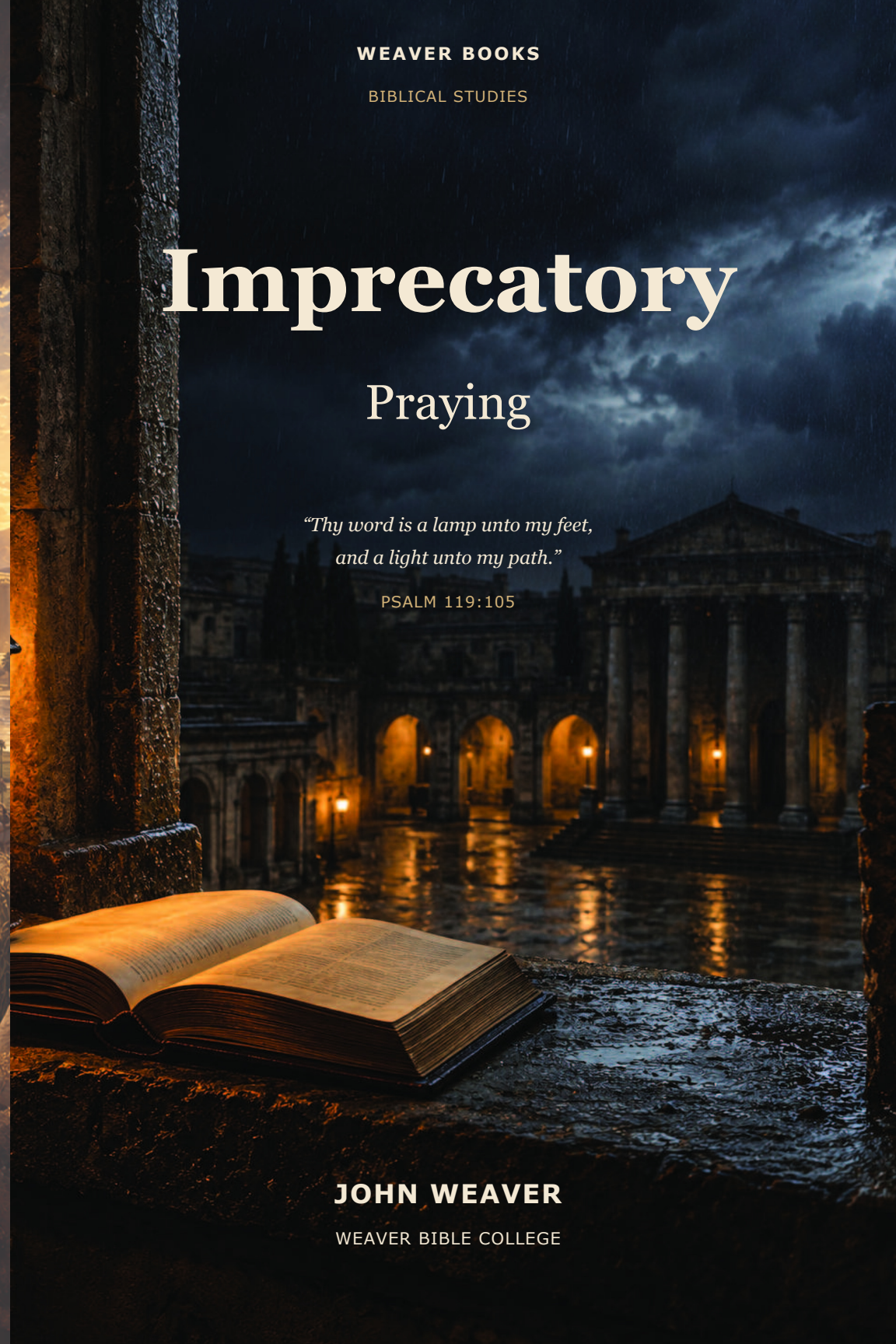
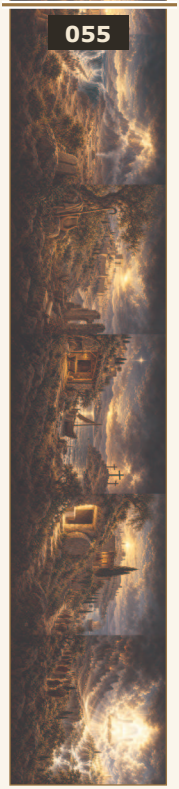

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Praying
“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.”
PSALM 119:105
JOHN WEAVER
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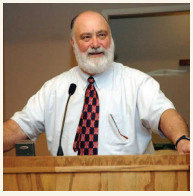
O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.

PSALM 94:1, EXCERPT

The prayers for judgment in Scripture raise serious questions about justice, holiness, and vengeance. John Weaver considers their biblical setting and the need for clean hands, faithful conduct, and dependence on God's righteous judgment. These messages distinguish an appeal to divine justice from the desire to take personal revenge.

"We pray these prayers to establish righteousness, judgment, holiness, godliness, and justice in the earth."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

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Contents

Chapter 1: Imprecatory Praying - Part One of Four 5

Introduction and Connection to Previous Messages 5

The Shocking Prayer of Psalm 104:35 5

Contemporary Controversy over Imprecatory Prayers 6

Defining Imprecatory Praying 7

New Testament Imprecations 8

Covenantal Sanctions: Blessings and Curses 9

Addressing the Objection of Condemning Sinners to Hell 11

Imprecatory Prayers as Prayers for Christ's Kingdom 15

Reconciling Imprecatory Prayers with Loving Enemies 17

The Purpose of Imprecatory Prayers: Establishing Justice 20

Applications: Learning to Pray Imprecatory Prayers and Living Holy 22

Closing Prayer 23

Chapter 2: Imprecatory Praying - Part Two of Four 25

Introduction and Review 25

No Tension Between Old and New Testaments 26

Results Left Entirely with God 30

Gracious Personal Conduct Despite Fierce Prayers 32

New Testament Parallels to Imprecatory Prayers 35

A Concern for Righteousness 36

Purposes of Imprecatory Prayers 36

Personal Holiness and Hatred of Sin 41

Conclusion and Prayer 42

Chapter 3: Imprecatory Praying - Part Three of Four 43

Introduction and Review of Imprecatory Praying Principles 43

Psalm 109 as the Most Controversial Imprecatory Psalm 45

The Intensity of Psalm 109 and Its Connection to Judas Iscariot 46

David's Appeal for God to Act (Verse 1) 47

Description of David's Enemies (Verses 2-5) 48
The Theological Foundation of Imprecatory Prayers 48
The Lex Talionis and the Law of Sowing and Reaping 49
Exegesis of Imprecatory Requests in Psalm 109:6-8 51
Applications: Crying to God for Justice and Trusting His Favor 58
Chapter 4: Imprecatory Praying - Part Four of Four 61
Review of Imprecatory Prayer Principles 62
The Lex Talionis and Family Involvement 63
Exposition of Psalm 109:8–15 69
The Justice of the Imprecations 75
David's Godly Desires 77
The Saints' Role in Executing Judgment 78
Topical Index 83
Scripture Index 85
Study Guide Link 91

CHAPTER 1

Imprecatory Praying

Part One of Four

Introduction and Connection to Previous Messages

Before reading the Scripture today, let me remind you that if you have not heard the two previous messages on the divine advocate, I encourage you to listen to them. The second part leads directly into the next four messages. From 1 John 2, you remember that Jesus Christ is our advocate, and how this was understood even in the Old Testament, where David began to pray, “Plead my cause, O Lord,” and, “Plead my cause against an ungodly nation,” demonstrating that God is indeed interested in justice.

The Shocking Prayer of Psalm 104:35

Today I begin a brief series entitled Imprecatory Praying. Look in Psalm 104:35: “Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord.” Let it sink in: “Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord.” What a prayer request.

Can you imagine a modern-day, politically correct, multicultural church member raising his hand in a packed church service and publicly asking the church to pray that sinners will be consumed out of the earth and the wicked will be no more? Moreover, he says, "When that happens, my soul then shall praise the Lord and bless His holy name." The pastor is dumbfounded, the congregation aghast, and silence pervades the auditorium. Everyone wonders how anyone could make such a request and how the church should respond.

The modernist pastor would say that the request is unloving and unkind. The fundamentalist pastor would say that it denies evangelism and therefore must be wrong. Many Christians would say that such a request condemns men to hell and cannot possibly be biblical or Christian.

Yet in Psalm 104:35, David—the sweet psalmist of Israel, the man after God's own heart—utters this very prayer: "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth and let the wicked be no more," and then says that he will bless the Lord and praise His holy name.

Contemporary Controversy over Imprecatory Prayers

If you want to know how touchy this subject of imprecatory praying is, go home and Google "imprecatory prayers." You will find a whole list of pastors who have prayed publicly for certain leaders to die and for certain practices to be cursed and doomed by God, along with a plethora of individuals who cry out against these pastors.

They are being excoriated and slammed on every hand. In fact, one individual who is the object of imprecatory praying is now suing the individual who is praying against him. I find it interesting that those who do not believe in God and do not believe in the Bible do not want to take any chances that these prayers might be heard. So they are suing to stop these prayers.

Is it unchristian or unbiblical to pray the imprecatory prayers given to us under divine inspiration? Some would say that Old Testament praying, such as these imprecatory prayers, conflicts with New Testament teaching and therefore should not be practiced. The problem with that view is that it presents an unnatural dichotomy

between the Old Testament and the New Testament. It destroys the continuity of the Word of God and leads some to believe that the Old Testament is either untrustworthy or plain outdated. Moreover, it presumes a change of gods from the Old Testament to the New Testament, or at least a change in God who has altered His standard.

There was one liberal theologian who charged that the God of the Old Testament is “a dirty bully.” He now knows better because he is dead. I can assure you he knows far better than that at this point in time.

Do you understand that when anyone begins to deny, deprecate, or disparage any portion of the Word of God, he sets himself up as judge and assumes authority to determine what is acceptable and unacceptable? If one can assume that authority, why not others? If everyone begins to assume that authority for themselves, pretty soon you have no Scripture, because there is something in Scripture practically everywhere that upsets someone. Pretty soon, the totality of scripture would be denied.

Defining Imprecatory Praying

So we're talking about imprecatory praying. What exactly is imprecatory praying? An imprecation is an invocation of judgment, calamity, or curse upon one's enemies or the enemies of God. So when you're talking about an imprecation or imprecatory praying, you're talking about praying down a curse or a judgment upon one's enemies or the enemies of God. You're going to find that such curses span the breadth of biblical revelation. In fact, these curses form the basis of covenantal renewal in Deuteronomy chapter 27 through 30. Moreover, you're going to find when you get to the last book of the New Testament, in Revelation chapter 6, it's the saints who run to the altar that are crying, "How long, O Lord God, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood which was shed upon the earth?"

Some of the most powerful imprecations of Scripture, however, are found in the Psalms. Although there is no psalm that contains only imprecations, there are many psalms that contain a large majority of imprecations in the psalm, such as Psalm 7, Psalm 35, Psalm 55, Psalm 58, Psalm 59, Psalm 69, Psalm 109, Psalm 137 and

Psalm 139. You will find these imprecations throughout the entire breadth of the Psalms.

Now, an imprecation, that is a curse. It is an enunciation and conveys a wish or a prayer and a threat of evil. Imprecatory praying, therefore, is to pray for evil or malediction or misfortune upon someone or upon some activity. It is a malediction. It is an anathema. It is an execration.

New Testament Imprecations

Now, when someone says, "Well, all that's in the Old Testament, you won't find any of that in the New Testament." That's not true. I want you to turn in your Bibles, if you would, to 1 Corinthians chapter 16. 1 Corinthians chapter 16. I will show you a couple of imprecations. 1 Corinthians chapter 16. And notice, if you would please, at verse 22. 1 Corinthians 16 and verse 22. Notice what the Apostle Paul writes. 1 Corinthians 16 verse 22. He writes, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." Well, you say that's interesting. What does that mean? Well, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." Well, the word Maranatha refers to the return of the Lord, the Lord's coming. The word Anathema means to be set aside for certain and sure doom and destruction. It means to be cursed. It means to be doomed. It means to be damned. Literally what verse 22 says is this: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be doomed and damned at the coming of the Lord."

That is an imprecation. That is a curse. That is what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 16:22. Anathema is straight from the Greek, and so is Maranatha. Notice what the Apostle Paul writes in Galatians 1:8–9. Here is a curse, an imprecation. Paul writes, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” And, as we said before, so now I say again, “If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed.” Every time you see the word “accursed” in verses 8 and 9, it is the Greek word anathema. He says in verse 8, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be anathema.”

In verse 9 again, he says, “Let him be anathema, let him be accursed, let him be doomed, let him be damned, let him be marked out and set aside for certain and absolute destruction.” Now you have to ask yourself this question: Was Paul uncharitable and unchristian when he prayed that God would doom and damn all of those who did not love him at his coming, and that God would doom and damn all those who would pervert the gospel of grace and preach another gospel? The answer is no. Paul is not being uncharitable. Paul is not being unchristian. He is merely reflecting the general teaching of Scripture on these subjects.

What does the Bible say in 2 Thessalonians 1, beginning with verse 7? “And you who are troubled rest with us, listen, when our Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that know not God, and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be destroyed with sudden destruction.” What is Paul doing here? He is saying the same thing that Scripture says in other places. It is a curse. It is an anathema.

What men forget is this: the Word of God has sanctions. There are positive sanctions in the Bible, and there are negative sanctions as well. All of us like to hear about the positive sanctions. No one has any problems with positive sanctions because positive sanctions translate into blessings. When you hear the word or phrase “positive sanction,” understand blessing. When you hear the phrase “negative sanction,” translate it as a curse. All you have to do is read Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28; you will find there are blessings and curses.

Covenantal Sanctions: Blessings and Curses

Throughout the Bible, God says something similar to this: “I set before you the way of life and the way of death.” In other words, here is a positive sanction and here is a negative sanction. There are only two kinds of people in the world: covenant keepers and covenant breakers. Covenant keepers receive positive sanctions, that is, blessings. Covenant breakers receive negative sanctions, that is, curses.

Psalm 1 sets the stage for all these Psalms, demonstrating both positive and negative sanctions. David says:

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

There are the positive sanctions. Now watch the negative: "The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

David, the warrior king, was a man of the covenant. He approached civil polity and spiritual worship with a firm understanding of positive and negative sanctions. He extols the virtues of the righteous man who delights in God's law, proclaiming him a covenant keeper and proclaiming blessings upon him. The righteous man is like a tree planted by the rivers of water; he brings forth his fruit in due season, and whatever he does shall prosper.

But David also shows the negative sanctions. The ungodly are under the crushing weight of God's divine wrath. They are like chaff driven by the wind, cannot stand in God's judgment, have no righteousness, and are ultimately going to perish from the earth.

This covenantal understanding is paramount if we are to comprehend, embrace, and emulate David's imprecatory war prayers. They are war prayers, given to us to recapture a lawless society. Scripture gives us grounds for using these imprecatory prayers.

Psalm 112 gives another clear illustration of positive and negative sanctions. This Psalm has only ten verses. The first nine describe a covenant keeper, a righteous man, and display positive sanctions; then comes the negative sanction. "Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth. The generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness endureth forever. Unto the upright there ariseth a light in the darkness. He is gracious and full

of compassion and righteous. A good man showeth favor and lendeth. He will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall not be moved forever. The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established. He shall not be afraid until he see his desire upon his enemies."

We are talking about the righteous man. He is dispersed and given to the poor. His righteousness endureth forever; his horn shall be exalted with honor. Here is the negative: "The wicked shall see it and be grieved. He shall gnash with his teeth and melt away. The desire of the wicked shall perish." There is a vast difference between a covenant keeper and a covenant breaker.

When you go back to Psalm 104, David has been praising and glorifying God for His creation, providence, and redemption. He sees the beauty of God's creation, but at the same time he sees that something is perverting, destroying, corrupting, and polluting the beauty, harmony, and glory of that creation. He understands that what is corrupting God's creation is sin.

Addressing the Objection of Condemning Sinners to Hell

Sin is not some abstraction floating around somewhere in the universe. It is sinners who sin. Sin is in man. If there were no sinners, there would not be any sin. You cannot have sin without sinners. David realizes, therefore, that sin and sinners are perverting God's glory, God's kingdom, and God's majesty. Therefore he prays in verse 35, "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord."

Some, when they hear that prayer request, will exclaim, "How horrible, how cold, how unloving, how unkind, how uncompassionate, how uncharitable, because such a prayer is condemning sinners to hell." Let me ask you a question. You do not have to answer this out loud, but I do want you to answer it: Is every single individual who has ever lived, is living, or will ever live going to be saved? The answer is no, unless you are a universalist. Scripture reveals that many individuals will be lost. Many have

already died unconverted. Some are probably even dying unconverted as I speak, and many more will die unconverted in the future.

Speaking of those on the left hand, our Lord said in Matthew 25:46, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” Our Lord Himself said in Matthew 7:13–14, “Enter ye at the straight gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” So what does our Lord say? Not everybody is going to be saved.

Martin Luther said, “We should pray that our enemies be converted and become our friends. And if not, that is if they're not converted, that their doing and designing should be bound to fail and have no success and that their persons perish rather than the gospel and the kingdom of Christ.” So let me ask you a question. Who would you rather see succeed, Christ or the wicked? Who would you rather have perish, Christ or the wicked? Who would you rather have the victory, Christ or the wicked?

It was Puritan David Dixon who said, “If any of the enemies of God's people belong to God's election, the church's prayer against them giveth way to their conversion, and seeketh no more than that the judgment should follow them only until they acknowledge their sin, turn, and seek God.” So David Dixon is saying that when you pray these imprecatory prayers against the ungodly, if one of them happens to be an elect, it will aid in their conversion, and that curse will follow them only until they repent and turn unto God.

Now, I can assure you of one thing based upon Scripture. This addresses the objection that when we pray these imprecatory prayers, we are condemning people to hell. I can assure you of one thing according to Scripture: not one for whom our Lord died will be lost. Look in your Bibles to Isaiah 53, and then we are going to John 17, to the high priestly prayer of our Lord. Everyone understands that Isaiah 53 speaks of the suffering Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. I am not going to read the entire chapter, but I do want you to look at verses 10 and 11. Isaiah 53:10 says concerning Christ, “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.

"He hath put him to grief, when thou shalt make his soul, that is Christ's soul, when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." Now look: "He shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities."

What does the Bible say? "He shall see his seed. He shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." In other words, those for whom our Lord suffered will indeed be saved. Our Lord shall see them. His travail is not in vain.

In John 17, the high priestly prayer of our Lord, notice what He is praying. There is a people who have been given to Jesus Christ. In verse 6 He said, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, thou gavest them me." In verse 9 He said, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine."

Then, in verse 11: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name. Those that thou gavest me, I have kept."

"And none of them is lost but the son of perdition that the scripture might be fulfilled." How many of our Lord's sheep did He lose? None. Judas was never His sheep. He was associated with Christ, but he never belonged to Christ.

Read Luke 15. Our Lord goes out and seeks the lost sheep. How long does He seek it? Till He finds it. He never fails. In verse 24, the Son prays to His Father: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world."

"Father, I will also that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am." Do you think that the prayer of Jesus Christ will not be answered? Do you think that somehow, some way, there is a possibility that one of our Lord's sheep will be lost and will not be with Him in heaven? Do you think that the Father will not answer

and honor the prayer request of the Son? In verse 24, "I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me."

If you think that, then you do not understand the eternal covenant. There is such a thing as an eternal covenant, and that eternal covenant was between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Hebrews 13:20 says, "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

What in the world is the everlasting covenant? If it is everlasting, that means it is eternal. It had no beginning; it has no end. The everlasting covenant is the covenant that was entered into between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost before the world ever began. In that covenant, God the Father gave to God the Son a people. God the Son agreed to become their substitute, their surety, and their sacrifice, and God the Holy Spirit agreed to convict and convert each one and bring them to Jesus Christ. If God dishonors the prayer of the Son in John 17:24, He dishonors that eternal covenant which He entered into with the Son before the world ever began.

It is not good English, but it is good theology: that ain't going to happen. He is not going to dishonor the prayer, nor dishonor the covenant.

The Bible teaches that we are one with Jesus Christ. Romans chapter 6 tells us that we have died with Christ. When He was crucified, we were crucified with Him because our sins were upon Him. We have not only been put to death with Christ; we have been buried with Christ. We have also been resurrected in Christ. In other words, folks, if you are in Jesus Christ, everything is absolutely certain and assured. Period.

"But God, who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Now watch verse 6:

"...and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ."

The Scripture tells us that we have died with Christ, been buried with Christ, been raised with Christ, ascended with Christ, and are now seated with Christ. If we are raised up with Christ and seated with Him in heavenly places, how can one of us be lost without Him being lost? If we are His body, according to Scripture, and He is our head, how could we lose part of His body?

It would be an utter impossibility. I am just trying to show you a simple truth. Imprecatory praying does not doom or damn anyone to hell who is not already doomed and damned to hell. Our Lord said in John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." How many are already doomed and damned to hell? Everybody without Christ.

Imprecatory Prayers as Prayers for Christ's Kingdom

Therefore, asking God to let sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more, is not contrary to the gospel, and certainly it is not unbiblical and unchristian. Such a prayer request is simply stating an undeniable truth that is plainly stated in Scripture. In Matthew 13:41, our Lord Himself teaches this: "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity."

What offends God? Sin. Who commits sin? Sinners. God said in Jeremiah 44:4, "O do not that abominable thing which I hate," speaking of sin. What, then, is David praying? "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth and sinners be no more." What is he saying? He is saying the same thing that our Lord is teaching in Matthew 13:41. "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth and let the wicked be no more" is another way of asking the Father to fully establish the kingdom of Christ.

Consider the parable of the tares. Jesus sent the multitudes away, went into the house, and His disciples came unto Him, saying, "Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field." A man had planted good seed. When his servants saw the tares, they asked, "Did

you not plant good seed? What are all those tares out there?" The householder answered, "An enemy hath done this." The servants then asked, "Do you want us to go pull up the tares?" "No," he said, "lest you pull up the wheat when you pull up the tares."

"Let them both grow together until the harvest." Then He said, "You get the tares and bundle them up and burn them. Then we'll take in the wheat."

Our Lord interprets the parable He gave: "Then Jesus sent the multitudes away, and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man," that is, Himself. "The field is the world. The good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one."

"The enemy that sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father. Who have ears to hear, let him hear."

When do the righteous shine forth as the brightness of the sun in the kingdom of their Father? When the wicked are destroyed, when things that offend and those that do iniquity are removed. That is what He said. "Then the Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then, when the wicked are removed, then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

To pray, "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more," is another way of asking God to fully establish the kingdom of Christ. It is the same as praying in Psalm 7:9, "Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the just."

Each one of these is a prayer request for the fullness of God's kingdom. An objection that is bound to assert itself in imprecatory praying is this: “How do we reconcile imprecatory praying with the words of our Lord in Matthew 5, 44 and 45?”

Reconciling Imprecatory Prayers with Loving Enemies

Our Lord says, “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, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Now, here is the question.

Is there a contradiction between the Old Testament law and New Testament grace? The answer is no, a thousand times no. The Apostle Paul is the one who taught, primarily, justification by faith alone. In Romans 3 and verse 31, when he is establishing the truth of justification by faith, he asks, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid,” he says, “yea, we establish the law.” Real teaching, gospel preaching of justification by faith establishes the law of God.

There is no tension between Old Testament law and New Testament grace because they are complementary; they go together and do not work against each other. So how in the world, then, do we deal with Matthew 5, especially verse 44?

The very first thing is this: you have to understand that the whole of Matthew chapter 5 is to be understood as an establishment of God's law. In verses 17 through 19, our Lord says plainly, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Our Lord says, don't even begin to think that He has come to destroy the law.

He has not come to set it aside, nullify, or abrogate it. He has come to put it in full force, continuously. The first thing to remember, then, is that Matthew 5 is an establishment of God's law.

The second thing to remember is that Matthew 5, verses 20 through 46, corrects the misinterpretation and misapplication of God's law by the Pharisees. In fact, throughout those verses our Lord says, "You have heard it said by them of old times, but I say unto you." What is He doing? He is saying, here is what your pharisaical teachers have taught you that has been wrong; He is correcting it and teaching what is correct.

For instance, in verse 43, immediately before verse 44, our Lord says, "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you." Now why did our Lord say, "You've heard it said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy"?

Because the Pharisees perverted the law of God, they taught that it was all right to hate your enemy. Here is how they misapplied the law: if your enemy hated you, you could hate him back; if your enemy cursed you, you could curse him back; and if your enemy stole from you, you could steal back from him. Our Lord says that is not what the law teaches. He says, “But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.”

Does that conflict with the imprecatory prayers? No. When our Lord says that we are to love our enemies, we have to ask ourselves, How do you love your enemy? Is God demanding some type of sentimental, emotional, gushy, humanistic feeling? The answer is no.

How do we do good to those who hate us? We know how to pray for them, but how do we love them and do good to them? The answer is given to us in Scripture. Romans 13:10 tells us, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Wait a minute. Did you hear that? Love is the fulfilling of the law. What is love? It is not a feeling, sentiment, gushy humanism, or fawning

serpenness. Love is obedience. Love is the fulfilling of the law. It is not feeling, sentiment, or gushing; it is obedience.

What does the Bible say in 1 John 5:3? “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” How do I love my enemy? Does that mean that I am gushy and sentimental, saying, “Oh, you’re so…” No. How do I love my enemy? I love him by acting biblically toward him. I do not react to his wickedness; I respond biblically.

I do not render evil for evil, hatred for hatred, or strife for strife. Rather, I obey God's law and do that which is right, regardless of what he does or how much he does that which is wrong.

Romans chapter 12 gives a wonderful illustration of what it means to love your enemy. This is taken from the Old Testament, so here is law and grace complementing each other. Romans 12:17 says, "Recompense no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men." It is very simple: recompense, or pay back, no man evil for evil; provide things honest in the sight of all men.

If Henry jumps up and cusses me out, and everyone hears him, does that give me the right to cuss him back? No. Just because Henry does wrong does not mean I have to do wrong. I can do what is right.

The passage continues: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." God understands that there are some people with whom you cannot live peaceably, but as much as you can, live peaceably with all men. Then it 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."

Now consider the application: "Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him. If he thirst, give him drink. For in doing so, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Then God says, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

What does it mean to act biblically toward my enemy? What does it mean to love my enemy and do good to my enemy? God does not require us to fawn over him or gush over him. He does not ask us to spend lavish amounts of money on him, invite him into our house, or

pretend that everything is hunky-dory. But God does say that if he comes to you hungry, give him something to eat.

You don't have to buy him a steak. You can give him peas. I don't know how to give him peas. That's good food. You'd feed him something. God doesn't require you to buy him a cappuccino. He said, give him water if he's thirsty. All God is saying is this: you are not to have a vengeful, hateful attitude toward your enemy. You're not to be overcome with evil. In other words, you're not to let his evil attitude and his evil acts affect you so that you're evil back toward him and have an evil mentality. No. You're required to do what's right and what's biblical.

How do I love him? I love him by acting biblically toward him. That doesn't mean I'm gushy all about him. That doesn't mean I want to see him prosper in every area. No. But if he comes to me and he's in need, I'll feed him. I'll give him water, because I'm not like him, and I don't want to be like him.

So when our Lord tells us in Matthew 5, "Love your enemies," He's not saying, buddy up to them and put your arm around them and walk down the street like, man, you're good friends. No, He's not saying that at all. He's just saying, you do what's right regardless of what they do to you. You respond in a biblical manner. And in doing so, He said, you're going to heap coals of fire upon their heads.

Coals of fire? That's pretty rough, isn't it? I know I told you this, but it's still one of my favorite stories. The woman came to the pastor for counseling, complaining about her husband. Finally, the pastor folded his arms, smiled, and said, "Well, have you ever tried pouring hot coals upon his head, you know, returning good for evil?" She said, "No, but I've tried hot water, and that don't work either." So that's not what the Lord means by using hot water. But it does mean that you're to be biblical.

The Purpose of Imprecatory Prayers: Establishing Justice

There is no contradiction between "love your enemies" and "pray for them." In fact, we are praying for them. So let's ask the question: why in the world are we given all of these divinely inspired

imprecatory prayers in the Bible? We are told very pointedly in 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good works." Obviously, those verses refer to the imprecatory prayers as well. Why did God give us these imprecatory prayers that are divinely revealed in His Word? One answer is that we may use them to establish true and biblical justice.

There are so many injustices in our day and age. Men are so depraved and wicked, and as long as they are depraved and wicked, there will always be gross miscarriages of justice. How then may we correct them? How do we rectify them? The truth of the matter is that we are weak, powerless, and helpless in and of ourselves. I have often thought about those old westerns and kind of longed to live back in those days.

If Phil was put in jail wrongly back then, we would simply get on our horses, get some ropes, pull the bars down, put him on a horse, and ride to another state. That would be it. You cannot do that today. You may say, “I have a fast car,” but it is not as fast as a radio. You might outrun a cop’s car, but you cannot outrun that radio.

How do you correct all these injustices? We cannot overturn court decisions on our own. We cannot overturn legal precedents or executive orders. We may be helpless and impotent in and of ourselves, but thank God there is a judge of all the earth. When Abraham appealed to God in Genesis 18:25, he asked, “Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?” I can assure you, dear friend, God is going to do what is right, righteous, and just.

In other words, these imprecatory prayers teach us that we, God’s people, have a right to bring a covenantal lawsuit against the wicked. We have a right before God to ask Him to overthrow gross injustices, rectify the perversions of justice, and bring forth true justice. Remember, the Bible tells us in Psalm 89:14 that justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne.

God is going to do what is right. One of the reasons He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, was to establish justice. Jeremiah 23:5 says, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto

David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, was prophesied in Isaiah 42:3: "...a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench, until he bring forth judgment unto truth." That prophecy is applied to Jesus Christ in Matthew 12:20: "...a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench, until he send forth judgment unto victory." The word judgment in both passages refers to justice. The imprecatory prayers teach us that we have the right, duty, and obligation to bring a covenantal lawsuit against the wicked and ask God to intervene on our behalf.

We have a biblical mandate to cry for justice. Isaiah 59:4 records God's charge against Israel: "...None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth. They trust in vanity, and speak lies. They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity." God said that none pleaded for truth and none called for justice. Imprecatory prayers are a call for justice and truth.

Applications: Learning to Pray Imprecatory Prayers and Living Holy

It is time for all of God's people to learn to pray the imprecatory prayers given to us in Scripture—to cry out to God for justice and call upon Him for victory in time and in history. This is God's world, and we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. This world does not belong to the wicked, the one-worlders, the Council on Foreign Relations, the trilateralists, the Council of Thirteen, or the Club of Rome. It belongs to God! We are not going to give up, give out, or give over. We are going to learn to pray like David: "Rise, O God, and make bare thine arm."

When we are injured, harmed, or treated unjustly, God is not only concerned; He is involved. You cannot attack a child without involving the parent. If He is our Father and we are His children, He is involved.

The second application is this: if we wish to be blessed by God and prosecute a covenantal lawsuit, we must be obedient, holy, and godly ourselves. There is a doctrine taught not only in our legal system but

also in the Word of God called the doctrine of clean hands. Clean hands means that we are innocent of the charges we press against others. A person who has acted wrongly, morally or legally—one who has unclean hands—will not be helped by a court.

If that is true in the lower courts of this land, how much truer is it in the divine court of heaven? If we want to prosecute a divine lawsuit against the wicked, we must have clean hands. We cannot be guilty of what they are guilty of.

Ahab coveted Naboth's land. Jezebel wrote to the elders of Naboth's village: "Proclaim a fast, set Naboth on high among the people, hire men of Belial, and charge him with treason, that he's blasphemed God and cursed the king." If you blaspheme God, you deserve to die; if you curse the king, you deserve to have your property confiscated. That is what happened. Jezebel had unclean hands; she was guilty of the very crimes with which she charged Naboth. Naboth and his sons died, and Ahab temporarily obtained the land, until the dogs licked Ahab's blood and ate Jezebel's body.

If we want God to act on our behalf, and if we want to pray imprecatory prayers and see God's hand against the wicked, we need to live holy and godly lives. We need to be biblical so that we can truly pray that sinners be consumed out of the earth and the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord.

Closing Prayer

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We're thankful for Your love, Your grace, and that Thou art a God that's interested in justice. Father, we give ourselves to Thee and pray, Lord, that You would indeed arise and make bare Thine arm, that men may know that Thou alone art the sovereign God of heaven and earth. Rectify, Lord, the injustices, wrongs, and misdeeds, and give us, Lord, Thy truth, righteousness, and justice. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Imprecatory Praying

Part Two of Four

Introduction and Review

Open your Bibles to Psalm 104 and verse 35. Lord willing, today we're going to take up the second part on imprecatory praying. There are going to be at least two more messages, so I'm going to try to set the stage today for the two messages that follow. Look at David's prayer request.

"Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord." Note, "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more." You remember when I started this message last week, I told you what imprecatory praying really was. An imprecation is an invocation for judgment, calamity, or curse upon one's enemies or the enemies of God. I spent a great deal of time last week showing you that imprecatory praying is not contrary to the gospel. I gave you this quote last week, and I want to give it to you again. It's from the Puritan David Dixon, who said this: "If any of the enemies of God's people belong to God's election, the church's

prayer against them giveth away to their conversion, and seeketh no more than that the judgment should follow them, only until they acknowledge their sin, turn, and seek God."

What he is saying is very simple. If one of God's elect is in that group that we're praying against, all the judgment will do will follow him until he repents and turns to God. We also saw last week how the imprecatory prayers were used for an appeal for the fullness of the kingdom of Christ. I particularly pointed out from Matthew 13, and I asked this question: when will the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father as the brightness of the sun? The Bible tells us this; the answer is when the Son of Man shall send forth his angels and shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity. So then the Bible says the righteous shall shine forth as the brightness of the sun. In other words, when David prayed, "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more," that is no different than praying, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." So to pray, "Let the wicked be consumed out of the earth," or "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more," is no different than praying in Psalm 7 and verse 9, "O that the wickedness of the wicked shall come to an end, but establish thou

Each one of these prayer requests is a request for the fullness of the kingdom of Christ. We also observed last week that there is no contradiction between imprecatory praying and the command of Jesus Christ to love your enemies and do good to those that hate you. Biblical love is the fulfilling of the law. We love our enemies when we act biblically toward them. We do that which is holy, just, and right, even if they do that which is wicked and wrong.

No Tension Between Old and New Testaments

After that brief review, certain broad principles found in imprecatory praying should be laid down, and then we may descend more particularly and consider the purposes involved in imprecatory praying. The first broad principle is this: Whatever problems we have with the imprecatory prayers in the Old Testament, the tension between justice and mercy, love and hate, is not a matter of the Old Testament versus the New Testament or law versus grace. Whatever

problem anyone can come up with, it cannot be a pitting of the Old Testament against the New Testament or the law against grace. We have one Bible, not two Bibles. The same God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. The New Testament has a great deal to say about justice, wrath, and condemnation. Likewise, the Old Testament has a great deal to say about faith, love, and mercy, especially loving your neighbor as yourself. There is no contradiction between law and grace, and there is no contradiction between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Consider Romans chapter 12, verses 17 through 21. We looked at this passage last week. It is not necessary to expound or explain it here, but notice carefully what God says: "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. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

You may say, "Aha! That is the New Testament teaching. We're to leave vengeance to the Lord. We're to do good toward our enemy." Well, that is true.

That is exactly what that passage says. But I want you to find out where the Apostle Paul got this truth. Look back in your Bibles first to the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 32, and verse 35. In Deuteronomy 32 and verse 35, you can see where Paul got this quote. God says, "To me belongeth vengeance and recompense. Their foot shall slide in due time, for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." Ah, so the apostle Paul got the statement, "Vengeance belongeth unto me, saith the Lord," from the law.

If you will turn in your Bibles to the book of Proverbs, chapter 25, verses 21 and 22, you will see where the Apostle Paul got the rest of his New Testament teaching: "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee." Isn't that interesting? Romans chapter 12, New Testament

grace, is taken from Old Testament law very pointedly. God says clearly that the New Testament is a reiteration and teaching of the same truth we have in the Old Testament.

You will remember that in Matthew chapter 5 our Lord was not establishing a new law; rather, He was establishing the law of the Old Testament. He said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

A jot, or jod, or yod, is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It looks like our comma, only smaller. Our Lord said it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for the smallest Hebrew letter to pass from the law until all be fulfilled. I have told you before what a jot and a tittle are. If you watch my finger, I will make a jot, or jod, or yod. You did not see it because you were not looking, and because it was too small.

What is a tittle? A tittle is not even a Hebrew letter. It is a small distinguishing mark between two Hebrew letters. For instance, if I were to write the word “little,” L-I-T-T-L-E, suppose I made my T’s fat so that they looked like the L’s. Or perhaps I made my I fat so that it also looked like an L. That distinguishing mark would be a tittle.

How do I know which is the I? How do I know which is the T? I will put a dot over the I and a little cross over the T. The dot over the I and the cross over the T is not a letter, but a small distinguishing mark between the other letters. That is what a tittle is. So our Lord said, "Think not that I'm come to destroy the law or the prophets: I'm not come to destroy but to fulfill. Verily I say unto you, it's easier for heaven and earth to pass away than it is for the smallest Hebrew letter or the smallest distinguishing mark between two Hebrew letters to pass away till all be fulfilled." Very obviously, our Lord did not come to set aside the law.

You have to remember that the Jews were constantly replacing God's law with their traditions. That is what got our Lord in trouble so many times with the Jews. It was not that He was violating the law; He was violating their interpretation of the law and their traditions, which had supplanted the law. In Matthew 15, we read,

"Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread." Why are your disciples transgressing tradition?

It is not just the Jews who had problems with traditions. Baptists do as well. If you want to get in trouble in a Baptist church, start preaching against traditions. Start preaching against the Easter Bunny and the Christmas tree and things like that, and you will get into all kinds of problems. They will tell you very quickly, "Well, we've always done it like this." Just because you have always done something does not make it right. It does not make it biblical.

They had their tradition, but look what our Lord said: "But he answered and said unto them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free." Then He said, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition, ye hypocrites. Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."

"But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." He says, "Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites. You honor me with your mouth, with your lips, but your heart is far from me. In vain you do worship me." Why? Because you are holding the traditions of men, man-made law rather than God's law.

Clearly, there is no contradiction between the Old Testament and the New Testament, or between law and grace. You will find grace in the Old Testament, but no one found grace in the eyes of the Lord. You will find law in the New Testament: "Children, honor your father and your mother." "This is the first commandment with promise." Whatever problems we have with imprecatory praying, they cannot be reduced to a tension between law and grace, or

between the Old and New Testaments. We have one Bible, one God, and one truth, taught in both the Old and New Testaments.

Results Left Entirely with God

Secondly, when David or any other biblical character prays an imprecation, asking God to curse his enemies, the matter is left entirely with God. Once we pray, whatever God does is His business. We leave it completely and totally in the hands of the sovereign God of heaven and earth. He may judge, act, and do as He pleases. He is God.

Duty is ours; consequences belong to God. Our duty is to pray against them. Whatever God does is in His hand. David prayed against Saul, Ahithophel, Doeg, and probably many others, yet he never personally harmed these men or sent a squad after them. He totally left them in the hands of God. Doeg was an exceedingly wicked man, responsible for the murder of 85 of the Lord's priests.

David's situation illustrates this. You can read about it in 1 Samuel 21 and 22. At that time David was not king. Saul was seeking his life, trying to kill him and murder him to keep him from becoming king. David had no control over the matter. Saul was king; David was not there, and he could not personally defend the priest. But David could pray against Doeg.

Psalm 52 is David's prayer against Doeg. Doeg was a wicked man, and David had no ability to rectify the situation. He was not king; he was running for his life, and he was not there. So he prayed. Turn to Psalm 52. We will read all nine verses to see that this psalm is against Doeg and what he did: "Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man?"

The goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue, and by the way, Doeg lied, "...thy tongue deviseth mischiefs like a sharp razor working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good, and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy thee forever. He shall take thee away and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place and root thee out of the land of the living."

The righteous also shall see and fear, and shall laugh at him: Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and strengthened himself in wickedness. But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. I will praise thee forever because thou hast done it, and I will wait on thy name, for it is good before the saints.

How did Doeg die? The answer is, I do not know, and neither do you, because it is not revealed in Scripture. But based upon verse 5, I would not want to die the death of Doeg. David said, "God shall likewise destroy thee forever. He shall take thee away and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place and root thee out of the land of the living." Whatever God did, David said, "I will praise thee forever because thou hast done it." God took care of Doeg in some way. I do not know what way He took care of him, but He took care of him.

The point is this: Whenever David or any of the other biblical characters prayed these imprecations, they left the result in the hands of God. God may be pleased to make our enemies our friends by converting them, the way He did Saul of Tarsus. If you had been alive in the first century, and there had been a vote taken as to the man most likely to bust hell wide open, Saul of Tarsus would have won it hands down. Yet God was pleased to convert Saul, turn him into the Apostle Paul, and use him mightily in His kingdom. In fact, most of the New Testament is written by the Apostle Paul.

Remember this: When we pray against our enemies and the enemies of God's people, God may convert them, restrain them, or remove them, either temporarily or permanently. Whichever God chooses to do, it is His business. It is not ours.

That is why I said, "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. I will repay." What you and I have to learn is this: "It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God." I've got news for you. I do not want to fall into the hands of an angry, righteous, just, living God.

So first of all, there is no tension between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Secondly, when David prayed against his enemies, he left the results in the hands of God. Thirdly, this gets even more pointed: as a whole, David's imprecatory prayers were

against his enemies, and they were fierce prayers. Yet his personal actions toward them were gracious and kind.

Gracious Personal Conduct Despite Fierce Prayers

Although David prayed against his enemies, his personal actions against them were gracious and kind. You remember how Saul sought to kill David. Twice David had Saul in his hands, and twice David allowed Saul to escape with his life. Each time David said, "His time will come to die, God will kill him, or his time will come, or he'll descend into battle and perish, but I am not going to do it." Even Abishai wanted to slay Saul. David refused to allow him to do it. David could have said, "Hey Abishai, I'm not going to kill him, but you can." No. He withheld Abishai from killing him as well.

You remember in 2 Samuel chapter 16, there was a man by the name of Shimei who cursed David as David was fleeing Jerusalem. Shimei was a Benjamite. Remember Saul was a Benjamite. Abishai said, "Who is this dog that he should curse the king? Let me go over and take off his head." David said to Abishai, "Smite him not. It may be that the Lord will look upon my affliction and that the Lord will requite me good for this cursing this day." Then David said, "My own family has turned against me. Let him curse."

David never laid a hand on Shimei. But after David's death and Shimei's rebellion, Solomon had him put to death. When David appeals to God for help against his enemies, he again claims the doctrine of clean hands. Psalm 35 is another imprecation, another imprecatory prayer psalm in which David prays against his enemies and claims to have clean hands—that is, there is no evil or wickedness in David. Notice Psalm 35 beginning with verse 11: "False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things I knew not. I

wasn't guilty. I've never heard of them, never did them. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or my brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.

But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not: with hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth. Lord, how long wilt thou look on? Rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions. I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.

Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause. For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.

Now stop and look what David said. They rewarded me evil for good. When they were sick, when they were in problems, I humbled myself. I prayed for them. What did our Lord say? Pray for your enemies. Why would David pray for them? To demonstrate there was no wickedness, no resentment, and no bitterness in his heart. David is saying, "I've got clean hands. When I'm asking you to judge them, Lord, my heart is clean."

Look at verse 22: "Thou hast seen, O Lord: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me." When David said, "Thou hast seen, O Lord," he was appealing to God's omniscience, God's all-knowing. He was saying, "Lord, you know I've got clean hands. You know I'm innocent in this. I have not done this. I have not given them any reason to hate me or any reason to attack me. And so Lord, I appeal to you."

Now look in your Bibles to Psalm 7, another imprecatory psalm. See how David appeals to God and claims the doctrine of clean hands. Psalm 7, beginning with verse 3: "O Lord my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:) let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea,"

“Let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust.” I would not pray a prayer like that if I were guilty. If I did not have clean hands and a clean heart, I would not pray, “Lord, if I have not acted rightly, if I have not done biblically, then let my

enemy take my life. Let him tread my honor down into the dirt." What is David saying? He is saying, "I am going to do what is right. I am going to keep my heart regardless."

Do you realize that one of the most difficult things for us to do as children of God is to keep our hearts? When somebody does us wrong, we immediately want to strike back. If they cuss us, we want to cuss them. If they attack us, we want to attack them. But what Romans 12 and Proverbs 25 teach is that we are not to render evil for evil; rather, we are to render good for evil. We are to keep our hearts and do what is right at all times.

In other words, even when we pray against our enemies, the enemies of God's people, and God's enemies, we should understand the gravity of the situation and remain humble and obedient. When we pray against our enemies, we must distinguish between the enemies of God's people and enemies of our own making—not people who are angry with us because we have acted ugly, unkind, or ungracious toward them, but people who are trying to destroy God's kingdom, God's people, and God's church. Consider Proverbs 24; this is a very important passage.

When we see the hand of God upon our enemies in judgment, we tend to swell up and say, "I guess they'll learn now. You show them, God." But we are talking about keeping the heart. Proverbs 24:17 says, "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth." Why are we not to rejoice and be glad when our enemy stumbles and falls? Read the next verse: "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him." God says that if you want your enemies really wiped out, keep a humble attitude. Do not become arrogant, haughty, heady, and high-minded when God answers your prayer.

There is a principle enunciated over and over in Scripture: God resists the proud—that is, He fights against them—but gives grace to the humble. David may have prayed fiercely, but his attitude and actions, even toward his enemies, were gracious and kind. We cannot be overcome with bitterness, resentment, ill will, and evil feelings.

In 2 Corinthians 7:1, the Bible says, “Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves, therefore having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” It is not enough that we are not whoremongers, adulterers, thieves, and liars. We certainly ought not to be involved in any of that. We are to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

That means I am not to have bitterness, resentment, anger, hatred, wrath, malice, ill will, or anything that will defile my spirit. There is no tension between the Old Testament and the New Testament. When David prayed, he left everything in the hands of God.

New Testament Parallels to Imprecatory Prayers

Thirdly, although David prayed fiercely against his enemies, he himself was gracious and kind toward them.

Fourthly, church discipline and church denunciations in the New Testament are not much different from the imprecatory prayers in the Old Testament. The New Testament contains many curses and condemnations. The Apostle Paul cursed Elymas in Acts 13 and smote him with blindness because he was hindering the gospel. In Galatians 1:8–9, Paul placed a curse upon anyone who would pervert the gospel of grace. In Acts 5, the Apostle Peter pronounced death upon Ananias and Sapphira because they had tempted the Holy Spirit. In 1 Timothy 1:20, Paul turned Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan, just as he did the man in 1 Corinthians 5 who was living in incest with his stepmother. According to the Bible, the final step in church discipline involves turning the sinner over to Satan, under God's sovereign control, that he may be severely chastised, even to the destruction of the flesh.

Three reasons are given in the Bible for church discipline. First and foremost, it is for God's honor and glory: "Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump." It honors God to deal with sin. Second, it is so the saints may be warned and not fall into the same sin. Third, if possible, it is for the repentance and restoration of the one who has sinned.

A Concern for Righteousness

In 1 Corinthians 5, the Apostle Paul speaks concerning an individual who had sinned: “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Notice that he flat turned him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh—that is, if God so chose, death.

If we had the courage and convictions to pray like David, and the courage and convictions to speak and act as the Apostle Paul, we would not be very comfortable with our own sins. The truth of the matter is very simple: David and Paul and Peter took sin far more seriously than do we.

Here are four general principles. I want now to descend to some particulars and show some reasons why the imprecatory prayers were prayed and why we should pray them. First, in the imprecatory prayers there is a concern for righteousness and the establishment of righteousness.

Purposes of Imprecatory Prayers

Go back to Psalm 7, which is an imprecatory prayer. In verses 8 and 9, David says, “The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me. O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.”

This psalm is actually concerned with righteousness, although it is an imprecatory psalm. Beginning with verse 6, David says, “Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded. So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high. The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to the integrity that is in my heart.” David is concerned about righteousness.

Do you want to see God's righteousness established on this earth? Do you want to see God's righteousness in your life? You know what

David prayed in Psalm 118, verse 19? "Open unto me the gates of righteousness, and I will go in them, and I will praise the Lord." One of the reasons that Jesus Christ came was that He might establish righteousness. Jeremiah 33 and verse 15 says, "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and justice in the land."

There is so much in the Old Testament upon righteousness. It is very painful for me to think that the Old Testament saints, with the limited amount of light that they had, would be more concerned with righteousness than we should be with the full light of the gospel shining in Jesus Christ. And we have the completed Word of God.

In these imprecatory prayers, there is a concern for God's righteousness. We want to see God's righteousness and God's justice. Secondly, there is a desire to see God praised and honored when our prayers are answered and the righteous are delivered. Since we are in Psalm 7, look at verse 17. David is praying this imprecatory prayer and then says, "I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high." In other words, when God answers my prayer, I am going to praise Him.

Look in Psalm 35, another imprecatory prayer. David says concerning his enemies, "Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall." Then, in verse 9, "...and my soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation." In verse 18, "...I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people." And in verse 28, "...and my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day."

In these imprecatory prayers, there is a desire to see God honored and glorified when those prayers are answered. How many times has God protected you and preserved you, and you have failed to give Him the honor and glory and worship that is due in His name?

Just stop and think about that. We do not understand how many times God has saved and protected us, but there are times in our lives when we know He has. Years ago, I went to play golf with an older man in our church, Wayne Coulter. I've never been much for golf, Pastor Poole, but I went with Wayne because he was old, I

needed the exercise, and we walked. I always tell people I had far more fun at golf than anyone else because I got to hit the ball far more times than anybody else.

We were going to the golf course in Folkston, Georgia. Before you get there, there is a railroad track. Wayne was driving. He eased up to the track, and I saw him look to the left. When he looked left, I automatically looked right, and, Lord have mercy, here came an Amtrak flying. There were no gates and no lights at the crossing. Under my breath, I said, "You better whoa or go." Thankfully, all he heard was "whoa," because he slammed on the brakes, and the train went right by us. Afterward, I looked at him and said, "What do you say we just sit here and pray and thank the Lord for a little while?" He said, "That's a good idea."

There are times when we know that God preserved us, but there are so many times when we do not know. We should praise Him continually for His multitudinous mercies toward us. In these imprecatory prayers, when we get in trouble, cry to God, and He delivers us, we had better make sure that we give Him the honor and the glory.

Here is the third purpose. These imprecatory prayers have a purpose and a design: that men may know there is indeed a God in the earth who is just, who rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. Look at Psalm 58. It is an imprecatory psalm like you would not believe. If you want to learn how to pray these imprecations, you need to look at Psalm 58 and Psalm 59. Beginning with verse 6, notice the imprecations: "Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth." Wow. "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 as 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." One of the reasons we pray these prayers is so that men will know that there is indeed a just God who rewards the righteous and who punishes the wicked.

This purpose is confirmed many times over in the Bible by many truths. Psalm 9 and verse 16 says this: "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." The truth of the matter is this: God will either be known in salvation or condemnation, but He will be known to the world. Therefore, the righteous needs to pray these prayers so that men may know that there is indeed a just God. In imprecatory prayers, there is a purpose that all may know that God is absolutely sovereign and He is the governor of the universe.

That is, He rules over all. There are many today who deny the existence of God. There are even more who act as if God did not exist, and they somehow think that they can thwart the eternal purpose of the sovereign God of heaven and earth. But there is a way that God will make His hand known. Psalm 59 and verse 13 says, "Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth." Consume them—why? That they may know that God's on the throne.

Psalm 83, verse 13, says: "O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire; so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O Lord."

"Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: that men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth." One reason that we pray these prayers is so men will know that God is on the throne when they are judged for their sin and rebellion. There are some folks who will only learn the hard way. Men like Pharaoh, Sihon, and Og can testify that they learned the hard way. When God consumed them, they found out that God was on the throne.

Fifthly, in imprecatory prayers, there is also the purpose of causing the wicked to seek the Lord. When I say that, you have to understand that there are some whose attention will be grabbed

when the judgment of God begins to fall. Psalm 83, verses 15 and 16, says, "So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame;" Why? "That they may seek thy name, O Lord." There are some folks you can hit upside the head with a two-by-four often enough that, all of a sudden, they will say, "It's no fun getting hit upside the head with a two-by-four. I think I'm going to move. I think I'll change positions."

Look in Isaiah 51, verse 4: "Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people." His judgment shall be a light. Some might wake up when they see the light. Thus, in these imprecatory prayers there is indeed a purpose for God sending judgment and some waking up.

Sixthly, imprecatory prayers have a purpose in keeping the wicked from enjoying the same blessings as the righteous. Go back in your Bibles to Psalm 69. Notice verse 28. David prays, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous." What is David praying? He is praying that God is going to kill some folks and wipe them out. Go back to verse 22: "Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.

"Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous." What is David saying? Remove them from this life. Take them.

Longevity of life is promised to the obedient. God says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that thy days may be long upon the earth which the Lord thy God giveth thee." God is promising long life to those who obey Him.

The opposite is also true. God promises brevity of life to those who disobey Him. The Bible tells us in Psalm 55:23, “But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.” What is He saying? God will cut them off in the prime of their life.

And it is a blessing of God that many of the wicked do not live to be of ripe old age. One purpose in imprecatory praying is that the wicked do not enjoy the blessings of the righteous.

Seventhly and lastly, in imprecatory prayers, we have to learn the abhorrence of sin and disobedience. I don’t know how anyone can read these prayers, or even pray these prayers, without at the same time having a detestation and abhorrence of sin and wickedness and rebellion. When you understand that sin, wickedness, and rebellion bring judgment and wrath upon you, how can you tolerate anything in your life that is contrary to God? How can you tolerate anything in your life that you know displeases Him? If you learn to pray these prayers, I can assure you of one thing: it will tend to make you a more holy person.

Personal Holiness and Hatred of Sin

You are going to understand that God is no respecter of persons. If you are asking God to judge someone because of that sin and rebellion in their life, you are going to make dead sure that the same sin and rebellion is not in your life. David’s prayer in Psalm 139, beginning in verse 19, says, “Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.” In other words, I don’t want to be near you when God starts swinging His sword. “For they speak against thee wickedly”; that is, they speak against God wickedly.

"And thine enemies take thy name in vain." Look what he says: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? 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, and lead me in the way everlasting."

What is he saying? "Lord, I don't want anything in me that's in them. Lord, I want to be holy. I want to be godly." If we learn to pray these prayers, we will learn to be grieved with our sin, our disobedience, our rebellion, our faults, and our failures. I'm not perfect, but it does grieve me that I'm not perfect. I'm not as holy as I should be, but it does grieve me that I'm not. If you learn to pray these prayers, you'll come to the same attitude God expresses in Jeremiah 44:4: "Oh, do not that abominable thing which I hate."

You'll learn to hate sin, wickedness, and disobedience. When we learn to pray these prayers, we will have an abhorrence of sin and disobedience. These imprecatory prayers evidence a purpose to see the justice of God vindicated, His word honored, His kingdom established, His righteousness prevail, and His name and honor glorified.

When the Bible says all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, it refers to the imprecatory prayers. It is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. We cannot be thoroughly furnished unto every good work without understanding and applying the imprecatory prayers. As we learn to pray, we also learn the necessity of being holy and righteous and having clean hands and a clean heart, so that God will hear our prayers, honor His Word, and establish His kingdom.

Conclusion and Prayer

It is right to pray, "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth and let the wicked be no more." Why? Because it is the same as praying, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask You for Your grace, help, and mercy in our lives. Teach us, Lord, to pray these imprecatory prayers, but teach us to pray them with clean hands and a clean heart. Teach us to hate sin, wickedness, and disobedience—not just in the lives of others, but in our own lives.

And make us holy and godly. In Thy name we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Imprecatory Praying

Part Three of Four

Psalm 109, beginning with verse 1: “Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise. For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love. Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office.”

Introduction and Review of Imprecatory Praying Principles

We have been dealing with imprecatory praying for the last two weeks. An imprecation is an invocation of judgment or calamity. It is asking God to put a curse upon His enemies and those who oppose Him. I have shown you from the Word of God that these imprecatory

prayers are not contrary to the gospel, nor are they contrary to the Christian faith.

Certainly, they can be equated with a prayer for the fullness of the kingdom of Christ. Many times David would pray something like this: “O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish thou the just.” Jesus Christ is the just one, and all those who are in Him are just as well. It is therefore a prayer for the establishment of the kingdom.

Last week I tried to give you several general principles and then several specific purposes for these imprecatory prayers. I want to remind you of them before going further. First, generally speaking, whatever problems we have with the imprecatory prayers in the Bible, there is no tension between the Old Testament and the New Testament, or between law and grace. It is never, ever a matter of law versus grace.

Secondly, when David or any other biblical character prays an imprecation—a curse against the enemies of God—the matter is left entirely with God. God determines when and how to curse and what to do. It is totally and completely left in His hands.

Thirdly, whenever David prayed these imprecatory prayers and prayed severely against his enemies, no matter how severe his prayers were, he was always kind and gracious toward his enemies personally.

Fourthly, church discipline and church denunciations in the New Testament are not much different from those imprecations in the Old Testament. The New Testament contains many imprecations and curses as well. Fifthly, the imprecatory prayers teach us that God has not appointed His enemies to defeat, but to victory. We are not the victims, but we are to be victorious.

There are several specific reasons for these imprecatory prayers. First, in imprecatory prayers there is a concern for righteousness and especially the establishment of righteousness. Secondly, there is a desire to see God praised and honored when those prayers are answered and the righteous are delivered. Thirdly, there is a purpose and a design that men may know that there is indeed a God in the earth, and that God does indeed reward the righteous and punish the

wicked. Fourthly, there is a purpose that all may know that God is absolutely sovereign and rules over all. Fifthly, there is also a purpose in causing some of the wicked to seek God.

It is true that oftentimes God's judgment does open the eyes of some, not necessarily of all, but some do learn a lesson. Sixthly, imprecatory prayers have a purpose of keeping the wicked from enjoying the same privileges and blessings of the righteous. Seventhly, through imprecatory prayers we learn to have an abhorrence of sin and disobedience. Overall, generally speaking, imprecatory prayers have the purpose of seeing the justice of God vindicated, His word honored, His kingdom established, His righteousness prevail, His people delivered, and His name honored and glorified.

Psalm 109 as the Most Controversial Imprecatory Psalm

What I want to do today is take the most talked-about imprecatory prayer, the most talked-about imprecatory psalm, and analyze it to see if there is anything in this psalm that is contrary to or cannot be explained in light of the rest of Scripture. The most controversial psalm is Psalm 109. Psalm 109 is vehement in its denunciation. I can assure you that liberals and sinners and sentimentalists and humanists all have problems with Psalm 109. The problem we face in Psalm 109 is not related just to this specific psalm.

Curses occur throughout the entirety of the Bible. Prayers, or imprecations, for the destruction of one's enemies or God's enemies occur throughout the entire Word of God. According to the Bible, who was the meekest man upon the earth apart from Christ? It was Moses. The Bible tells us in Numbers 12 and verse 3 that Moses was the meekest man upon the earth, and that meekest man, in Numbers 10 and verse 35, prayed, "Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let those that hate thee flee before thee." That is an imprecatory prayer. He was praying for the destruction of God's enemy.

It is worth noting that above Psalm 109 we read, "To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David." This psalm was written to be sung in tabernacle worship or temple worship. When it was written, there

was no reason why it could not be sung, read, or shouted. Political correctness had not been invented at that time. Very clearly, this psalm was designed to be sung in God's worship.

What has happened is that certain men have said, "We can't sing this psalm, preach this, or pray this prayer because it is repugnant to humanistic thinking." When anyone sets himself up as a judge to determine what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, he has usurped the throne of God and is guilty not only of blasphemy but of idolatry as well. God is the one who has given his word.

The Intensity of Psalm 109 and Its Connection to Judas Iscariot

Psalm 109 is intense, extremely so. Beginning with verse 8, it says: "Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg. Let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth."

That is intense. One of the reasons for the intensity in this psalm—and you must remember that it was written by David under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—is that it also concerned Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of the son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ. How do we know that? Hold Psalm 109 and look in your Bibles to the book of Acts, chapter 1. Acts chapter 1 shows how this is applied to Judas Iscariot. Notice Acts chapter 1, beginning with verse 16.

Peter stands and says, “Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all

his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood."

"For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take." That is basically from verse 8: "let his days be few; and let another take his office." In other words, the enemy of David in Psalm 109 found its fulfillment in Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus Christ. Acts chapter 1 quotes this psalm as referring to Judas Iscariot; this is the apostolic application of the passage.

Psalm 109 has therefore been called historically the Iscariotic Psalm because it referred to Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ. Now, it is true that when David wrote and prayed Psalm 109, he probably did not have Judas Iscariot in mind. He probably had Doeg, Saul, Ahithophel, or one of his other many enemies in mind. The prayer was against one of David's real, genuine enemies, but it found its accomplishment and fulfillment in Judas Iscariot, because this psalm is quoted in Acts chapter 1 referring to him.

David's Appeal for God to Act (Verse 1)

Look at verse 1 of Psalm 109. David begins this prayer by saying, "Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise." When David prays that first petition, he is simply saying this: I do not want, nor do I desire, anyone other than the Lord God Almighty to vindicate me. In other words, it is God who will be the judge of my heart, and God who will be the judge of my integrity.

"Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise." God is the God of His praise, and so God is the one who will exonerate David. God is the one who will investigate and look into all those who are persecuting David. What David is saying in verse 1 is very simple: Do something, O God. "Hold not thy peace." God, do not just sit back and be quiet. Say something. Do something. Help me. I am in desperate need.

It is like David wrote in Psalm 68:1: "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him." In other words, God, do something. Arise. David is begging God, praying for God to undertake his defense, to undertake and plead his

cause. He is asking God to act on his behalf rather than remain silent while his enemies continue their persecution.

Description of David's Enemies (Verses 2-5)

Verses 2 through 5 give us a description of David's enemy or enemies: "For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love."

David describes them as deceitful and lying. They use words of hatred, fight against David without a cause, and wrongly and wickedly refuse overtures of love and peace. They return evil for good and hatred for love. David is praying against these wicked men who do not want to do right, will not do right, and, because of their rebellion, cannot do right.

The Theological Foundation of Imprecatory Prayers

Imprecatory prayers do not have their foundation in a vengeful, vindictive heart. Rather, they spring from a theology that reflects the holiness of God and His faithfulness to His covenant promises. I've already said this in previous messages, but I want to say it again. They do not arise from a vengeful, vindictive heart. Rather, they arise from a theology that understands the holiness of God and His faithfulness to His covenant promises. Let me say that again. If you were to read Deuteronomy 27, you will find that there are many curses pronounced against those who hate God and violate His law. You've heard me say over and over, curses follow disobedience. Blessings follow obedience.

You have positive sanctions, you have negative sanctions. Very clearly in the Bible, I don't care which book you turn to, you're going to find that a curse comes upon all of those who disobey God. In other words, this teaches us that sin is primarily against God.

If I were to go back to Henry and steal a hundred-dollar bill from him, I have sinned against Henry. Janet would say, no, I have sinned

against her; it was her money. It is true that I took from Henry and stole from Henry. But why did I steal from Henry? Because I hate God, because I am not going to obey God. I am going to disobey Him. God is not going to rule over me or tell me what to do. My sin primarily is against God and secondarily against Henry. The reason I sinned against Henry is that I first sinned against God.

These imprecatory prayers teach us that sin is primarily against God, and that all who disobey God and all who are wicked are under His divine judgment. They stem from a view of God's holiness and a desire to see God honor His covenant promises. They ask God to fulfill His covenant by punishing the evil as well as rewarding the righteous.

The Lex Talionis and the Law of Sowing and Reaping

Imprecatory prayers do not come from a vengeful, vindictive heart. I do not pray against my enemies because I hate them in that sense of the word. I am not full of bitterness and wrath. I pray against them because they are contrary to God and His word, and they are dishonoring Him. They are His enemies; yes, they are my enemies. But I am not praying against them because I hate them. I am praying against them because I have been commanded to pray against them, and it is right to pray against them.

Imprecatory prayers exemplify the lex talionis of Scripture. It is a Latin term that refers to the law of retribution, where God makes the punishment fit the crime. In Exodus 21:22, God says, “If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.”

“And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” What’s God doing? He’s making the punishment fit the crime.

In Leviticus 24:19–22, God says, “And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a

man, so shall it be done to him again. And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it: and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death. Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country: for I am the Lord your God."

In Deuteronomy 19:16–21, God says, "If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; and the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."

God says He makes the punishment fit the crime. It is the lex talionis. If Ed goes out and murders a man, takes a man's life unlawfully according to God's law, he is not to be stuck in prison for forty years, fed with the finest food, watching television and playing games until he dies of old age. No, he is to be put to death: life for life. He took someone else's life; he shall forfeit his life. That is the lex talionis of Scripture. Notice that in each of these passages, it was the judges who must do this. They were to execute this biblical principle.

In Matthew chapter 5, verses 38 through 42, our Lord said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." The Lord there is not instituting a new law. He certainly is not revising, refuting, or removing the Old Testament principle of lex talionis. In Matthew 5, He is correcting the Pharisees' misinterpretation of the law, because they taught that it was right for a man to take personal vengeance.

So if Hobie slapped me, I can slap him back. If Hobie cussed me, I can cuss him back. In other words, I can exercise personal vengeance. No. Scripture says, God said, "Vengeance is mine; I will

repay, saith the Lord." There are those to whom God has given the proper use of the sword. That is why, in Romans chapter 13, concerning the civil magistrate, he says that he shall not bear the sword in vain.

Now the point is this: when you look at Psalm 109, David does not ask anything in this psalm that is unbiblical, unholy, ungodly, or contrary to the Christian faith. Everything David asks for is in line with the clear teaching of Scripture. Similarly, in the New Testament, we have the law of sowing and reaping, Galatians 6:7–8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Remember lex talionis, the law of retribution, where God makes the punishment fit the crime. Remember the law of sowing and reaping, where you reap exactly what you sow. With these two principles in mind, let us begin looking in Psalm 109 at these imprecatory prayer requests. After David has described his enemies in verses 2 through 5, he begins in verse 6: "Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand." His first request is that his foe might be subjected to the evil of having a man placed over him like himself.

Exegesis of Imprecatory Requests in Psalm 109:6-8

A man who has no regard for justice, truth, or righteousness, who does not respect character, integrity, or propriety—in other words, what David is asking is that this man, whoever he is, might be punished in the line of his offenses. He reaps what he sows. He experiences the lex talionis, where God makes the punishment fit the crime: “Set thou a wicked man over him.”

This should be the object of all law. Every magistrate should endeavor to apply this principle: the punishment fits the crime. Can there be anything more just than that? The answer is no. It is justice. This is how God acts toward individuals. How would you like for God to act toward you? David writes in Psalm 18: “With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew

thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward."

If you want God to be merciful to you, God says you need to be merciful. If you want God to be froward—that is, hard-nosed and hard-lined with you—then continue to act like that. God will act the same way toward you. This is a principle. What is the golden rule that everybody can quote? "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

That is the law of sowing and reaping. That is lex talionis. So when David in Psalm 109 says, "Set thou a wicked man over him," he himself, whomever David is praying against, was a wicked man, and he was over someone and treated them wickedly. God says, through David's prayer request, Let him experience himself what he has done to others. "Set a wicked man over him."

In verse 6 he says, "and let Satan stand at his right hand." That is, let Satan be his counselor and advisor. The language here would properly apply to someone who was a counselor or advisor to the king, someone in the administration of government. The prayer, then, is that this individual, whoever he is, would have a counselor and advisor much like himself. David is praying for someone who evidently betrayed him—someone who gave him bad counsel and advice, and got him into trouble. Now David says, "let Satan stand at his right hand."

The word Satan, as many of you know, means adversary. Literally, in verse 6 he says, "Set thou a wicked man over him: and let an adversary stand at his right hand." I like what Hugo said. Spurgeon quoted this: "The devil is on the left hand of those whom he persecutes in temporal things, on the right hand of those whom he rules in spiritual things, before the face of them who are on their guard against his wiles, behind those who are not foreseeing and prudent, above those whom he treads down, and beneath the feet of those who tread him down."

David begins this imprecatory prayer: "Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan or an adversary stand at his right hand." Here is a man who was wicked, who gave wicked counsel, and now he is to reap what he has sown. In verse 7 David continues: "When

he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin." Here is a man caught in his wickedness. He judged and condemned others in the vilest manner; he suffered not the innocent to escape. David is saying that it would be a great shame in his trial if he were allowed to escape. He is asking that the guilty be condemned and punished according to justice. "When he shall be judged, let him be condemned." Let the outcome be sure and certain. Do not let him get away or escape; let the outcome be condemnation. "And let his prayer become sin."

Now, you may not remember, but I hope that you do. I've preached two messages in times past. One of them is "When Prayer Is Sin," and the other is "When Prayer Is Useless." David says right here, "Let his prayer become sin." I want to give you a couple of quotes from several of the old commentators on "let his prayer become sin." I'm going to give you the first quote from Albert Barnes, then I want you to listen to some Scripture that I'm going to read. But Albert Barnes said concerning this prayer request, "Let his prayer become sin." He says, "Evidently his prayer is in reference to his trial for crime. His prayer that he might be acquitted and discharged. Let it be seen in the result that such a prayer is wrong."

"That it was, in fact, a prayer for the discharge of a bad or wicked man, a man who ought to be punished. Let it be seen what a prayer would be if offered for a murderer or a violator of the law, a prayer that he might escape or not be punished. All must see that such a prayer would be wrong or would be a sin. And so in his own case, it would be equally true that a prayer for his own escape would be sin. The psalmist asks, that by the result of the trial such a prayer might be seen to be in fact a prayer for the protection and the escape of a wicked man." A just sentence in this case would demonstrate this, and this is what the psalmist prays for. So Barnes is saying that certainly if the man is guilty and he's praying that he would get free from his condemnation, his just condemnation, the prayer would be sin. But the fact of the matter is this, folks, listen carefully: the prayer of a wicked man is already sin.

Do you know the Bible says in Proverbs 21:4, "An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin." Now wait a minute. A high look, a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked is

sin. You say, wait a minute, Brother Weaver. Has not God commanded even the wicked as well as the godly to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow? Yes. Wicked men are required to work. Well, how then can the plowing of the wicked be sin since they are obeying God when God commanded them to work for their bread? The answer is given us in Romans 14:23: "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." The wicked plow, but they do not plow in faith. They do not plow for God's honor and God's glory. They do not plow in respect to God's promises. They plow without faith, and therefore their plowing is sin. If their plowing is sin when they plow without faith, how much more is their prayer sin when they pray without faith?

We are taught in Proverbs 15:8 that "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight." The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. If the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, how much more is his prayer? Listen to this one, Proverbs 21:27: "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?" Now if the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, and God says, how much more is it when he brings it with a wicked mind, the prayer of the wicked is sin. How much more sinful when he prays and has no concern for God's honor and glory, no concern for righteousness, and no concern for truth.

He only intends to benefit himself and to prosper in his sin and rebellion. Very obviously, "let his prayer be sin" is a scriptural prayer because his prayer is already sin. Spurgeon said this: "and let his prayer become sin. It is sin already. Let it be so treated. To the injured it must seem terrible that the black-hearted villain should nevertheless pretend to pray, and very naturally do they beg that he may not be heard, but that his pleadings may be regarded as an addition to his guilt."

He has devoured the widow's house and yet he prays. He has put Naboth to death by false accusation and taken possession of his vineyard, and then he presents prayers to the Almighty. He has given up villages to slaughter, and his hands are red with the blood of babes and maidens, and then he pays his vows unto Allah. He must

surely be accursed himself who does not wish that such abominable prayers may be loathed of heaven and written down as new sins.

He who makes it a sin for others to pray will find his own praying become sin. When he at last sees his need of mercy, mercy herself shall resent his appeal as an insult. Because that he remembered not to show mercy, he shall himself be forgotten by the God of grace, and his bitter cries for deliverance shall be regarded as the mockeries of heaven.

Joseph Caryl says the prayer of the hypocrite is sin formally, and it is sin in the effect; that is, instead of getting any good by it, he gets hurt. The Lord, instead of helping him because he prays, punishes him because of the sinfulness of his prayers. Thus his prayer becomes sin to him because he receives no more respect from God when he prays than when he sins. Sin does not only mingle with his prayer, as it does with the prayers of the holiest, but his prayer is nothing else but a mixture, a mingle-mangle, of many sins.

So when David says, "when he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin," he is praying a biblical request. How many would want the prayers of the wicked answered? I would not, because all the wicked pray for is more wickedness, corruption, ungodliness, and unrighteousness. Joseph Caryl, Spurgeon, Barnes, and all the commentators who understand and believe the Bible say his prayer is already sin, and it is a biblical request to pray that his prayer become sin. How God mocks those who hate Him and turns their very good deeds against them, counting them as sin and rebellion.

Look at verse 8: "Let his days be few; and let another take his office." This man had to be high in government, or at least have authority somewhere; he had an office. The prayer request is plain and unambiguous: "Let his days be few." What does that mean? Kill him, Lord. Destroy him. Take his life. "Let his days be few."

You say, “How can anyone pray for the death of someone like that? Certainly that has to be unchristian, uncharitable, and ungodly.” No. Let’s turn it around. How many of you would pray for an extended life for a murderer, a pervert, a dictator, a tyrant, or a fraudulent, corrupt, unjust individual? How many of you would like

for him to live a long life? I wouldn't. I want to get rid of him as soon and as quickly as I can.

David's prayer for a quick death and a short life for such an individual is in line with Scripture. I told you last week that one of the specific purposes for praying these imprecatory prayers was to see that the wicked do not enjoy the privileges of the righteous. Long life, longevity, is promised to the faithful and obedient. It is not promised to the wicked.

Look at Psalm 91. I like this psalm, and the older I get, the more I like it. In verse 15, just to show you, the Lord says, "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation." Long life is promised to those who are obedient and who trust in God.

Turn back to Psalm 34, beginning with verse 12. Look what the Bible says: "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?" I don't know about you, but I would like to live a long, fruitful life. I would like to have good days and see good all my life. God said, if you want to live long, have good days, and have a good life, here is what you do. "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. 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 unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." God said, "You want to live long? You obey me."

We are talking about "let his days be few"; it is a biblical prayer request. Proverbs 9:10–11 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased." By what? By the fear of the Lord and by the knowledge of the Holy. You do not get long life by disobeying God. In fact, length of days is not promised to the wicked at all. Psalm 55:23 says, "bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days." In other words, God will cut them down in the prime of life. Such a prayer request is not only biblical; it is just. Proverbs 10:27 says, "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened."

So when David says, “let his days be few,” he is saying, God, they are already under your curse. They are already disobedient. You have already said you would cut them off. You have already said that the years of the wicked will be shortened. So, Lord, just do what you said you were going to do anyhow. How can that be unbiblical? How can that be unrighteous? It is asking a holy God simply to fulfill His covenantal promises.

Notice that he said, “let his days be few; and let another take his office.” Obviously, if the wicked man dies, somebody else must take his office, and we would want a righteous man to take it. Proverbs 28:28 says, “When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase.” When do the righteous increase? When the wicked perish. When the wicked rise—that is, when they get in authority—men hide themselves. They have to, or the wicked will steal everything they have and take everything they possess.

Proverbs 29:2 says, “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.” Thus David is praying a biblical prayer request when he says, “let his days be few; and let another take his office.” Albert Barnes wrote, “Let another take his office. So every man acts and practically prays who seeks to remove a bad and corrupt man from office. And such an office must be filled by someone. All the efforts which he puts forth to remove a wicked man tend to bring it about that another should take his office.”

"And for this it is right to labor and pray. The act does not itself imply malignancy or bad feeling, but is consistent with the purest benevolence, the kindest feelings, the strictest integrity, the sternest patriotism, and the highest form of piety." If you want to be patriotic, pious, kind, to have integrity, and to do what is right, pray that God will kill wicked men and put righteous men in their offices. That is what Albert Barnes just said. That is what David just said.

"Let his days be few; and let another take his office." Is it wrong to pray for the death of bad men? Is it wrong to ask God to fulfill His covenantal promises? No. It is the law of sowing and reaping. It is the lex talionis, where God makes the punishment fit the crime.

Applications: Crying to God for Justice and Trusting His Favor

When men will not grant justice—and there is hardly any justice at all on this earth today, especially in our courtrooms—it is perfectly acceptable to cry to the Judge of all the earth for justice. I am not a communist, and I have no sympathy with communists, but there is one communist who said something with which I agree. Gus Hall said the reason we refer to our courts as the halls of justice is because the only place you can get any justice is out in the halls. That is about the truth. You cannot get it in the courtroom, that is for sure.

That is exactly what David is doing in Psalm 109. That is exactly what all these imprecatory prayers are about. God encourages us to pray for justice because God is a lover of justice. The Bible says in Job 37 and verse 23, "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice." In Isaiah 45 and verse 21, God declares that He is a just God and Savior. There is none else beside Me. It is perfectly lawful to cry to God for justice, and to ask Him to thwart and overthrow the schemes, plans, and purposes of wicked, ungodly men who hate God, Christ, the Bible, His people, and His earth. It is perfectly biblical to cry that God would overthrow them: "Let their days be few; and let another take their office."

Look back in Psalm 109:1 again: “Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise.” This is my second application. The point for us is this: We must remember that God is for His people when the wicked are against them. Verses 2 through 5 show how the wicked were against David. Everybody was talking about David, hating David, and trying to kill him. David appeals to God, saying, “Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise.” In other words, “Lord, do something. Help me out.”

I know You are for me. All the world may be against me, but Lord, You are not.

Thirdly, the opposite is also true: the wicked are against God's people when God is for them. That is why verses two through five describe the wicked constantly persecuting David. There is no reason to expect goodness, kindness, integrity, morality, or justice from wicked men. The mouth of the wicked poureth forth wickedness, so

says the Word of God. We should expect wickedness from wicked men.

The imprecatory prayers are a foundation of hope for the people of God. They assure us that God will hear our prayers, arise, and deliver us, as He has done in time past and promised in His Word. We must cry to God to remedy situations we cannot remedy ourselves. Some things can be answered only by crying to God. Life and death are in His hands. The same psalmist who said, "let his days be few; and let another take his office," also said in Psalm 66 and verse 9, "which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved." God has the issues of life and death in His hands.

David's prayer means, Lord, I cannot do anything about this wicked man against whom I am praying, but You can: "Let his days be few; and let another take his office." I believe that prayer probably needs to be prayed much more frequently in our time.

Let's pray. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are thankful for thy word and for thy truth. We pray, Lord, that you would teach us to pray and teach us that thou art indeed the sovereign God of heaven and earth, that thou holdest life and death in thy hands, and that thou canst remove the wicked and establish the righteous. We pray with David again, "O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish thou the just." In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

David, in praying this prayer, said, “Lord, I cannot do anything about this wicked man that I am praying against, but You can. Let his days be few, and another take his office.” I believe that prayer probably needs to be prayed more frequently in our time.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are thankful for Thy Word and Thy truth. We pray, Lord, that Thou would teach us to pray and teach us that Thou art the sovereign God of heaven and earth, that Thou holdest life and death in Thy hands, and that Thou can remove the wicked and establish the righteous. We pray with David, “O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish Thou the just.” In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Imprecatory Praying

Part Four of Four

SCRIPTURE READING - Psalm 109:8-19 (KJV)

Psalm 109, beginning with verse 8:

"Let his days be few, and let another his office take. And let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg. Let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him, neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth. Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.

> As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him. As he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing, like as with a garment, so let it come upon his bowels like water and like oil into his bones. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually."

Review of Imprecatory Prayer Principles

> An imprecation is a curse. It is calling down a malediction upon one's enemies or upon the enemies of God. Whatever problem anyone has with the imprecatory prayers in the Bible, it cannot be that there is a tension between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant or between law and grace. Never. Because you find grace in the Old Testament and you find law in the New Testament.

Secondly, as a general principle, when David or any other biblical character prays an imprecation, the result is left entirely with God. God may do as He pleases. He may convert, remove, restrain, or do whatever He pleases. It is all in the hands of the sovereign God, who is the Judge of all the earth.

Thirdly, no matter how severe David's imprecatory prayers were against his enemies, he was always personally kind and gracious toward them in his actions. Fourthly, there is not much difference, if any, between New Testament church discipline and New Testament denunciations and the imprecatory prayers of the Old Testament. Certainly, the New Testament contains many curses and denunciations as well. Fifthly, the imprecatory prayers teach us that God has not appointed His people to defeat, but has given us victory in Jesus Christ.

There are also specific reasons for these imprecatory prayers. First, they evidence a concern for righteousness and the establishment of righteousness. Secondly, they express a desire to see God praised and honored when those prayers are answered and the righteous are delivered. Thirdly, their purpose is that men may know there is a God in the earth, and that there is a reward for the righteous and a punishment for the wicked. Fourthly, they have the purpose that everyone should know God is absolutely sovereign and

rules over all. Fifthly, they have the purpose of causing the wicked to seek the Lord. Some, a few, who experience God's righteous judgment will indeed repent and turn to the Lord. Some do learn a lesson.

Sixthly, in imprecatory praying there is a desire to see that the wicked do not enjoy the blessings of the righteous. In fact, Scripture teaches that the wicked and the deceitful man shall not live out half his days. Seventhly, in imprecatory prayers we learn to have an abhorrence of sin and to despise it.

In imprecatory prayers, you must understand the lex talionis of Scripture, that is, the law of retribution. Exodus 21, Leviticus 24, and Deuteronomy chapter 19 speak of an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, life for life, and limb for limb. The lex talionis, the law of retribution, means nothing less than that God always makes the punishment fit the crime. In the New Testament, it is known as the law of sowing and reaping: “Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7-8).

In each of these Old Testament passages concerning the lex talionis, or the law of retribution, that law was given to the magistrates. It was given to the judges. Whichever passage you read, it always has the judges involved in it. In Matthew 5:38-42, our Lord rebukes the Pharisees and reestablishes the biblical interpretation of the law, for they had perverted the Old Testament teaching so that they might enjoy personal vengeance. They taught that if your enemy tried to do wrong to you, you could do wrong back to him, or maybe even worse. In other words, they gave you the right to exercise personal vengeance. But God says, “Vengeance belongs to me, saith the Lord, I will repay.”

The Lex Talionis and Family Involvement

Now consider Psalm 109 in light of the lex talionis—the law of retribution, or the law of sowing and reaping. Last week we looked at verses 1 through 8, so go back to verse 8 and consider these verses in line with and in light of that law. Verse 8 says, “Let his days be few and let another take his office.” Then the psalm continues: “Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds and beg. Let them seek their bread also out of

their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him, neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following, let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth."

These are very serious imprecations. The question that should automatically come to mind as we read these verses is this: Since David is praying against his enemy, do these imprecations therefore extend automatically to the wife and children of his enemy?

Psalm 109 is referred to as the Iscariotic Psalm because it refers to Judas Iscariot and is quoted in the New Testament as applying to Judas. So whoever David's enemy was in Psalm 109, it found its fulfillment in Judas Iscariot. As you read these verses, it is obvious that the wife and children are involved, and that brings another Scripture to mind. You have to ask whether David's prayers and prayer requests in Psalm 109 violate another principle of Scripture. What principle would that be?

Deuteronomy 24:16 says, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither the children be put to death for the fathers, every man shall be put to death for his own sin." God is saying that every man should die for his own sin. When we read in 2 Kings 14:6 about the men who murdered King Joash's father, the Bible says, "...but the children of the murderers he slew not, according to that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, where the Lord commanded, saying, The father shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers, but every man shall be put to death for his own sin."

Since the mother and children are obviously involved in these imprecations, are they a violation of this principle of Scripture? The answer is no. If David's enemies are cursed, does the curse extend to their families? If it does, why does it extend to them? Are there biblical principles that apply in such cases? The answer is yes. Proverbs 3:33 says, "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just." The curse of the

Lord is in the house of the wicked, which means everyone in that wicked house is cursed. There are sins that extend to and affect entire households. Proverbs 15:27 says, "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house."

"But he that hateth gifts shall live." Notice, "he that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house." It is possible to curse one's own family and one's own house. You have to remember the two messages preached not too long ago on family sins. In those messages, I demonstrated how one man's sin affects other members of the family. Jacob's sin affected Dinah. Dinah's sin affected Simeon and Levi. There are sins that extend to entire families.

Here is a principle that you have to understand in light of Psalm 109, because the wife and the children are involved in these imprecations. God usually—and I am saying usually, as a general rule—places His elect in households. He also generally places the wicked in households. Psalm 68:6 says, "God setteth the solitary in families." Notice that God setteth the solitary in families. I know that there are exceptions to this principle.

Occasionally, you will find a child who is a fool in a godly household, and occasionally you will find a godly child in a wicked household. But usually, God places His elect in families, and He also places the wicked in families. Why? Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." It is only godly families that train up their children under biblical law and according to biblical principles. Godly families usually produce godly children. Wicked families do not train their children in the admonition of the Lord. They train their children in their own sin and wickedness; therefore, wicked families normally produce wicked children. That is a simple principle. God does indeed place His elect in families, and usually the non-elect are placed in families as well.

Consider Proverbs 11:17: "The merciful man doeth good to his own soul, but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh," not merely his own body, but his own offspring as well. He that is cruel troubleth his own flesh. Proverbs 12:7 says, "The wicked are overthrown and are not, but the house or the family of the righteous shall stand."

"Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed, but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded." Who is it that normally despises the word? It is the wicked. The wicked live in households. Who is it that normally obeys? It is the godly. The godly live in households. Look in Proverbs 14:11: "The house of the wicked shall be overthrown, but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish." It is the whole house of the wicked that shall be overthrown. Look in Proverbs 15:25: "The Lord will destroy the house of the proud, but he will establish the border of the widow." The Lord will destroy the house of the proud.

It is important to remember that families are usually involved in the same sins and therefore receive the same punishment. It is not necessarily that the children are cursed for the sin of the father. Usually, the children are continuing in the same sins of the father and therefore have their own curse. That is, they participate in the sins of the father and therefore are equally condemned and justly punished.

Let me give you some illustrations from Scripture. If I were to mention Haman, everyone should automatically remember wicked Haman in the book of Esther. Do you realize that Haman and his entire family were wiped out? All were equally guilty and sinful and therefore equally punished. Haman's sons were complicit in their father's sins. Even his wife gave him counsel.

Listen to two verses out of the book of Esther. Esther 8:7: "Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews." Ahasuerus gave Esther the house of Haman. You say, "Ah, but Brother Weaver, verse 7 just says they hanged Haman upon the gallows." Well, let us get to Esther 9:14: "And the king commanded it so to be done, and the decree was given at Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons."

Why were the sons hanged? Because they were equally guilty as well. Let me give you another illustration. Turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 11 and then to Numbers 16.

You remember Dathan, Abiram, and Korah. They rebelled against the Lord and against Moses and Aaron. In Deuteronomy 11:6 we read, “And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben, how the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession in the midst of all Israel.” Note that God said the earth opened up and swallowed their households. If you want to be more explicit, go to Numbers chapter 16, beginning with verse 27.

The Word of God is specific: “So they got them up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram on every side. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. And Moses said, Hereby you shall know that the Lord had sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of mine own hand. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord had not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, and with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit, then you shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.”

“And it came to pass, as he made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods, they and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit. And the earth closed upon them, and they perished among the congregation.” Who all perished? All of them—wives, sons, and children. They were all involved in the rebellion; they were all equally guilty, and therefore they were all equally punished. It is possible to curse an entire family.

One more illustration: turn to the book of Joshua, chapter 7. God normally places His elect in families, and He normally also places the wicked in families.

Here is what happened to Achan and his family. You remember that Achan is known as the Troubler of Israel. He stole from Jericho when Jericho was placed under the ban, under the curse.

Joshua chapter 7, beginning with verse 19: “And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them and took them. And behold, they were hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.”

So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran into the tent, and found the things hidden there, with the silver under them. They took them out and brought them unto Joshua and all the children of Israel, and laid them before the Lord. “And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all they had. And they brought him down to the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall also trouble thee this day.”

“And all Israel stoned them with stones, and burned them with fire, and they stoned them with stones, and they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger, wherefore the name of that place was called the Valley of Achor unto this day.”

You say, “Wait a minute, Brother Weaver. It was Achan who sinned. Why were his wife and children killed as well?” Where did he hide it? In the midst of his tent, with some of it under his tent. How can you hide things in a tent without your wife and children knowing? They knew. They were complicit. They tried to cover it up and hide it as well. They were equally guilty and therefore equally punished, and all died before the Lord. It is just that simple.

Now, may I remind you of one other thing. You don't have to turn to any scripture, but you will remember when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, God put a sword in their hand, sent them into Canaan land, and said, kill every man, woman, child. Why? They were all equally guilty. They had all sinned against God, and the entire families were blotted out. With that in mind, I want you to go

back to Psalm 109, and I want you to look at it. I want you to understand that God normally places His elect in households. He also normally places the wicked in households. It's a biblical principle. Only the godly are going to train their children, and the ungodly will not train their children. It's just that simple. So when David is praying these imprecations, it extends to the entire family. And I want you to see how everything just kind of works together. Now, I want you to note this.

Exposition of Psalm 109:8–15

If you look in verse 8, "Let his days be few, and let another take his office." All the way down through verse 15, each of these verses begin with a "let." Each of these verses is a specific prayer request. It is a specific imprecation. But I want you to see how they're all interrelated. How they build one upon another. How one automatically follows the other. So, look at verse 8.

We looked at that last week. I'm not going to deal with it in a great deal of time today. But look at verse 8. "Let his days be few, and let another take his office." Now, when David prays, "let his days be few," that means Lord take his life, Lord kill him. "Let another take his office." Very obviously, if he's dead, someone else has to take the office.

And hopefully, and prayerfully, it'll be a righteous man. Now, if you look at verse 9, verse 9 is just actually a continuation and verification of that prayer request. For verse 9 says, "Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow." Now if the children are fatherless and the wife is a widow, very obviously the man is dead. So what is David's prayer request? His prayer request is for the man to die.

I pointed out that it is not unbiblical to pray for the death of wicked men. Who wants wicked men to continue to reign? Who wants wicked men to continue to live? Very obviously, only the wicked. So very clearly then verses 8 and 9 is praying for the death of his enemy.

“Let his children be continually vagabonds and beg. Let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.” Let his children be

continually vagabonds; let them beg; let them seek their bread out of desolate places. Do you realize that the same curse was placed upon Cain in Genesis chapter 4 and verse 12? He was to be a vagabond, continually traveling.

This prayer request is repeated in Psalm 59. There David is praying against his enemies: "Slay them not, lest my people forget. Scatter them by thy power, and bring them down, O Lord, our shield. For the sin of their mouth, and the words of their lips, let them even be taken in their pride. And for cursing and lying which they speak, consume them in wrath, consume them that they may not be, and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth."

"And at evening, watch carefully, let them return, and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. Let them wander up and down for meat and grudge if they be not satisfied." What is the prayer here? Let His enemies be like wild dogs who are not fed on a constant and continual basis. They have to run up and down, looking for a scrap here and a scrap there, searching wherever they can. They are continually hungry and continually begging for food. It is the same thing as Psalm 109:10: "Let His children be continually vagabonds, let them beg."

Now think this through. When you come to verse 8—"let his days be few, and another take his office"—the man undoubtedly held a high office and was probably well-paid. In verse 9, his children are fatherless and his wife is a widow, so he is dead. He can no longer provide for them or give to them. If the father has lost his office and there is no money coming in, the necessary result is that they will be destitute. They will have nothing; they will be vagabonds and beggars.

This is one of the hardest lots that can befall any individual, especially those born into what you and I would describe as wealth, who are used to living lavishly and having everything handed to them on a silver platter—whatever their hearts desired.

All of a sudden, it is taken from them. It is gone. They have nothing, and consequently they are begging. They are vagabonds. Is it possible for a race of tyrants to be reduced to a generation of beggars? Misused power and abused wealth secure absolute

destitution for the family, and detestation for the family. How can anyone be sympathetic with a wicked man or with his family when he has put them in such jeopardy and turmoil?

John Gill, the great Baptist scholar, said, "Wander from place to place begging their bread. This is denied of the children of good men in David's time." He refers to Psalm 37:25, where David said, "I've been young and now I'm old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." In other words, God takes care of His own. But Gill says, "This was threatened to the children of Eli in 1 Samuel 2:36, and was very likely true of the children of Judas, and was certainly the case of the multitude of the children of the Jews, the posterity of them that crucified Christ, at the time of their destruction by the Romans, when great numbers were dispersed, and wandered about in various countries as vagabonds, begging their bread from door to door, which is reckoned by them as a great affliction and very distressing." No language could be more awful than that of Psalm 109:6–19.

It embraces almost every misery that we can think of. Could any man be in a more wretched condition than Judas? Could any words be too severe to express the depth of his misery—he who for three whole years had been the constant attendant of the Savior of mankind, had witnessed His miracles, shared His miraculous powers, and enjoyed all the warnings and reproofs of His love, and then betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver? Can we conceive a condition more miserable than that of Judas? This psalm is a prophecy of the punishment that should overtake him for his sin. Peter, in the book of Acts, quotes part of this psalm and applies it to Judas as a prophecy of the punishment he should suffer for betraying the Son of God. This happened literally, not just probably, to Judas and to those Jews who crucified our Lord.

He prays that his children be continually vagabonds and beg: "Let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places." Look at verse 11: "Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labor." The extortioner is the usurer; he is the creditor.

The man has died and lost his office. There is no money for his wife and children; they become vagabonds and beggars. Then the extortioner, usurer, or creditor comes and claims their home,

furniture, and everything else. In other words, this is a request for absolute destitution—the loss of everything. Verse 11 is a necessary consequence of verses 8 through 10. Even today, what does a man do when he has no money? He tries to borrow, goes to the usurer, pledges his property, and, when he cannot pay, the usurer comes and takes it.

Adam Clarke, in his commentary on Psalm 109, quotes the Roman poet Juvenal, who died in 140 AD. Juvenal said that many of these execrations were literally fulfilled in the case of the miserable Jews after the death of our Lord. They were expelled from their own country after the destruction of Jerusalem, prohibited from returning, and so taxed by the Roman government that they were reduced to the lowest degree of poverty. Domitian expelled them from Rome, and they were obliged to inhabit a wood contiguous to the city, outside the gate Capena. For this habitation they paid rent, and the whole of their property was a basket and a little hay. Literally, this happened to those who crucified Christ.

They were not only vagabonds; the usurer took everything they had. Look in verse 12: “Let there be none to extend mercy unto him, neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children.” Let him find compassion and sympathy in no one. When the enemy and his children suffer, let them suffer alone. Let no one shed a tear of compassion over them or show any mercy toward them. Let there be none to favor his fatherless children.

These imprecations are very severe, but the people upon whom they fell were very severe and wicked sinners. Calvin states on this verse: “David, however, includes also the wicked man himself along with his children, as if he should say, though he visibly planned a way under such calamities, and these descend to his children, yet let no one show pity towards them. We are aware, it not infrequently happens, that long-continued misfortune of an enemy either excites the sympathy of men of savage disposition, or else makes them forget all their hatred. But in this part of the psalm, David expresses a desire that his enemy in all his posterity may be so hated and so detested that the people may never be wearied with beholding the calamities which they endure, but may become so familiarized with the spectacle as if their hearts were of iron. At the same time, let it be

remarked that David is not rashly excited by any personal anguish to speak in this manner, but that it is as God's messenger he declares the punishment which was impending over the ungodly."

"And verily the law accounts it as one of the judgments of God, his hardening men's hearts, so that they who have been passionately and unmercifully cruel should find no sympathy Deuteronomy 2:30. It is just that the same measure which they have used toward others should also be meted out to them." So what is he saying? Let there be none to extend him mercy. Let everyone be hard-hearted to him and to his children. Let no one have mercy upon them.

Over a period of time, men tend to forget the wicked and their wicked acts. They tend to be sympathetic toward children who are in such straits of desperation. Yet David is saying, "Don't let that happen. Don't let anyone be merciful. Don't let anyone shed a tear for them." Spurgeon says it like this: "We're staggered to find the children included in the father's sentence. And yet, as a matter of fact, children do suffer for their father's sin."

"And as long as the affairs of this life are ordered as they are, it must be so. So involved are the interests of the race that it is quite impossible in all respects to view the father and the child apart. No man among us could desire to see the fatherless suffer for their deceased father's fault. Yet, so it happens, and there is no injustice in the fact.

"They share the parent's ill-gotten gain or rank, and their aggrandizement is a part of the object in which he aimed in the perpetuation of his crimes. To allow them to prosper would be an encouragement and reward of his iniquity, and therefore, for these and other reasons, a man perishes not alone in his iniquity. The ban is on his race, that is, on his family. If a man were innocent, this would be a crime. If he were but commonly guilty, it would be excessive retribution. But when the offense reeks before high heaven in an unutterable abomination, it is of little marvel that men devote the man's whole house to perpetual infamy, and that it so happens."

There is no one among the commentators who are Bible believers who denies that these implications are real and just. Consider modern-day families and clans that have their ill-gotten gain and

become multimillionaires, perhaps billionaires. Look at their family, and how even the adult sons and daughters suffer. Are we sympathetic with them? I would not be, because they are enjoying the ill-gotten gain, and to show them mercy would be to approve of their father's sins. Stop and think about that.

Every one of these prayer requests, every one of these imprecations, builds upon the others. He has lost his office; he is dead; his children and wife are impoverished; the creditor comes and takes everything they have, and they become vagabonds with no one to extend mercy to them.

“Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following, let their name be blotted out.” David is praying not only that the man and his children will die, but that the whole name, family, and clan will be blotted out. Among the Hebrews, having a numerous posterity was counted a great blessing. Therefore, to have one’s posterity blotted out was one of the severest curses that could be placed upon a family. The request is that this man’s family not be perpetuated at all, so that no one will even remember the family.

In deeds of wickedness, there are leaders and prime movers. David goes to the main man, then to the children, and sometimes comes back to the main man in this prayer request.

Spurgeon said it like this: “Both from existence and from memory, let them pass away till none shall know that such a vile brood ever existed. Who wishes to see the family of a Domitian or Julian continued upon earth? Who would mourn if the race of Tom Paine or Voltaire would come to an utter end? It would be undesirable that the sons of the utterly villainous and bloodthirsty should rise to honor, and if they did, they would only revive the memory of their father’s sins.” Who would want to revive the memory of Mussolini or Joe Stalin? Stalin murdered over 30 million of his own. Who would want to extend the family of Idi Amin or Pol Pot? Just think about that.

David is saying, Let not only the children be cut off, but let the name be blotted out. “Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let

them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth."

The Bible teaches very clearly in Exodus 20:5 that God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation. It is not just the children who suffer, but the children's children and the children's children's children as well. They suffer from their parents' sins, crimes, follies, murder, and treason. In other words, this is something God has said that He does. Period.

Look at the request in verse 14: "Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord," that is, to judge and destroy, "and let not the sin of the mother be blotted out." It could be what we would call a parallelism. Having mentioned the fathers, he now mentions the mother. I do not know whether the mother of this individual had a specific sin or was simply a sinner in general. David said it in Psalm 51:5: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and sin did my mother conceive me."

The Justice of the Imprecations

It could be parallelism, a specific sin, or sin in general. But what he is saying is, Lord, remember all the sins of this family, judge them, and destroy this family. Then he says in verse 15, "Let them be before the Lord continually," that He may "cut off the memory of them from the earth." May no one remember that they ever lived.

That is tough. Why would David pray such a prayer? It could be because of this truth in Psalm 34:16: "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." That is a lawful prayer request, a biblical prayer request. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

Spurgeon said, "This verse is perhaps the most terrible of all. But yet, as a matter of fact, children do procure punishment upon their parents' sins and are often themselves the means of such punishment. A bad son brings to mind his father's bad points of character. People say, ah, he is like the old man. He takes after his father. A mother's sins also will be sure to be called to mind if her

daughter becomes grossly wicked. Ah, they will say, there's little wonder when you consider what her mother was."

These are matters of everyday occurrence. We cannot, however, pretend to explain the righteousness of this malediction, though we fully believe in it. We leave it till our Heavenly Father is pleased to give us further instruction. Yet as a man's faults are often learned from his parents, it is not unjust that his consequent crimes should recoil upon him.

In verses 8 through 15, each prayer request begins with “let.” All of these prayer requests are very severe imprecations. We have to ask this question: When David prayed these prayer requests, was he vengeful, vindictive, and vicious? And the answer is no. A thousand times no. What David is doing in this psalm, as well as in the other imprecatory psalms, is merely asking for the lex talionis, the law of retribution, or, if you please, the law of sowing and reaping. He is asking God to do what divine justice has proclaimed it will do: He will reward the wicked according to their sins.

Psalm 7:14–16 speaks of the wicked man: “Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. 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.” In other words, God is going to bring back the wickedness of the wicked on the top of his own head.

David is not being vicious, vindictive, or vengeful. He is asking God to apply the biblical principle of lex talionis, the law of retribution, the law of sowing and reaping. Look at Psalm 109:16–20. Here is why David prayed these things: “Because that he, the enemy, remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him. As he delighted not in blessing, so let blessing be far from him.” And again: “As he clothed himself with cursing like as with a garment, so let it come into his own bowels like water and like oil into his bones. Let it be on him as the garment which covereth him, and for girdle wherewith he is girded continually.”

What is he saying? Lord, here is why I pray: it agrees with Your principle, Your law of retribution, and the law of sowing and reaping. As he has done, so let him reap; as he sowed, so let him reap. As he loved cursing, let him be cursed; as he refused to bless, let him have no blessings. As he liked covering others with violence, cover him with violence. Let it be done to him exactly as he did to others.

David's Godly Desires

Can anything be more just than that? The answer is no. These imprecatory prayers are about justice and establishing justice.

David desired three things through these imprecatory requests in Psalm 109. Each desire was godly and upright. We are told in Psalm 37:4, “Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” David is praying out of the desires of his heart against the wicked. First, David desires to be delivered from his enemies.

Is there anything unlawful, unbiblical, unholy, or ungodly about wanting to be delivered from enemies who are persecuting you unjustly and wickedly? No. David says, “But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name’s sake, because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.”

“I am gone like the shadow when it declineth. I am tossed up and down as the locust. My knees are weak through fasting, and my flesh faileth of fatness. I became also a reproach unto them, when they looked upon me, and they shaked their heads. Help me, O LORD my God, O save me according to Thy mercy.” What does David desire first? He wants to be delivered.

I try to pray every day, “Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil.” I do not want to be led into evil or persecuted unjustly, and neither should you. I want to be delivered from my enemies; from those that hate me without a cause, from those that hate me for righteousness sake, and from those that hate me according to their hatred of God.

David desired to be delivered from his enemies in such a way that God would receive all the honor and glory. He wanted everyone to

recognize that God was the one who delivered him: “That they may know that this is thy hand, and that thou, Lord, has done it.” Lord, I want to be delivered in such a way that everyone will know that You did it; therefore men will fear God, and You will receive all the honor and glory.

SCRIPTURE READING - Psalm 109:28-31; Psalm 140:8-13 (KJV)

That's why in Psalm 58:11, we looked at it before. When David finished praying his imprecatory prayer in Psalm 58, he said, "So that a man may say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous. Verily he is a God that judgeth in all the earth." David said, I want to be delivered in such a way that everyone will know that you did it. And thirdly, David wanted to rejoice in the Lord and give Him all the honor and glory.

He says, "Let them curse, but bless thou. When they arise, let them be ashamed, but let thy servant rejoice. Let mine enemies be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle. I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth. Yea, I will praise him among the multitude. Notice, for he shall stand at the right hand of the poor to save him from those that condemn his soul." So David wanted to make sure that he got all the praise and all the glory.

The Saints' Role in Executing Judgment

Will there not be enough reason to rejoice when God delivers His people from their enemies? Will there not be enough reason to rejoice when those who are against Christ and against God and against God's Word and God's people in high places and in power and authority, will there not be reason to rejoice when they're cast down? I don't know about you, but I shall.

Psalm 140:8: "Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked. Further not his wicked advice, lest they exalt themselves. As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them. Let burning coals fall upon them. Let them be cast in the fire, into the deep pits, that they rise not up again. Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth. Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him. I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted and the right of the

> poor. Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name, and the upright shall dwell in thy presence."
>
> I don't know about you, but I think that's a wonderful prayer request. Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked. Further not his wicked device.

Psalm 149 says, "For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people. He will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory. Let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people, to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute upon them the judgment written. This honor have all the saints. Praise ye the Lord."

These imprecatory prayers demonstrate that God has not appointed us to defeat, but to victory. It is the judgment that is written—God's Word, God's written judgments—that will fall upon the wicked, and God will oftentimes use His people to execute those judgments. We pray these prayers to establish righteousness, judgment, holiness, godliness, and justice in the earth. Judgment and justice are the habitation of God's throne.

Psalm 109 is in total agreement with the rest of Scripture. It is easily understood when this imprecatory prayer is viewed in light of the lex talionis of Scripture: God gives the wicked exactly what he dished out. God repays the wicked with his own wickedness. He pays them in kind.

Thank God for your salvation, and stay as far away from wickedness and sin as you can, because you know God will judge it.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your grace and Your mercy and Your kindness. We pray against the wicked, against the ungodly, especially those who are persecuting Thy people. Teach us to pray that Thou wouldst establish Thy justice and Thy righteousness. Help us to pray, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Help us to pray, O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish Thou the just. Give us grace and mercy to live wholly and godly. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

Source Notes

Chapter 1: Imprecatory Praying Part 1 of 4
JW01235 | YouTube

Chapter 2: Imprecatory Praying Part 2 of 4
JW01236 | YouTube

Chapter 3: Imprecatory Praying Part 3 of 4
JW01237 | YouTube

Chapter 4: Imprecatory Praying Part 4 of 4
JW01244 | YouTube

Topical Index

Chapter titles and section headings are listed with the pages on which they begin.

A

A Concern for Righteousness p. 36

Addressing the Objection of Condemning Sinners to Hell p. 11

Applications: Crying to God for Justice and Trusting His Favor p. 58

Applications: Learning to Pray Imprecatory Prayers and Living Holy p. 22

C

Closing Prayer p. 23

Conclusion and Prayer p. 42

Contemporary Controversy over Imprecatory Prayers p. 6

Covenantal Sanctions: Blessings and Curses p. 9

D

David's Appeal for God to Act (Verse 1) p. 47

David's Godly Desires p. 77

Defining Imprecatory Praying p. 7

Description of David's Enemies (Verses 2-5) p. 48

E

Exegesis of Imprecatory Requests in Psalm 109:6-8 p. 51

Exposition of Psalm 109:8–15 p. 69

G

Gracious Personal Conduct Despite Fierce Prayers p. 32

I

Imprecatory Prayers as Prayers for Christ's Kingdom p. 15

Imprecatory Praying p. 5

Imprecatory Praying Part 1 of 4 p. 5

Imprecatory Praying Part 2 of 4 p. 25

Imprecatory Praying Part 3 of 4 p. 43

Imprecatory Praying Part 4 of 4 p. 61

Introduction and Connection to Previous Messages p. 5

Introduction and Review p. 25
Introduction and Review of Imprecatory Praying Principles p. 43

N

New Testament Imprecations p. 8
New Testament Parallels to Imprecatory Prayers p. 35
No Tension Between Old and New Testaments p. 26

P

Personal Holiness and Hatred of Sin p. 41
Psalm 109 as the Most Controversial Imprecatory Psalm p. 45
Purposes of Imprecatory Prayers p. 36

R

Reconciling Imprecatory Prayers with Loving Enemies p. 17
Results Left Entirely with God p. 30
Review of Imprecatory Prayer Principles p. 62

T

The Intensity of Psalm 109 and Its Connection to Judas Iscariot p. 46
The Justice of the Imprecations p. 75
The Lex Talionis and Family Involvement p. 63
The Lex Talionis and the Law of Sowing and Reaping p. 49
The Purpose of Imprecatory Prayers: Establishing Justice p. 20
The Saints' Role in Executing Judgment p. 78
The Shocking Prayer of Psalm 104:35 p. 5
The Theological Foundation of Imprecatory Prayers p. 48

Scripture Index

Scripture references identified in chapter readings, headings, and manuscript text are listed with their page locations.

Genesis

Genesis 18:25 p. 21

Exodus

Exodus 20:5 p. 75

Exodus 21 p. 63

Exodus 21:22 p. 49

Leviticus

Leviticus 24 p. 63

Leviticus 24:19-22 p. 49, p. 50

Leviticus 26 p. 9

Numbers

Numbers 10 p. 45

Numbers 12 p. 45

Numbers 16 p. 66

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 2:30 p. 73

Deuteronomy 11 p. 66

Deuteronomy 11:6 p. 67

Deuteronomy 19:16-21 p. 50

Deuteronomy 24:16 p. 64

Deuteronomy 27 p. 48

Deuteronomy 28 p. 9

Deuteronomy 32 p. 27

1 Samuel

1 Samuel 2:36 p. 71

1 Samuel 21 p. 30

2 Kings

2 Kings 14:6 p. 64

Esther

Esther 8:7 p. 66
Esther 9:14 p. 66

Job

Job 37 p. 58

Psalm

Psalm 1 p. 9
Psalm 7 p. 7, p. 8, p. 26, p. 33, p. 36, p. 37
Psalm 7:14-16 p. 76
Psalm 7:9 p. 16
Psalm 9 p. 39
Psalm 18 p. 51, p. 52
Psalm 34 p. 56
Psalm 34:16 p. 75
Psalm 35 p. 7, p. 8, p. 32, p. 37
Psalm 37:25 p. 71
Psalm 37:4 p. 77
Psalm 51:5 p. 75
Psalm 52 p. 30
Psalm 55 p. 7, p. 8
Psalm 55:23 p. 41, p. 56
Psalm 58 p. 7, p. 8, p. 38, p. 78
Psalm 58:11 p. 78
Psalm 59 p. 7, p. 8, p. 38, p. 39, p. 70
Psalm 66 p. 59
Psalm 68:1 p. 47, p. 48
Psalm 68:6 p. 65
Psalm 69 p. 7, p. 8, p. 40
Psalm 83 p. 39, p. 40
Psalm 89:14 p. 21
Psalm 91 p. 56

Psalm 104 p. 11, p. 25
Psalm 104:35 p. 5, p. 6
Psalm 109 p. 7, p. 8, p. 43, p. 45, p. 46, p. 47, p. 51, p. 52, p. 58, p. 61, p. 63, p. 64, p. 65, p. 68, p. 69, p. 72, p. 77, p. 79
Psalm 109:1 p. 58
Psalm 109:10 p. 70
Psalm 109:16-20 p. 76
Psalm 109:28-31 p. 78
Psalm 109:6-19 p. 71
Psalm 109:6-8 p. 51
Psalm 109:8-15 p. 69
Psalm 109:8-19 p. 61
Psalm 112 p. 10, p. 11
Psalm 118 p. 36, p. 37
Psalm 137 p. 7, p. 8
Psalm 139 p. 7, p. 8, p. 41
Psalm 140:8 p. 78, p. 79
Psalm 140:8-13 p. 78
Psalm 149 p. 79

Proverbs

Proverbs 3:33 p. 64, p. 65
Proverbs 9:10-11 p. 56
Proverbs 10:27 p. 56
Proverbs 11:17 p. 65
Proverbs 12:7 p. 65
Proverbs 14:11 p. 66
Proverbs 15:25 p. 66
Proverbs 15:27 p. 64, p. 65
Proverbs 15:8 p. 54
Proverbs 21:27 p. 54
Proverbs 21:4 p. 53, p. 54
Proverbs 22:6 p. 65
Proverbs 24 p. 34
Proverbs 24:17 p. 34

Proverbs 25 p. 34
Proverbs 28:28 p. 57
Proverbs 29:2 p. 57

Isaiah

Isaiah 42:3 p. 22
Isaiah 45 p. 58
Isaiah 51 p. 40
Isaiah 53 p. 12
Isaiah 53:10 p. 12
Isaiah 59:4 p. 22

Jeremiah

Jeremiah 23:5 p. 21, p. 22
Jeremiah 33 p. 36, p. 37
Jeremiah 44:4 p. 15, p. 42

Matthew

Matthew 5 p. 17, p. 18, p. 20, p. 50
Matthew 5:38-42 p. 63
Matthew 7:13-14 p. 12
Matthew 12:20 p. 22
Matthew 13 p. 26
Matthew 13:41 p. 15
Matthew 15 p. 28, p. 29
Matthew 25:46 p. 12

Luke

Luke 15 p. 13

John

John 3:36 p. 15
John 17 p. 12, p. 13
John 17:24 p. 14

Acts

Acts 5 p. 35
Acts 13 p. 35

Romans

Romans 3 p. 17

Romans 12 p. 34

Romans 12:17 p. 19

Romans 13:10 p. 18, p. 19

Romans 14:23 p. 53, p. 54

1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 5 p. 35, p. 36

1 Corinthians 16 p. 8

1 Corinthians 16:22 p. 8

2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 7:1 p. 35

Galatians

Galatians 1:8-9 p. 8, p. 35

Galatians 6:7-8 p. 51, p. 63

2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 1 p. 9

1 Timothy

1 Timothy 1:20 p. 35

2 Timothy

2 Timothy 3:16 p. 20, p. 21

Hebrews

Hebrews 13:20 p. 14

1 John

1 John 2 p. 5

1 John 5:3 p. 19

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