

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

The psalmist complains to God of the oppressions which the poor suffer from the wicked man, whom he describes as the hater of the poor, Psalm 10:1, Psalm 10:2; proud, Psalm 10:3; one who will not seek God, Psalm 10:4; and is regardless of his judgments, Psalm 10:5; self-confident, Psalm 10:6; blasphemous and deceitful, Psalm 10:7; strives by subtlety and treachery to destroy the poor, Psalm 10:8-10; and supposes that God is regardless of his conduct, Psalm 10:11. The psalmist calls earnestly on God to preserve the poor and humble, and cast down the oppressor, Psalm 10:12-15. He foresees that his prayer is heard; that judgment will be executed, and the poor delivered, Psalm 10:16-18.

Verse 1

Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? - This Psalm makes a part of the preceding in the Vulgate and Septuagint; and in four of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. It seems to belong to the time of the captivity, or the return of the captives. It was probably made in reference to Sanballat, and the other enemies or the Jews. There is a great similarity between this and Psalm 13:1-6, Psalm 14:1-7, 35, and Psalm 53:1-6: In these, as Calmet remarks, we find the same complaints, the same sentiments, and almost the same expressions. God is represented here as standing at some distance, beholding the oppression of his people, and yet apparently disregarding it.

Verse 2

The wicked in his pride - On no principle of nature or reason can we account for a wicked man persecuting a humble follower of God because of his religion. The devil hates godliness; and the wicked man hates it also because the devil is in his heart.

Verse 3

Boasteth of his heart's desire - Boasts among his fellows how often he has gratified such and such passions, in such and such circumstances. This shows the excess of a depraved and imbruted spirit. He who can boast of his iniquity, is in the broad road to perdition. Should such a one repent and turn to God, it would be equal to any miracle.

Blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth - Or, he blesseth the covetous, he abhorreth the Lord. Those who are like himself he commends, and with them he associates; and they abhor the Lord - they have a mortal hatred against every thing that is holy; and they are under the full influence of that carnal mind which is enmity to the Lord.

Verse 4

Will not seek after God - He is too proud to bend his knee before his Judge; he is too haughty to put on sackcloth, and lay himself in the dust, though without deep repentance and humiliation he must without doubt perish everlastingly.

Verse 5

His ways are always grievous - Or, He is travelling in pain to bring forth iniquity at all times. He is full of lust, or irregular and unholy desires; he conceives and brings forth sin; and sin being finished, time, place, and opportunity concurring, death is soon brought forth.

Thy judgments are far above out of his sight - He is so blinded with sin, that he cannot see the operations of God's hand.

He puffeth at them - He whistles at them; insults God, and despises men. He overthrows them with his breath; he has only to give orders, and they are destroyed. "Bring me the head of Giaffer," said an Asiatic despot. The head was immediately brought! No trial, no judge, no jury; but the despot's will and caprice.

Verse 6

I shall not be moved - I have whatever I covet. I hold whatsoever I have gotten. I have money and goods to procure me every gratification.

Verse 7

His mouth is full of cursing, and deceit, and fraud - What a finished character! A blasphemer, a deceitful man, and a knave!

Verse 8

He sitteth in the lurking places - In this and the following verse there appears to be an allusion to espionage, or setting of spies on a man's conduct; or to the conduct of an assassin or private murderer. He sitteth in lurking places - in secret places; his eyes - spies - are privily set; he lieth in wait secretly: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net. He is like a hunter that lays his traps and gins, digs his pits, sets his nets; and when the prey falls into them, he destroys its life.

Verse 10

He croucheth - Of the scoffing, mocking, insulting, and insidious conduct of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, the fourth and sixth chapters of Nehemiah give abundant proof; and possibly the allusion is to them. The lion squats down and gathers himself together, that he may make the greater spring.

Verse 11

God hath forgotten - He hath cast off this people, and he will never more re-establish them. So Sanballat thought.

Verse 12

Arise, O Lord - Hear their reproaches see their guile, consider thy oppressed people. "Lift up thine hand," threaten them, that they may desist and repent. If they repent not let them be punished.

Verse 13

Wherefore doth the tacked condemn God? - How is it that the Lord permits such persons to triumph in their iniquity? The longsuffering of God leadeth them to repentance.

Verse 14

Thou hast seen it - Nothing can escape thy notice. Thou hast not forgotten thy justice, though judgment is not speedily executed on an evil work. But thou wilt requite it with thy hand. By thy power thou wilt cast down and destroy the wicked.

The poor committeth himself unto thee - To thee he has given up his body, his soul, and his cause; with the full conviction that thou who art the helper of fatherless, will not forget him.

Verse 15

Break thou the arm - Destroy his power, deprive him of his influence, that he may be no longer able to oppress.

Seek out his wickedness till thou find none - All his public haunts and private ways shall be investigated; thou wilt bring all his villanies to light, and continue to inflict punishment, while there is a crime to punish. Or, "Continue to judge and punish transgressors, till not one is to be found." This agrees with the following verse.

Verse 16

The Lord is king for ever - He has, and ever will have, the supreme power.

The heathen are perished out of his land - They are all either cut off or converted. This may refer to the Canaanites. What a mercy that we can say this of our own country! Once it was entirely heathen; now not one heathen family in the whole land.

Verse 17

Lord, thou hast heard - Thou hast not permitted thy tempted and afflicted followers to pray in vain.

Thou wilt prepare their heart - See the economy of the grace of God:

1. God prepares the heart;
2. Suggests the prayer;
3. Hears what is prayed;
4. Answers the petition.

He who has got a cry in his heart after God, may rest assured that that cry proceeded from a Divine preparation,

and that an answer will soon arrive. No man ever had a cry in his heart after salvation, but from God. He who continues to cry shall infallibly be heard.

Verse 18

That the man of the earth may no more oppress - I believe the Hebrew will be better translated thus: "That he may not add any more to drive away the wretched man from the land." Destroy the influence of the tyrant; and let him not have it again in his power to add even one additional act of oppression to those which he has already committed.

How many for the sake of their religion, and because they would serve God with a pure conscience, have, by wicked lords, proud and arrogant land owners, been driven off their farms, turned out of their houses, deprived of their employments, and exposed to wretchedness! While they served the devil, and were regardless of their souls, they had quiet and peaceable possession; but when they turned to the Lord, and became sober and industrious, attended the means of grace, read their Bible, and were frequent in prayer, then the vile man of the earth drove them from their dwellings! In the sight of such Philistines, piety towards God is the highest of crimes. What a dreadful account must these give to the Judge of the Fatherless and the oppressed!