not simply unsaved; certainly they are unsaved, but they are also impenitent and impudent rebels against God. There is a big difference. We are told in Psalm 74, "by the enemies set up, by an enemy's roar in the midst of the congregation, they set up their ensigns or signs"—that is, they set their standard up: "We have conquered. This is our people."

"We'll do this and we'll do that." The enemies of God are those who would dethrone God if it were absolutely possible. They would murder God if it were possible. They desire to rule and reign in His place, and they seek to steal His honor and His glory.

That is the kind of enemy I am talking about. Remember Psalm 2, verses 1 through 3, where the psalmist asks, "Why do the heathen rage? And the people imagine a vain thing?" Listen: "The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us."

What the rulers are saying is, We do not like God's law. We do not like God's kingdom. We do not like the boundaries and limitations He has placed upon us. We are simply going to cast them away; we are going to destroy them. Such wicked men rage against God, blaspheme Him, mock Him, and seek to set up their little kingdom over and above His righteous, holy, and godly kingdom.

It is these kinds of people that the Bible teaches we must pray against and fight against. It does not matter whether you pray long prayers against them, as David did, or short prayers against them, as the Apostle Paul did. Just so you pray against them. Hold in Isaiah 37, and turn to Psalm 58.

Psalm 58 gives us a prayer against the wicked:

“The wicked are estranged from the womb. They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent. They’re like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.

"Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth. Break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord. Let them melt away as waters which run continually. When he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away with a whirlwind, both living and in his wrath.

"The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance. He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked, so that a man shall say, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous. Verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth."

That is an imprecatory prayer against the enemies of God: "Break their teeth, O God. Break out their teeth in their mouth. Shoot your arrows at them. Let them be cut in pieces like a snail melts before the sun. Let them melt like an untimely birth. Let them pass away. Send your whirlwind. Send your fire and consume them."

Psalm 68 gives the same kind of prayer: "Let God arise. Let His enemies be scattered. Let them also that hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away. As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

"But let the righteous be glad. Let them rejoice before God. Yea, let them exceedingly rejoice."

"Let God arise." God is always pictured as sitting on His throne. All God has to do is speak the word, and that is it. But when God arises, when He gets up, He is going to do something. He is going to do something while He is sitting, but here is the picture: "Let God arise."

"Don't sit back, O Lord. Arise and let Your enemies flee away as smoke. Let them melt as wax before the fire. Let them perish in the presence of God."

Turn now to 2 Timothy chapter 4. I want to show you some short prayers in the New Testament that are imprecatory prayers. Notice verse 14, a very short, brief prayer, but an imprecatory prayer: "Alexander, the coppersmith, did me much evil. The Lord reward him according to his works." That is short and sweet, isn't it? What is he saying? "Pay him back, O Lord. Vindicate me. Vindicate your

child." There are a lot of God's children that need vindicating. I know a number of folks who are now in prison unjustly, unlawfully. They need vindicating.

Look in Romans 15, another prayer that Paul asked folks to pray as well. Beginning with verses 30 and 31, Paul says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in prayers to God for me." Paul, why do you want the people to pray for you? "That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea. And that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints." What did he say? "You pray for me twofold. Positively, that my ministry is going to be accepted of the saints. But secondly, negatively, you pray that I'll be delivered from those that do not believe in Judea." Pray against some and pray for some. That's exactly what he's saying.

If you would turn back in your Bible to Psalm 139, let me show you how specific David was. Beginning with verse 19, look at this prayer: "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God. Depart from me, therefore, you bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly. And thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? Am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." Now, here's my question: Is David violating Matthew 5 and verse 44?

The answer is no, because Matthew 5:44 deals with our enemies, not God's enemies. David says, "Do not I hate them that hate thee, O Lord? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies." Then he says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me." In other words, David was saying that he was perfectly righteous and holy in praying this prayer and making this statement. David counted God's enemies as his enemies. He loved the Lord, and therefore hated all who were against God. He not only fought against God's enemies; he prayed against God's enemies.

One of my favorite verses is Psalm 7:9: “Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just.” Wouldn't that be wonderful? When you pray, “Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just,” you are praying, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” It is the same thing.

When is it time to pray against the wicked? Generally, it is always time to pray against the wicked. In the strictest sense, we should always be praying against them, for we are always wrestling against them. The Apostle Paul said, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” The word wrestle indicates a contest between two in which one endeavors to throw the other, and the match is decided when one is down and the victor has his foot or hand on the other's neck. If I have my foot on your neck, you are totally under my control, because the neck can be broken very easily and quickly. Thus, we wrestle against all these wicked powers. Why?

When the Righteous Are Persecuted

Because they are trying to destroy us, and according to the Scripture, excuse my English, it is us or them. That is what the Bible says. We are constantly and consistently fighting against them. Since this is true in a general sense—that we should always be fighting against them and praying against them—I want us to go back to Isaiah 37 and look at some specifics. I am going to show you five truths from this passage on praying against the wicked.

When is it time to pray against the wicked? First, it is time to pray against the wicked when the righteous are persecuted.

In Isaiah 37, Hezekiah and the people of Judah had done absolutely nothing to merit the attack of Sennacherib and the Assyrians. It is true that the people of Jerusalem were sinners, but they had done nothing to antagonize Sennacherib. The evidence of their innocence in this sense is given in verse 35. We will go to this later, but look at Isaiah 37:35, where God says, “For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake and for my servant David's sake.”

God said, “I am going to defend Jerusalem. I am going to save these people, number one, for mine own sake and then for David's sake.”

We read about and hear about Christian persecution in many countries, such as Russia, Iran, Iraq, and Israel. But how often do you read about Christian persecution in America? You say, “Christians are not persecuted in America.” I beg to differ. Let me read you an article I downloaded. You can get the same article. It says, “Report highlights consistent pattern of hostility toward Christians in the United States,” by Paul Stanley, Christian Post reporter. A new 140-page report released by the Family Research Council and Liberty Institute reveals a pattern of hostility toward Christians and Christianity in the United States. The report includes over 600 incidents during a 10-year period.

The attacks range from rulings by the judiciary branch to an elementary school student who was physically lifted from his seat and reprimanded for praying before eating his lunch. I wish that had been my child. Another example shows that a Christian couple was fired as apartment-complex managers and forced to move because a painting with a Christian reference was displayed in their office. Other examples cited in the report include a federal judge threatening incarceration to a high-school valedictorian unless she removed references to Jesus from her graduation speech. I wish that had been me too.

I would still have prayed in Christ's name. City officials prohibited senior citizens from praying over their meals, listening to religious messages, or singing gospel songs at a senior activity center. Again, I wish that had been me.

Following U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs policies, a federal government official sought to censor a pastor's prayer, eliminating reference to Jesus during a Memorial Day ceremony honoring veterans of the National Cemetery. Again, I wish that had been me.

A public university's law school banned a Christian organization because it required its officers to adhere to a statement of faith with which the university disagreed. I wish that had been Henry. I'm teasing. The United States Department of Justice argued before the

Supreme Court that the federal government can tell churches and synagogues which pastors and rabbis they can hire and fire.

When they try to fire me, we'll meet in the woods. Through the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, the federal government is forcing religious organizations to provide insurance for birth control and abortion-inducing drugs, in direct violation of their religious beliefs. That's why they're being fought now. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs banned the mention of God from veterans' funerals, overriding the wishes of the deceased families. A federal judge held that prayers before a state house of representatives could be to Allah but not to Jesus.

“America today would be unrecognizable to our founders. Our first liberty is facing a relentless onslaught from well-funded and aggressive groups and individuals who are using the courts, Congress, and a vast federal bureaucracy to suppress and limit religious freedom,” said Kelly Shackelford, president of the Liberty Institute. “This radicalized minority is driven by an anti-religious ideology that is turning the First Amendment upside down.”

Both organizations presented the report’s findings during a joint press conference in Tampa, Florida, on the Monday prior to the Republican Party’s platform committee convention, to raise awareness. The Liberty Institute further pointed out that religious liberty is facing a relentless onslaught from well-funded and aggressive groups using whatever means available to suppress or attack religious freedom. FRC’s Tony Perkins said, “As dark as this survey is, there is much light. The secularist agenda only advances when those who love liberty are apathetic. Let this be a call to stand for religious liberty in the United States.”

In Psalm 74:23, notice this prayer request: “Forget not the voice of thine enemies, the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.” What is he asking? “God, don’t forget the voice of your enemies. Bring them down. Listen to their tumult, it’s increasing continually against you.”

Then Psalm 34:14-19 says, “Depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is against them

that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all." He says, "the face of the Lord is against them that do evil to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. But the righteous cry and the Lord heareth and delivereth them out of all their troubles."

When the Wicked Are Powerful, Haughty, and Blasphemous

Obviously, we should be praying against the wicked, and it is time to pray against the wicked when the righteous are persecuted. It is time to pray against the wicked when the enemies are powerful, haughty, and blasphemous. Do we know any like that today?

In Isaiah 37:4, Hezekiah says, "It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria, his master, hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard. Wherefore, lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left." In verse 6, Isaiah says, "Thus shall you say unto your master, Thus saith the Lord. Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me."

When Enemies Are Powerful, Haughty, and Blasphemous

It is one thing to be an enemy of God. It is quite another thing to be an arrogant, haughty, powerful, blasphemous enemy of God. Why is it more dangerous for someone like that to be an enemy of God? The answer is that they can do more damage to the people of God.

Listen carefully to Psalm 14:4: "Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge who eat up my people as bread and call not upon the name of the Lord." The wicked eat up God's people as bread. How simple is it to eat a piece of bread? I ate two this morning. No problem. In other words, they are ready to maul, dismember, kill, and destroy just like eating a piece of bread. The wicked think nothing of destroying the work of God or the people of God.

It is like the adulterous woman in Proverbs 30:20: “Such is the way of an adulterous woman. She eateth and wipeth her mouth and saith, I have done no wickedness.” To them, killing people is nothing. Do you remember what our Lord said in John 16:2? “They shall put you out of the synagogue, yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God’s service.” Whoever kills you will think that he is doing God’s service.

Psalm 79. Let us read the first seven verses. I want to show you what a proud, arrogant, haughty, powerful enemy of God can do. Psalm 79, beginning at verse one: "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance. The holy temple have they defiled. They have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem. And there was none to bury them. We have become a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry forever? Shall thy jealousy burn like fire? Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place."

Notice this: "The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem."

Sennacherib had a mighty empire, great wealth, military might, and a desire to extend and build a greater kingdom at the expense of Judah and Jerusalem. He did not care whom they worshipped or how they worshipped. He did not care who was there, who lived, or who died. The only thing he wanted was to extend his kingdom and power; whoever got in the way was to be taken out.

Do you realize that this is the same attitude of haughty, arrogant, blasphemous, powerful rulers today? They believe that if we are in their way, we are expendable.

You say, "People aren't like that." Oh? Did you ever read about Joseph Stalin and the 60 million that he killed? How about Pol Pot,

who killed millions? Nelson Tom, millions. Castro, millions. There are people like that today. Why do you think some people are trying to say that the earth is overpopulated and that we need to reduce the people on this earth to a certain number? How do you reduce a people to a certain number? You kill them.

It is time to pray against the wicked when your enemy is powerful, haughty, arrogant, and blasphemous, for they have no regard for life or for anything. You talk about your liberty and freedom? They do not regard that; they do not even regard your life.

Thirdly, it is time to pray against the wicked when we are incapable of dealing with them ourselves. Look back to Isaiah 37:3. Hezekiah sends this message to Isaiah: "Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble and a rebuke and a blasphemy. For the children are come to birth, and there is no strength to bring forth."

When We Are Incapable of Dealing with Them Ourselves

The meaning of this figure is plain. There was the highest danger and the need of help and aid. It was as in childbirth, when the pains had been protracted, the strength exhausted, and there was imminent danger to the mother and the child. Hezekiah was saying, "We may have made some preparation and may have some defensive weapons, but this is a critical time. Our energies are exhausted. Our strength is insufficient for our defense. What we need is divine interposition. We need God to intervene and step in between us and these enemies who are trying to destroy us. We are helpless and powerless. We need help."

The psalmist says in another passage, "Give us help from God for vain is the help of man." In light of the situation, they sent Isaiah the prophet and said, "You have got to pray to God; we need help."

I have often thought, I sure miss the old days. You say, "What are you talking about?" Back in the 1800s, people could ride up to a jail cell, put ropes on the window, tie up their horses, pull the window out, rescue the prisoner, and ride him off to a different state, where he could live happily ever after—just not in that state. But it is not

like that anymore. How can we intervene for people who are wickedly, unlawfully, and unjustly treated? Think about that.

We have to have help from God. If God does not help us, we cannot do one thing. Isaiah 37:2 says, “And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priest, covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This is a day of trouble, a day of rebuke, and of blasphemy, for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.”

“Now it may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard. Wherefore, lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.”

Isaiah says concerning Sennacherib, “This is the word which the Lord hath spoken concerning him: The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; and the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

“Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high, even against the Holy One of Israel? By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon. I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir-trees thereof. And I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel. I have digged and drunk water, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places. Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it?

“And have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldst be to lay waste, to fenced cities, and to ruinous heaps? Therefore, their inhabitants were of small power, and they were dismayed and confounded, and they were as grass of a field as the green herb, and as the grass on the housetops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.”

God says to Sennacherib, “But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. Because thy rage

against me, and thy tumult has come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way which thou camest."

"I can take care of him. I can handle him." Stop and think of all the wicked that we are incapable of handling. We need to remind ourselves that, regardless of how strong, motivated, pure, holy, or righteous we may be, our Lord said, "without me, you can do what? Nothing." How desperately do we need Him? We should understand how powerful, ungodly, arrogant, and blasphemous the wicked truly are, and ask God to divinely intervene.

Fourthly, it is time to pray against the wicked when they seek to overthrow the faith and trust of God's people in the Lord. Look, if you would, beginning there with verse 10. Before I read it, let me point this out: it is not simply wicked college professors who seek to destroy faith in Christ. It is also unbelieving and unconverted pastors, liberals, politicians, governmental agencies, and even the government itself.

When They Seek to Overthrow Faith in God

Sennacherib wanted to make absolutely sure that the people did not trust in God. To prove and stress his point, he pointed to the other gods that were unable to deliver their people. Isaiah 37, verse 10: "Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah, king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given to the hands of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands by destroying them utterly, and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them, which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden, which were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad? Where is the king of the city of Sepharvaim? Hena and Ivvah?" Notice what he says: "Check around. Look around." Sennacherib sends word to Hezekiah: "I've taken out all the other cities."

"I've conquered their kings. I've got their gods. I destroyed their gods. Do you think your God is going to stop me? Do you think your God is going to deliver you?" Sennacherib said, "Let me give you

some references. Check up and see what I've done to these other cities and countries and kings." It should be observed that such an attack by Sennacherib against Jerusalem did not occur and did not succeed.

When the enemies attack or even threaten to attack the true people of God, it drives them closer to the Lord, makes them seek a greater confession of faith, and drives them to reassure themselves in the Lord. When Sennacherib sent his messenger, he said, "No, no, no, no, you don't need to trust in the Lord your God. Look what I've done to all these other gods."

Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord: "O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, thou that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art God, even thou alone. For all the kingdoms of the earth, thou hast made the heaven and the earth. Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear, and open thine eyes, O Lord, and see, and hear all the words of Sennacherib which he hath sent to reproach the living God. Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their countries, and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were no gods. For the work of men's hands, wood and stone, therefore have they destroyed them. Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou art God alone."

A tax on our faith will never succeed as long as we stay with the Lord and with his word. It is true that in the time of persecution, there are some that will defect, leave, forsake, and apostatize. Yet the truth is, they never really belonged to him to begin with. They were never really genuine Christians. How do we know that? Because of what the Scripture teaches in 1 John chapter 2 and verse 19.

Pray Against the Wicked Before They Act

John said, "They went out from us, but they were not of us. For had they been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. But they went out that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us." If you are really, genuinely all of us, you are not going to leave, forsake, defect, or apostatize. When people leave, it makes plain that they were never one of us to begin with.

The proof that we have real, genuine, saving faith is that we persevere to the end, and we are only able to persevere by His preserving grace and mercy in our lives.

Fifthly, it is time to pray against the wicked before they act. Each of us has used the old adage, “An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure.” Why should we ever try to get out of trouble if we could prevent getting into trouble in the first place?

Before They Act: Preventive Prayer

Sennacherib wanted to attack and capture Judah and Jerusalem, but he was thwarted by the prayers of Hezekiah, Isaiah, and the people. It is better to avoid going into Assyria than to get in and try to get out. If you can avoid going there the first time and in the first place, that is what you need to do. That is exactly what they were doing: praying against Sennacherib and the Assyrian Empire.

In Isaiah 37:35, God says, “For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake and for my servant David’s sake.” Then the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand. When they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

Not every one of them died, obviously. Those who were alive saw one hundred eighty-five thousand dead. But did God take care of Sennacherib? “And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia.”

"And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead." Earlier, God said, "I'm going to put my hook in his mouth. I will make him go back the same way that he came and he's going to fall in his own land." We need to learn to pray with David that we may see the truth he states in Psalm 9:15: "The heathens are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken." The wicked are sunk in the pit that they made.

Psalm 7:14 speaks of the wicked man: "Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood." Then it says, "He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the

ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate." What is God going to do? God is going to let the wicked fall into the pit which they dug. In Proverbs 28:10, the Word of God says, "Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit."

We need to learn to pray as Deborah and Barak prayed in Judges 5:31. After the enemies of God had been dealt with severely, Jabin and his army had been destroyed, Deborah and Barak prayed, "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might." "So let all thine enemies perish." That's God's enemies; it's not our enemies. We need to learn to pray that God would be pleased again to subdue and remove the wicked from our lives and from our nation.

Psalm 104:35 is a very powerful verse: "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more." That is saying, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Applications: Praying Against the Wicked in Every Area

We must learn to pray against the wicked in every area of our life, and in every area in which the wicked are prospering. David prayed against the wicked counsel of Ahithophel. In 2 Samuel 15:31, one told David, saying, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O Lord, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.” I prayed against prosecutors who were persecuting God's people unlawfully. I prayed that God would turn their thoughts into confusion and their tongue into foolishness, to confound them. That is what David prayed. It is holy, right, and lawful to ask God to destroy the counsel of the wicked.

Secondly, we know that the enemies of God shall be destroyed and consumed. There are biblical words by which we pray to that end. Psalm 110:1–2 says, “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of his strength out of thine hand, and rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.” These verses are quoted a number of times

in the New Testament and apply to our Lord Jesus Christ, including Matthew 22:44 and Mark 12:36. We know that the enemies of God are going to be subdued and destroyed. It is therefore right to pray for that subjugation and destruction.

Conclusion: The Certainty of God's Victory

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:25 concerning Christ, “for he must reign till he's put all of his enemies under his feet.” What does that tell you? All of his enemies are going to be subjugated. They will be absolutely dominated and destroyed by King Jesus.

Since we are talking about praying against our enemies, we must remember that even Elijah made intercession against his own people when they turned against God. Romans 11:2–3 says, “Know you not what the Scripture says of Elijah? How he made intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed my prophets and digged down thine altars, and I am left alone and they seek my life.”

So my question is not just, Who do you pray for? but, Who do you pray against? Whose kingdom do you really want to flourish, prosper, become evident, and manifest—the kingdom of God or the kingdom of man? We need to learn to pray against the wicked. We need to learn to pray, "Our Father, Lord in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Learn to pray against the wicked. Learn to pray against anyone and any organization that is against the Lord Jesus Christ, His law, His righteousness, His kingdom, and His salvation. to intervene.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to You this day, and we are thankful, Father, for the truth that You have given us. We are free by Your grace and Your mercy to pray against those who are Your enemies. And, Lord, we do pray, as David did, that You cast them down, O Lord, that they rise not up again. Let them break their teeth in their mouth, O Lord. Break their arms. Destroy their power.

Lord, I pray, Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, not only against Your divine enemies, but for Your people. I pray, Lord, first of all, that You would turn us. Turn us, O God, and we shall be turned. Cause Thy face to shine upon us, and we shall be saved. Lord God,

grant us repentance. Grant us faith. Grant us obedience. Then, Lord, restore our dominion, that we may live under Thy Word and honor Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

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CHAPTER 2

Praying Against The Wicked

Part Two

January 12, 2016

Introduction and Review of Part 1

Turn to 2 Kings chapter 19. This is when Sennacherib is going to attack Jerusalem. We will begin with verse 1, though our main text is verse 20.

"And it came to pass when King Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos."

"And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, Today is a day of trouble, and a rebuke, and blasphemy. For the children are come to birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be the Lord thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria, his master, had sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard. Wherefore, lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left."

So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, “Thus shalt thou say to your master. Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumor, and he shall return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.”

Now skip down to verse 20. “Then Isaiah the son of Amos sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, that which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.”

This message is entitled “Praying Against the Wicked, Part 2” because some time ago I preached a message from this very text entitled “Praying Against the Wicked.” The message today is entirely different from that first message, but I want to give you the five main points I brought out then and bring them to your mind. That message dealt more with when it is time to pray against the wicked.

First of all, it is time to pray against the wicked when the righteous are persecuted. That is what is happening in 2 Kings chapter 19. Secondly, it is time to pray against the wicked when our enemies are powerful, haughty, and blasphemous. That is exactly what the Assyrians were. Thirdly, it is time to pray against the wicked when we are incapable of dealing with them ourselves. Hezekiah and the people were not able to fight against the wicked. Fourthly, it is time to pray against the wicked when they seek to overthrow the trust and faith of God's people. That is exactly what they were doing, because they were telling Hezekiah not to trust in the Lord. Fifthly, it is time to pray against the wicked before they act. That is exactly what Hezekiah was doing.

As I was reading through 2 Kings again recently, verse 20 simply jumped out at me again: "Then Isaiah the son of Amos sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, that which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard."

The Pertinence of Praying Against the Wicked

We often pray for ourselves, and we often pray for other people, but very seldom do we genuinely pray against the wicked. Praying against the wicked is a very pertinent reality. The wicked are in charge in just about every area of our lives today; they are basically running things. When the wicked are in charge, the righteous withdraw.

The Bible teaches that the way to have the righteous increase is to have the wicked decrease. In fact, the Bible says in Proverbs 28 and verse 28, "When wicked men rise, men hide themselves, but when they perish, the righteous increase." When they perish, the righteous increase. So if we want an increase in righteousness, in righteous individuals, God says one of the ways is for the wicked simply to perish.

Clarifying 1 Timothy 2:1-2 on Praying for Rulers

We have been actually so slothful in our studies and so negligent in our reading and understanding of Scripture that most Christians somehow think we are absolutely duty-bound to pray for wicked, ungodly, reprobate rulers. Then they run to 1 Timothy 2 and say, “Here is my proof text.” This is the passage most people quote when saying that we should pray for our rulers.

The Apostle Paul is indeed admonishing us to pray. In 1 Timothy 2:1 he writes, “I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority.” So obviously Paul is saying that we should pray for kings and for all who are in authority.

They say, “There we are; there we have it. We are duty-bound to pray for our rulers.” That is true in one sense of the word. But you have to ask yourself, What does the rest of verse 2 say? Why are we being admonished to pray for these civil rulers? Look at it: “For kings and for all that are in authority.” Why should we pray for them?

Here it is: “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.” What the Apostle is saying is this: We pray for them

not for their benefit, but for our benefit. We pray that they will leave us alone, that we will be unbothered, undisturbed, and unmolested, and that we, God's people, may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, which is acceptable in the sight of God. We are not demanded to pray for their salvation.

According to Deuteronomy chapter 17, a ruler has absolutely no business being in office unless he is a Christian, because the Bible demands that we only have our brethren to rule over us. There is a host of other Scriptures as well. Obviously, if a man is in office and he is unsaved, he should not be in that office to begin with.

It may surprise you to learn that all of the original charters in this country and all of the original state constitutions demanded Christian rulers. Unless a man would take an oath that he believed in the one true and living God, who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, and in both the inspiration of the Old and New Testament, he could not hold office. An infidel could not hold office; a Jewish man could not hold office. Obviously, it was Christians and Christians only.

It may surprise you that the first Supreme Court Justice, John Jay, had this to say: "Almost all nations have peace or war at the will and pleasure of rulers whom they do not elect and who are not always wise and virtuous. Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers." That was the first Supreme Court Justice. He said we should have Christians for our rulers.

Before proceeding any further, I want to deal with one objection that I dealt with in the introduction of the first message, "Praying Against the Wicked." You will find that objection in Matthew 5:44. They will say, "Oh, but our Lord told us that we should pray for our enemies." Yes, He did. Our Lord says, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you."

Distinguishing Personal Enemies from God's Enemies

Our Lord says, "Do good to them that hate you. And pray for those which despitefully use you and persecute you." But there is a vast

difference between our enemies and God's enemies. They usually should be one and the same, that is true. Yet our enemies are usually those of our own making. We have enemies because of our pride, stubbornness, rebellion, carelessness, or lack of consideration for other individuals, and so we develop enemies.

In Matthew 5:44, our Lord shows us how we are to respond to our enemies. He points out that a man may be our enemy in one of three distinct ways. First, he may be our enemy in his heart through hatred: "Pray for them, do good unto them that hate you." A man can be our enemy in his heart; he could hate us. Secondly, he may be our enemy by words, in that he curses us or uses direful imprecations against us: "Bless them that curse you." Thirdly, a man may be our enemy by actions, continually oppressing and persecuting us: "And pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

Our Lord tells us three ways in which a man may be our enemy, and then tells us how we should respond to enemies who hate us in those three particular ways. First, we are to meet unbiblical hatred with biblical love. Literally, He says, "Love your enemies. Love your enemies."

The word "love" does not mean becoming emotional, sentimental, and teary-eyed toward them. According to Romans 13:10, love is the fulfilling of the law. If I am to love my enemy, what am I to do? I am to do good toward him and obey God's Word toward him. This does not mean I have to put my arm around him or hug his neck, nor does it mean I have to do anything special for him. It means that I am always to act biblically toward him in any situation and circumstance.

Secondly, if our enemy uses cursings or evil words, we are to meet those evil words and cursings with blessings. He said in verse 44, "Bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you." Our Lord is teaching us what Peter and Paul said as well: we are not to render evil for evil.

If Steve is my enemy and stands up and cusses me out in front of everybody, would that give me the right to stand up and cuss him back? The answer is no. If he hates me and curses me, the Scripture tells me to do good toward him. In 1 Peter 3:9, it says, "Not

rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." We are not to render evil for evil.

Paul gives us the same information in Romans 12, beginning with verse 17: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men." We do not pay somebody back just because he does us wrong. We have to do right even if our enemies refuse to do what is right. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." I confess that there are some men with whom you cannot live peaceably, but, as much as in you is, you are to endeavor to live peaceably with all men.

Then verse 19 says, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Vengeance belongs to God. Let me point this out clearly: God is absolutely just. If David is my enemy and does something horrendous, wicked, and vile to me, and I say, "I will get you back," and do get him back, I have usurped God's authority. Vengeance belongs to God, not to me. How could I expect God to deal with David after I have dealt with him? God is just.

He is not going to punish him twice for the same sin. If I want God to avenge me, then I have to be obedient. God can clean this plow a whole lot better than I can and do a finer job of it at the same time. God says, "Don't try to avenge yourself."

To make sure that you are not trying to avenge yourself, He says, "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him." You do not have to buy him a steak, but you do have to give him something to eat if he is hungry. If he is thirsty, give him to drink. "For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Do not let evil overtake you; overcome evil by being obedient and doing that which is right and holy and godly.

Thirdly, repeated injurious acts of an enemy are to be met with continual prayer. He says in Matthew 5:44, "And pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Why should you pray for them if they are persecuting you? If they are continually and constantly persecuting and harassing you, it is either a manifestation

that they need to be saved or that they need to be judged. That is up to God. You just pray for God's will to be done.

As far as our enemies are concerned, we can love them, bless them, and pray for them. But it is a whole different ballgame when we come to God's enemies. Psalm 94 and verse 16 asks, “Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Who will stand for me against the workers of iniquity?” God said, “I want someone to rise up. I want someone to stand for me.” God's enemies must be confronted, dealt with, and prayed against. There are numerous prayers in the Bible prayed by godly men against the wicked.

Praying Against God's Enemies

They are recorded for our benefit and our blessing. These prayers are referred to as imprecatory prayers. Several years back, I brought four messages on imprecatory praying. My third book, "The Biblical Truth About God's Righteous Vengeance," also deals with imprecatory prayers. But imprecatory prayers are just as valid, just as applicable, just as biblical, and just as scriptural today as they were in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

Point 1: It Is Right and Proper to Pray Against God's Enemies

Praying against the wicked is indeed a godly act, and we are sinful and rebellious when we fail to pray against the wicked. Our Lord made this exceedingly clear in Matthew 12 and verse 30. He said, "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not scattereth abroad." Obviously, not praying against our Lord's enemies signifies that we may be actually for those enemies.

It is right and proper to pray against God's enemies. That is exactly what Hezekiah was doing in 2 Kings chapter 19. That is why in verse 20 God said to Isaiah, "You tell Hezekiah, that which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, I have heard."

Hezekiah was a great king and also a godly man. We must remember that the enemies of God are equally the enemies of God's people. While Sennacherib was fighting against God, the

manifestation of his fighting against God was his fighting against God's people. There is no enemy of God that can climb up to heaven, face God, and just slap His jaws. He cannot do that; it is impossible. If he is going to fight against God, the only thing he can do is basically fight against His children or His creation in some way. Sennacherib was fighting against God, but the manifestation of that fight was against God's people.

If we fail to pray against the wicked, it is evidence that we are not for Jesus Christ. Which kingdom would you prefer to prosper: the kingdom of man or the kingdom of Christ? Which kingdom would you prefer to be victorious: the kingdom of evil or the kingdom of Jesus Christ? Did our Lord not teach us to pray, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”? Do you realize that when you pray, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,” you are actually praying against all the other kingdoms? You do not want the kingdom of humanism. You do not want the kingdom of evil. You do not want the kingdom of man. You want the kingdom of God. Failure to pray against the wicked, in essence, is either to condone them, excuse them, or support them.

The Bible shows us how specific these prayers really were and how puny our prayers are today. Consider first the prayers of David in Psalm 58. There are other prayers in the Bible, but David was a man after God's own heart. David was a holy, righteous man. Notice what he was praying. In Psalm 58, beginning with verse 3, he identifies the wicked: “The wicked are estranged from the womb. They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent. They're like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.” In other words, they are not going to listen to you, God, or anybody.

So David begins to pray against them. In verse 6 he says, “Break their teeth, O God. Break their teeth in their mouth. Break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord.” What is a young lion? He is a powerful enemy, a powerful adversary. If you break out the teeth of the young lion, what is going to happen to him? He is going to shrivel up and die because he cannot eat. That is all there is to it. Notice that David said, “Break their teeth in their mouth.”

Have you ever stopped to think about some of these illustrations? I remember reading years ago about a man who was teaching self-defense. He said that fights often begin in bars and beside the road. He illustrated how some men in a fight will take a beer bottle in their hands and hit somebody over the head. It does nothing because the glass is so thin that it breaks instantaneously. The only real damage that might happen is if the label is still on the bottle, with some glue and a little glass shard sticking to it. That might rake the person and cause him to bleed a little. You never want to hit somebody over the head with a bottle, he said, because the head is harder than the bottle. But he said, "If you really want to hurt him, hit him in the mouth with the bottle."

Can you imagine being hit in the teeth with a bottle? This is what David says to the wicked: break out their teeth; hit them in the mouth. That is what he is praying. Look at verse 7: "Let them melt away as waters which run continually. When he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces."

Do not let anything be left. "As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away, like the untimely birth of a woman," a stillborn child, "that they may not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living in his wrath." He said that He is going to deal with them.

Now watch: "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance. He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked, so that a man shall say, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous. Verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth." Isn't that amazing? David is praying against the wicked, praying that the Lord will kill them and take their lives, and that He will do so in a very gruesome way.

Look in your Bible at Psalm 68. I hope I might get to preach on this text before long, because this is actually a war hymn. I will explain that if I get to preach on it. But look at verse 1: "Let God arise. Let His enemies be scattered. Let them also that hate Him flee before Him."

"As smoke is driven away, so drive them away." Just as the wind drives away smoke, God says, "Let them go away as wax melted before the fire, so that the wicked perish at the presence of God. But

let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God. Yea, let them exceedingly rejoice."

Some of you remember that little wax Coca-Cola bottle. It had a little bit of Coke in it; you got the juice, then chewed the wax. But if you set one next to a heater, it was gone. This is what he is saying: "Let them melt as wax melted before the fire."

Now look in Psalm 139, beginning with verse 19. David is very specific, and in this passage he is extremely bold: "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God. Depart from me, therefore, you bloody men." He knows God is going to kill them. "For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain."

Then he says, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies." David is saying, "God, your enemies are my enemies. I hate them with perfect hatred."

But now notice his prayer in verse 23: "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Can you imagine that? He has just said, "Thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies." And now he says, "O God, search me." Obviously, it is not unholy or ungodly to despise God's enemies and hate those that hate God. David says, "I want to be right with you. Search me, O God."

Let me point something out for your consideration. We are talking about praying against the wicked. May I remind you that there have been times in the Bible when God's prophets prayed against God's professing people who had sinned and refused to repent? Do you remember Elijah? Romans chapter 11, verses 2 and 3, says, "Know ye not what the scripture saith of Elijah, how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets and digged down thine altars, and I am left alone, and they seek my life." Elijah made intercession against Israel. Israel had sinned against God, and he was praying to God against Israel.

Do you remember Jeremiah chapter 14? God told Jeremiah, "Pray not for this people for their good." He told Jeremiah, "I'm not going to hear you if you try to pray for them for their good." He said, "When they pray to me, I'm not going to hear them either. If you want to pray to me, you pray that I'll destroy them, for that's exactly what I'm going to do." So Jeremiah might pray freely that God would destroy and judge them, and that was exactly what God was going to do.

Now, if it is proper and right for a man of God to pray against God's professing people when they so blatantly and heinously sin against God and refuse to repent, what could possibly be wrong with praying against the wicked who have never loved God to begin with and hate Him with all their hearts? Obviously, it is right to pray against the wicked. It is holy; it is godly. Moreover, it is proper and right to enlist others to pray against the wicked. Go back in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 19. King Hezekiah was enlisting the aid of the prophet Isaiah to pray for the remnant that was left. In 2 Kings 19, verse 4, he says, "It may be the Lord thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria, his master, had sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard. Wherefore, lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left." Now if Isaiah

Expect Ridicule When Praying Against God's Enemies

If Hezekiah is praying for Judah and Jerusalem, or for Israel, who is he praying against? He is praying against the Assyrians. If somebody is persecuting Pat and I am praying for Pat, what does that mean? I am praying against those who are persecuting him. Hezekiah is enlisting the aid of Isaiah to pray. It is proper and right to pray against the wicked, and it is proper and right to enlist the aid of others to pray against the wicked as well.

Point 2: Expect Mockery When Praying Against the Wicked

Here is the second thing we see out of 2 Kings 19: when we pray against God's enemies, we must expect to be laughed at, mocked, ridiculed, and taunted, especially by the wicked. Look at 2 Kings 19,

beginning in verse 8. The Bible says, "So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish."

When he heard of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, saying, "Behold, he is come out to fight against thee," he sent messengers unto Hezekiah. God had said that He would cause Sennacherib to hear a rumor and return to his own land. The rumor was that Tirhakah was coming with a great army to fight against him. Sennacherib was not going to give up on Judah and Jerusalem that easily; he was trying to get a victory without ever having to fight.

So he sends Rabshakeh back: "Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?" The enemies always suggest that our prayers are useless, our faith is worthless, and our God is helpless. They want us to believe in the success of the wicked, the progress of the New World Order, and the progressive enslavement of all mankind. We cannot fight it, they say. That is not true. We can fight because we can pray. What they want us to believe is that our God will not hear or help us. That is what Sennacherib said to Hezekiah: it does no good to pray; God will not hear you or help you.

Look at all the other lands that we've conquered. Nehemiah is building the wall, and the enemies hate the fact that the walls are being rebuilt and Jerusalem is being restored. Notice the mocking, and then notice Nehemiah's prayer. Nehemiah chapter 4, verse 1: “But it came to pass that when Sanballat heard that we built the wall, he was wroth, and he took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren, the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?”

Notice how he is mocking them. “These feeble people, they think they're going to build this wall. They're not going to sacrifice. They're not going to make it. They can't revive anything out of the rubble.” Verse 3: “Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him and said, Even that

which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." Now you talk about some ridicule. I don't know if you've ever noticed how lightly a fox treads. He said, if they build something, a fox can walk on it and tear it down. It will be so worthless.

So now Nehemiah prays against the wicked: "Hear, O our God, for we are despised. And turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity. And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee, for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders." What is he saying? "Lord, let them go into captivity. Let them be defeated. Do not cover their iniquity. Do not cover their sin." What is he asking? "Judge them, O God. Judge them." Here they are mocking, and here he is praying for their destruction.

Psalm 75 shows how arrogant unbelievers really are, and here is the counsel that God gives them: "I said unto the fools, Do not foolishly, and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn." That is, you don't lift up yourself in pride, arrogance, and haughtiness. "Lift not up your horn on high, speak not with a stiff neck," hard-headed. Here's why.

"For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge. He putteth down one, and setteth up another."

"For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red. It is full of mixture, and he poureth out the same. But the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them. But I will declare forever. I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted." God says, "I'm gonna bring them down. You can mock all you want. You can be proud and arrogant all you want, but you'll be brought down. He will give you the cup and you will drink it, and you will be cut off."

We expect the enemies of God to mock us, ridicule us, and taunt us. That is nothing; it simply comes to pass. What hurts deeply is not when the enemies of God mock us, but when a professing brother or believer joins with the enemy or turns his back upon us.

David said in Psalm 55: “For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it. Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me, then would I have hid myself from him. But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.” What tore David down was not an enemy reproaching him; he could have understood and borne that. Nor was it him that hated him who magnified himself against him; David could have hidden himself. What got him was this: it was a man who was his acquaintance and guide, with whom he had taken sweet counsel and walked in the house of God.

Unhappily, most believers have no concept of the great sin and wickedness in betraying and mocking their brethren. There is a book I recommend that you read. It is a little T90 paperback, about this thick.

Do Not Be Deterred by the Enemy's Victories

The title of it is "Fair Sunshine," written by Jock Purvis. "Fair Sunshine" is about the lives of those Scottish Covenanters. We are so far removed from reality. Once you read "Fair Sunshine," you will find how brethren protected brethren and even protected their pastor, because these conventicles, or field gatherings, were illegal according to the king. Christians who really wanted to serve the Lord had to meet in the woods.

Oftentimes the king's troops came upon them, and many of them died. But they always sought the pastor because they were going to cut off his head. They figured that if they could kill the preacher, then that would be the end of those field meetings. When they captured some of these people, they immediately wanted to know, "Who's the pastor?" A man would step forward and say, "I'm the pastor." Boom. They would blow his head off. He knew he would die the moment he stepped forward, but he was not the pastor. He simply gave his life to protect the preacher and keep the meetings going. Today, most Christians would not only betray a pastor; they would betray each other for fifty cents, just to gain an advantage with the government, or to make sure they are not persecuted or prosecuted.

Obviously, we need to understand that, according to the Word of God, it is very serious to join with those who mock and ridicule the people of God, especially when those people are taking a stand against the wicked.

Here is my third thought today: When we pray against God's enemies, we must not be deterred or discouraged because of either temporary or what we would call major victories of the enemy.

Point 3: Do Not Be Deterred by Temporary Victories of the Wicked

Let me show you what I am talking about. Go back in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 19, and let us begin reading with verse 11. Watch what Rabshakeh says to King Hezekiah: "Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, by destroying them utterly. And shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden, which were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, of Ivvah?" In other words, he says, "Look at all that we have done. Exactly all the people that we have conquered. You think you are going to be any different? We are going to conquer you just like we have conquered all of these other people."

Clearly, you and I should mourn over any successes that the enemies of God have. We do not want them to prosper against our God. The Bible says in Proverbs 29, verse 2, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice, but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn." It should be a time of mourning when the wicked are bearing rule. We must also consider temporary victories, or even what we would call major victories, in light of the fact that God oftentimes sets up His enemies, and what they view as a great victory is nothing less than their own destruction.

You remember the two messages I just preached on the hard truth, where God set up Pharaoh and made him think that he was going to win, and then God literally destroyed him. Let me show you how the enemy thinks. Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 10. I want you to

see the arrogance, pride, haughtiness, disrespect, and even blasphemy.

"Why standest thou far off, O Lord? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?"

He begins to talk about the wicked: "The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor. Let them be taken in the devices which they have imagined." That is an imprecatory prayer: let the wicked be taken in the very devices they are imagining against the poor. Verse 3 says, "For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord hateth. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God. God is not in all of his thoughts. His ways are always grievous. Thy judgments are far above, out of his sight."

"As for all of his enemies, he puffeth at them, even God. He has said in his heart, I shall not be moved, for I shall never be in adversity. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud. Under his tongue is mischief and vanity. He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages. In the secret places doth he murder the innocent. His eyes are privily set against the poor."

The wicked lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den. He lieth in wait to catch the poor and doth catch the poor when he draweth him into his net. He croucheth and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones. He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten. He hideth his face. He'll never see it.

Arise, O Lord. O God, lift up thine hand, forget not the humble. Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it. Thou hast not seen it. For thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand. The poor committeth himself unto thee. Thou art the helper of the fatherless. Break thou the arm of the wicked and evil man. Seek out his wickedness till thou find none. The Lord is king forever and ever. The heathen are perished out of his land.

Notice, “Break his arm.” When your arm is broken, your power is gone. That is what David is praying. The wicked think God is nothing; that He does not see, will not judge them, and will never hold them accountable. The wicked is going to have some temporary

victories. In fact, they may have some major victories. There's no problem there.

One of my favorite sayings came from one of the wickedest men in the Bible, King Ahab. Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, said to Ahab in 1 Kings chapter 20, "Behold, your wives and your children and your silver and gold are mine." Ahab replied, "I am thy servant; you can have everything." Ben-Hadad then pushed the envelope: "About this time tomorrow, my princes are going to come by, and they're going to search your house and every other great house in Jerusalem or in Israel, in Samaria. They're going to take whatever they want to take." Ahab said, "No, you're not going to do that."

Ben-Hadad threatened him again, saying, "The gods do so to me and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for the handfuls of all the people that follow me." In other words, "I've got more people than dust is in Samaria. I'll wipe you out, boy."

Here is what old Ahab said to his messengers: "Tell him, Let not him that putteth on his harness boast himself as he that taketh off his harness." In other words, do not boast when you are putting on your battle attire, because you have not fought yet. Do not boast until you have taken it off, until you have won the battle. You have not won yet.

I have news for you: the wicked have not won, they cannot win, and they will not win. They may have a little victory here and there; they may win a skirmish or a battle, but those skirmishes and battles are not the war. God says, "Don't be boasting yourself when you're putting on your battle garment, as he who taketh it off." The wicked may boast of their accomplishments, but they are going to lose.

Point 4: Attacks on God's People Are Attacks on God

As we pray against God's enemies, we must understand that any reproach or attack upon God's people is an attack upon God Himself. In 2 Kings chapter 19, Isaiah told Hezekiah, "Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me." They were threatening Hezekiah and the people of God. They were not necessarily attacking God, for they themselves said that God had

sent them against Samaria. But God interpreted their reproach and attack upon His people as a reproach and attack upon Himself.

There existed even in the Old Testament a covenantal relationship between God and His people. We have a covenantal relationship anyhow. The word "testament" means "covenant." There is the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. When we get to the New Covenant, we find that there is even a closer relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and His people. How is that? Well, let us see.

If I remember correctly, He is the bridegroom and we are the bride; He is the head and we are the body; He is the foundation and we are the building; He is the shepherd and we are the sheep; He is the Lord and we are the servants. I cannot attack Effie without attacking Pat. I cannot hit David in the stomach without affecting his head. Any attack or reproach upon God's people is an approach, reproach, and attack upon God Himself.

Let me show you something. In Deuteronomy 32, God is speaking of His people. Look at verses 9 and 10. "For the Lord's portion is his people. Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land and the waste howling wilderness. He led him about. He instructed him. He kept him as the apple of his eye."

You know what the apple of your eye is? It is your pupil. You will protect that eye without even thinking about it. I have been walking in the woods when a limb came, and my hand either came up instantly to keep it out of my eye, or my eyelid closed so quickly that, if the limb hit me, it hit the eyelid. It did not hit the pupil of my eye. God says He kept them as the pupil of His eye.

If you look in Psalm 17 and verse 8, David made this prayer request. He said to God, "Keep me as the apple of thine eye. Hide me under the shadow of thy wings. Keep me as the apple of thine eye."

Zechariah 2:8 says, "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you, for he that touches you touches the apple of his eye." You cannot touch God's people without touching God. Twice in the Old Testament, once in 1 Chronicles 16 and again in Psalm 105, God said, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." Psalm 105:13-15 says, "When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to

another people, He suffered no man to do them wrong. Yea, He reproved kings for their sake, saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." He is talking about His people. They went from nation to nation and from kingdom to kingdom, and He said, "Don't you hurt my people. Don't you touch them."

Applications and Conclusion

Let me make a couple of applications. First, we need to learn to pray against the wicked. David prayed against the wicked. Nehemiah prayed against the wicked. Multitudes of people prayed against the wicked. The Apostle Paul prayed against the wicked. He told the people, "Remember Hymenaeus and Philetus. Remember Alexander the coppersmith and the evil he did unto me. The Lord reward him." In other words, "The Lord pay him back." That is an imprecatory prayer.

We need to learn to pray. The psalmist said, "Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the just." Have you ever prayed, "Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end"? Wouldn't it be wonderful to see God put the brakes on the wicked and let them stop? That is how we need to pray: "Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the just."

Some people have an older brother. A bully may be picking on a little child, and the child says, "Just wait till my big brother gets to you." It is wonderful to know that we as God's people have an elder brother and a heavenly Father, both willing to defend us and vindicate us. We need to cry out to the Lord Jesus Christ and to our Heavenly Father to defend and vindicate us. He said of Jerusalem five times, "I will defend Jerusalem." He will defend His people and fight for His people.

If you have never prayed against the wicked, now is the time to begin praying against them consistently and constantly. Stop and think. God could handle the wicked in one of three ways. First, He could convert them, and then they would no longer be our enemies; they would be our friends. Secondly, He could remove them from office, just as David says, "Break their arm, O Lord." In other words, break their power. Man cannot do anything without power. Or He

could remove them by taking their life. However God deals with His enemies is totally up to Him.

It is not up to us. We can pray against them and say, "Lord, they're Your enemies. You deal with them in Your time and in Your way." Our responsibility is to pray against them. How He deals with them is up to Him. Lastly, He has taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." When we pray for His kingdom, we are praying against all the other kingdoms.

Some say, "Well, Brother Weaver, I don't want to get involved in praying against the wicked and all this kind of stuff. I'm just going to pray for the Lord Jesus Christ to come back." Well, have at it. Go ahead. But I want to show you what you are praying for. In 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, beginning with verse 7, Paul writes, "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, watch, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and be admired in all them that believe."

Because our testimony among you is believed in that day. You cannot even pray for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ without praying for the destruction of His enemies, because that's what He's going to do when He comes back. And when you pray, "Thy kingdom come," you're praying, "Lord, set up Your kingdom in its full manifestation and destroy all the others."

So the question has to be asked: are you for Christ? Christ said, "If you are not for me, you are against me." I would much rather see the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ prevail and prosper than have the New World Order, the Bilderbergers, the CFR, George Soros, and all the Clintons and Bushes combined. So we need to pray against the wicked: "Lord, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the just."

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word, Your truth, and the greatness, power, and majesty of Thy divine person. We confess and acknowledge that

Thou art God alone. The kingdom is Thine, and we pray, Father, for Thy kingdom to come. Lord, we do pray against the wicked. As Thou hast taught us to pray, "Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the just." We ask these things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Source Notes

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JW00632 | 2012-12-09 | SermonAudio

Chapter 2: Praying Against The Wicked Part 2
JW01414 | 2016-01-12 | YouTube

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