

better presentation of the total Biblical message but also for the reassurance of our own hearts in the firm teaching of the Scripture.

It is likely that no portions have raised more questions than the imprecatory Psalms. Among these would be Psalms 7, 35, 69, and 109 while others contain imprecatory parts (137, for instance). The fact that these are also marked by a Messianic flavor does not lessen the problem but if anything heightens it. So Psalm 109 has been selected as the focal point of this paper. It is regarded as the fiercest of the lot and generally what may be said about it is valid for the other "cursing Psalms" also. This returns us to our study and the basic antithesis posed in the first paragraph.

An Analysis of Psalm 109

Psalm 109 divides readily into three sections:

vss. 1-5, the problem of the Psalmist

6-20, the prayer of imprecation

21-31, the prayer of dependence.

Each of these may then be discussed briefly to gain a feeling for what the Psalm-writer is saying and why he is saying it.

The first part, vss. 1-5, describe the actions of the Psalmist and the reactions of his enemy. His actions have been basically benevolent but the enemy has repudiated his every gesture of kindness. He (the Psalmist) has been lied against, given personal hatred, and disparaged without cause. When he has loved, he has been opposed. When he has shown good, he has been returned evil. With every expression of lovingkindness

1. Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise;
2. 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.
3. They compassed me about with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.
4. For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.
5. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.