

THE PSALMS IN HUMAN LIFE

PART 3

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PSALM 10

It appears to me as I read this *Psalm* that the writer is somewhat distressed because it seems to him that the Lord is ignoring the injustices committed by the ungodly.

I understand, from what I have read about this *Psalm*, that the historical setting goes back to the time of Nehemiah.

The following verses give some background

Nehemiah 2 v 10 *When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.*

Nehemiah 2 v 19 *But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?*

Nehemiah 4 v 1 *But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.*

Nehemiah 4 v 7 *But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls*

of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth,

Nehemiah 6 v 1 *Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;)*

Nehemiah 6 v 2 *That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief.*

Nehemiah 6 v 12 *And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.*

We cannot doubt that Nehemiah and the people suffered a lot of grief during the time they sought to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem. The history of Israel shows us clearly that to be a people of God does not give immunity from being on the receiving end of persecution. Even Jesus, who came to His own, was not received by all of them, but ridiculed, persecuted and eventually crucified. He asked the Father to forgive the people, but also cried “*My God My God why hast thou forsaken me*”?

One of the areas of complaint that Christian people have, is that the ungodly look as if they prosper in all that they do, whereas the godly at times find life a struggle. In saying this, I do not think that I am being unrealistic about the situations some Christians find themselves in. If I were to say that the Christian life is one that is smooth, and has no rough patches in it, I would be accused of burying my head in the sand, and not facing up to the truth. It is not my intention to do this regarding the situations Christians find themselves faced with.

The big difference between the Christian tackling their problems and difficulties, even though they may ask the question sometimes, “Where are you Lord”? is that they know full well, the Lord will be their shield and defence, and that in the end everything will turn out to their good.

In reading this *Psalm* and giving it some consideration during times of meditation, I notice that it is about how someone saw things as they were, and then penned their feeling; it is a kind of a journal, an account of how the *Psalmist* saw things from a human **perspective**. I think that there are in some instances different **perspectives** to be seen, and that there can be many. However, in this *Psalm* I see three.

- 1. The Perspective of the Persecuted.**
- 2. The Perspective of the Persecutor.**
- 3. The Perspective of God.**

It is worth noting that the *Psalmist* is not complaining about the treatment he is receiving from the Lord, the complaint is against the ungodly, who appear to be ‘getting away with’ their evil deeds.

The *Psalmist* complains to God about the oppression being suffered by innocent people from the wicked, who are described as the hater of the poor, and one who will not seek God; one who does not regard the judgment of God as something to be considered. The ungodly are described as being self-confident, blasphemous and deceitful; striving by subtlety and treachery to destroy those persecuted, and supposes that God will turn a blind eye to his conduct. The *Psalmist* in this poem calls earnestly on God to preserve the poor and humble, and cast down the oppressor. He foresees that his prayer is heard; that judgment will be executed, and the poor delivered.

Let us consider here.

1. THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PERSECUTED

Psalm 10 v 1 *Why, O LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?*

The first issue raised by the *Psalmist* is with regard the position he sees the Lord taking. There is an inability to find the Lord in the situation that is being experienced, and so the only conclusion that can be deduced from what is taking place, is that the Lord is nowhere to be found, this is what has promoted the utterance expressed in **verse 1**.

It is easy to find the sun when there are no clouds. However, even when there are clouds, no matter how thick they are the sun is present above them; the fact is the sun cannot break through! Because there are clouds, it does not mean there is no sun, what the clouds do is indicate that there is something blocking it out. The trials that we encounter as Christians, which make us ask the question “Where are you Lord?” is made very real by what we feel is the absence of God’s presence.

It is strange how trials, tribulation and persecution affect us. When there is an absence of these, we have no problem in relating to the presence of the Lord, but as soon as we hit ‘a low’, it seems we cannot find the Lord.

Let me emphasise that we must never lose sight of the fact that no matter how severe a trial, tribulation, persecution, or sickness is, the Lord is there. May be He cannot be seen, and possibly His presence cannot be felt. However, it is impossible to change what is unalterable, as **Psalm 46 v 1** says “*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble*”.

Our **perspective** is very often out of step with reality. Therefore hold fast to the fact that God is there even though He seems to be afar off.

This *Psalm* is very true to human life because in **Psalm 10 verses 2 to 11** we see.

2. THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PERSECUTOR

Clark in his analysis of this *Psalm* says “The wicked in his pride persecutes the poor”. It is clear that the *Psalmist* sees the persecutor as being: Disrespectful, Proud, Boastful, Malicious, Covetous, Full of Falsehood, Deceitful and Merciless. These are eight characteristics that the *Psalmist* identifies in the persecutor. The energy of the enemy is directed towards those who are the servants of the Lord. What one sees as this *Psalm* is read, is of someone who has no respect and no regard for God, or the people of God.

As far as God is concerned, the wicked think He is nowhere to be seen or found. For no respect, reverence, or regard is given to God.

We have to admit that we see no remorse in those who carry out atrocities against the poor. No regret or sorrow in those who persecute Christians in countries where the gospel is not allowed to be preached freely.

There is no apology from the criminal fraternity for the awful mess society is in because of the misuse of drugs and other banned substances, or for the violent abuse of the human body for their own pleasure. Our **perspective** is no different to that of the *Psalmist* who saw and experienced the same kind of injustices in his day.

There is the failure by the wicked to acknowledge, that in the end, there will be a day of reckoning. This is not even thought about.

As there is no retribution being dished out to them, they feel secure in their lifestyle. They think that as far as God is concerned, He has hid His face, taking no notice of what is taking place. But in reality this is not the case.

Let us now read **Psalm 37 verses 35 to 40** because in these verses we do have a clear **perspective** of the wicked, how they are viewed, and what their end is. There is also the view of the righteous and the security that there is for them in the Lord.

35 I have seen a wicked and ruthless man flourishing like a green tree in its native soil,

36 but he soon passed away and was no more; though I looked for him, he could not be found.

37 Consider the blameless, observe the upright; there is a future for the man of peace.

38 But all sinners will be destroyed; the future of the wicked will be cut off.

39 The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD; he is their stronghold in time of trouble.

40 The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him.

This leads us naturally to **Psalm 10 verses 12 to 18** and the next thing to be considered, which is.

3. THE PERSPECTIVE OF GOD

There is a hymn which has the following words: “God holds the key to all unknown and I am glad; if other hands should hold the key, or if He trusted it to me, I might be sad.”

Our **perspective of God** is that He will undertake on our behalf. There is a confidence we have in God which conveys to our mind, and spirit, that no matter how severe might be the trial we are experiencing, He will lead us through, so that we come out of it without any harm being done to us. He works all things together for good to those who love Him.

It is our knowledge of *Psalms* like this, and the experience of characters we read of in scripture, that give us the confidence to seek Him and to ask Him to intervene on our behalf.

Clark says that “The third part of this *Psalm* is a petition to be freed from the wicked”. The *Psalmist* sees that there is a power that God has, which when exercised is sufficient to release any who are finding life difficult because of the trials they are encountering.

The perspective that we have of God is all important, for if our view of God is distorted, we shall never be in a position to emphasise the positive outcome to any trial, tribulation or persecution encountered.

Romans 8 verses 38 & 39 says

38 *“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

The perspective that we must have is this. No matter how severe things may be in the present, or how they might be in the future, this *Psalm* is conveying to us the all important fact that we have a God we can trust. One, who it appears is not always around when you need Him, yet I have to stress He is there behind the screen. There is not a time when he is not present.

Psalm 46 verses 1 to 5 says

1 *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

2 *Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;*

5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

3 *Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.*

4 *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of*

Make sure your view of everything is right, for in the end all will turn out right.