

Friday - Psalm 10 - Where is God?

When they look at the state of the world and of individual societies, many Christian people might be tempted to ask, 'Why doesn't God do something?' Many of God's people over the centuries have had this same concern when they see wickedness flourishing on every side; people not only doing wicked things but boasting about them and acting as if there were no God.

In this Psalm, there is a vivid portrayal of such a society, a society that could well be the society in which we live today. It was prosperous (v. 5), safe and secure (v.6), insolent, arrogant, and godless (vs 4, 11), deceitful (v. 7), and violent (vs 8-10). Where is God when all these things are happening, especially when bad things are happening to the people of God and are hindering the cause of God and truth?

The psalmist finds an answer to his questioning when he goes to God in prayer. He pleads with God not to forget the afflicted, and then he reflects on the nature of God, and the foolishness of the wicked who thought that God would not call them to account (vs 12-13). The activities of the wicked have not escaped the all-seeing eye of God, and the cause of those who have committed themselves to Him will be vindicated (vs 14-15).

No matter how much it may appear at times that the wicked are in the ascendancy, it is the Lord who is sovereign, and He is working out His own purposes for the honour and glory of His own great name. When His people call to him, He hears their cry and will strengthen them in time of need. God will always vindicate His own cause and magnify His own name.

- Q1. How does the psalmist answer the question about 'where is God'?
- Q2. What will God always do?

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Thursday - Psalm 9 - Giving Thanks.

It is often the case that the circumstances of our lives affect our moods and our attitudes. When everything is going well, we are happy and content, and when we suffer times of trial or adversity, we are miserable and discontent. It is not at all surprising that our circumstances affect us either positively or negatively, but in both good times and in bad, it is important to look at what people sometimes call 'the big picture'.

This is what David is doing in this Psalm. There is no indication that, when this Psalm was written, his life was free of discomfort or distress. Indeed, verses 13 & 14 seem to suggest the opposite. But David looks beyond his present circumstances to the God who is in control of all of the circumstances of his life.

It may be that David was rejoicing over a particular victory that God had given him, or perhaps he was looking back over a longer period and remembering the good hand of God upon him in many differing situations.

It is important that David gave thanks to God for all the wonderful things He does on behalf of His people (v.1), for His defence against the attacks of the evil one (vs. 3- 4), for the ultimate victory of God's church (vs 5-6), and for His kingly rule over all nations (vs 7-8).

David also instructs the people of God on how they should react to the goodness of the Lord: they should trust in the Lord who will always be their fortress and will never forsake them (vs 9-10); they should always praise Him and tell others about Him (vs 11-12); and they should always have the firm assurance that God's cause will triumph and the plans of the wicked will come to nothing (vs 15-20).

- Q1. What should we do in all circumstances, good and bad?
Q2. How should we react to the goodness of the Lord?

Monday - Psalm 6 - Sorrow for Sin.

Psalm 6 is the first of the penitential Psalms in the psalter. All of the penitential Psalms have as their main theme repentance and confession for sin. At the beginning of this Psalm, David recognises that he deserves to be punished for his sin, 'do not rebuke me in your anger'. One of our greatest fears is that God would give us what we deserve, but as David realised, God is gracious and listens to the cry of His people for mercy. It is right and proper that we plead for mercy because mercy is consistent with the character of our God. It is only after his plea for mercy that he asked for healing; forgiveness for sin must always come first.

David was obviously going through a period of great trial, but his response was a correct one, he went to God. Although he asks how long this evidently painful and difficult trial would continue, he nevertheless, continues to be aware of the love that God has for him. He appeals for deliverance on the basis of God's loving-kindness, and this is the only confidence that the child of God can have. If God loved us so much as to give His only son to save us from our sins, it is not likely that He will abandon us to the hand of wicked men, even if we have to pass through times of trial and testing for a period.

At the end of the Psalm, David confidently asserts that God had heard and answered his prayer, even though his circumstances had not changed. It was perhaps the fact that he had experienced so many answers to prayer in the past that gave him this assurance, or perhaps God, by his Holy Spirit, spoke comfort and assurance to his soul.

What a blessing that God can change sorrow into triumph so quickly through prayer.

- Q1. What is the theme of the penitential Psalms?
Q2. On what basis does David ask for deliverance?

Tuesday - Psalm 7 - The Just Judge.

When Abraham was pleading with God to spare the city of Sodom, he based his plea on the justice and righteousness of God when He said, 'shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' (Genesis 18:25). It is this same conviction that motivated David in this 7th Psalm. In complete trust and reliance on the righteousness and justice of God, David appeals to God to judge his cause.

David knows that he had done no wrong to any man, and the statement in vs. 3,4 may well refer to his treatment of Saul when he had the opportunity to kill him but did not do it (1 Samuel 24 & 26), but his enemies had constantly plotted to take away his life. Because of his understanding of the righteousness and justice of God, he confidently expects that God will vindicate his cause, vs 17,18. David also has a clear understanding of the consequences of continuing in sin. Failure to repent would bring the wrath and the punishment of God, vs 12 - 16.

The child of God may not always see the vindication of his righteous life in this world, for many of the saints of God have been put to death for their faithfulness to Christ, but nevertheless, they and their cause will be vindicated, and they will be shown before all the world to have been faithful servants of the king on that great and glorious day of judgement.

So, when believers are faced with the opposition of wicked men and suffer unjustly, they can have the same confidence in a God who always judges justly that David had. They, too, will be able to say with David, 'I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high'.

- Q1. Why does David appeal to God to judge his case?
- Q2. Who will every person have to answer to one day?

Wednesday - Psalm 8 - The Majesty of God.

There is a wonderful revelation of God that is evident to all men and women on the face of the earth, even those who have never heard the gospel of Christ. In spite of the teaching of educated fools who pretend that the universe came into being by some chance happening, and that man is the product of random evolutionary process, the psalmist directs our thoughts to the real beginning of the heavens and the earth, and to man's place in it.

The only response to the wonder of the universe is praise and adoration for the God who created it all out of nothing. It is so clearly evident that even children and babies can see it! How sad that there are so many who consider themselves wiser than God and refuse to see His hand in the glories of stars and the beauties of the earth, which, with all their much-prized intellect, they cannot explain!

The great wonder for the psalmist was not that God had made all these things; it was that such a great, powerful, and almighty God would have such an interest in man, and grant him such an exalted place in the universe that He had made. Not only was man made the crown of the divine creation - made in the image and likeness of God - he has been crowned with glory and majesty through the incarnation and saving work of God's only son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The place of dignity conferred upon the first man in the garden of Eden, and lost because of his sin, has been restored for those who believe through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God's own son.

No wonder, then, that the psalmist exclaims, 'O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth'.

- Q1. Where has God revealed Himself?
- Q2. What should our response be to the beauties of Creation?