



Imprecatory Psalms

(35, 58, 69, 83, 109, 137)

(57, 58, 59, 109, 137, 139)

Is it okay to curse those who curse you? Why or why not?

How do you respond to: “How can a God of justice let unjust, hurtful things happen”?

Are there times when it’s acceptable to get revenge?

Why “Imprecatory” Psalms?

1. the psalmist asks God to punish his enemies
2. although these psalms are inspired by God, the words come out of the harsh pleas born out of the pain of the psalmists
3. they call on God to repay the wicked for their wickedness.
4. the psalmists are simply asking God to act in line with His character and receive the justice they deserve
5. the enemy is real out there
6. these psalms reveal a God who is not absent
7. they give us words to cry out against our enemy, vent our anger, sadness, fear and despair
8. these psalms aren’t so much a cry for vengeance, but more for justice
9. the Lord administers the justice
10. by asking God to bring justice, the psalmist is able to avoid personal revenge, his hands are not bloodied – David says in 1 Samuel 24:12, “May the Lord judge between me and you, may the Lord avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you.”

Psalm 109

vv. 1-5: words of appeal

vv. 6-15: words of vengeance

vv. 16-19: the psalmist wishes the same evil action done by his enemy would be done to him

vv. 20-25: Who does David want his enemies to receive curses from?

vv. 26-29: David is asking for such hurtful actions upon his enemy to be the result of what?

vv. 30-31: an expression of faith and praise

Psalm 58

vv. 1-2: judges, rulers (the very people who are to administer justice) in that day have become corrupt

vv. 3-5: the nature of some of these people is corrupt

vv. 6-9: David speaks a curse calling down God's judgement

v. 10: the righteous will be glad when this happens

v. 11: people will once again know that God is in control, people can't just get away with anything

Psalm 137

v. 1: the heartbreak of captivity

vv. 2-4: their captors request the Israelites to sing the "songs of Zion"

vv. 5-6: Jerusalem was their highest joy

vv. 7-8: Edom and Babylon are the enemies.

v. 9: (dare we speak these words?)

Can we speak/pray imprecatory psalms today?

Imprecations in the New Testament

- Luke 10:10-16
- Galatians 1:8, 5:12
- 1 Corinthians 16:21-22
- 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10
- 2 Timothy 4:14
- Matthew 23:13, 15-16, 23-24, 27, 29