

A Study of the Wisdom Literature

(OT Survey Lesson 258—Psalms 108-109)

Introduction: Both of these psalms express a strong sense of justice toward evil doers, and seek the honor of God in the midst of prevailing wickedness. The first appeals for God’s justice against the Edomites for their opposition to the Israelites. The second appeals for God to punish impenitent evil doers who ignore truth and harm others.

Lesson aim: To understand the spirit expressed by psalms of imprecation.

A psalm of praise and petition for deliverance from the Edomites—Psalm 108:1-13

(Psalm 108 is apparently a compilation of verses from two other psalms. Verses 1-6 are a duplication of Psalm 57:7-11, a psalm written by David during the time of Saul’s persecutions. Verses 7-13 are a duplication of Psalm 60:6-12. Hence, this psalm borrows the praises of the first and the expresses the petition of the latter. It is possible that David put together these verses together to express his own personal worship to God during the time of the Edomite war. Or, it is possible that a later writer might have combined parts of the two psalms as to express hope in God during a similar conflict with the Edomites.)

1. What does the psalmist pledge to do? (v. 1)
2. What does he mean when he says, “I will awaken the dawn”? (v. 2)
3. To what extent would the psalmist praise God? (v. 3) Why? (v. 4)
4. As God was exalted and glorified, what would happen to God’s “beloved”? (v. 5-6)
5. What portions of Palestine had God laid claim? (v. 7-9) *It is this past allotment of the land to Israel that gives the psalmist the confidence to ask the Lord to defeat the Edomites.*
6. What question does David raise in v. 10? Did it appear that God had not gone with His armies? (v. 11)
7. What then does David ask God to do? (v. 12) Why?
8. What hope did David have in God? (v. 12)

A strong imprecatory psalm by David against his enemies— Psalm 109:1-31

(It is common for commentators to think of the imprecatory psalms as unworthy of a believer in God. However, it is perhaps better to see them as strong expressions of righteous indignation toward those who have dishonored God and injured others. In this sense they are the product of a strong sense of justice toward the evil doer. Indeed, God taught his people to love their enemies; but there is a principle of justice that calls for their punishment when they remain impenitent or unaffected by the love of others.)

1. What is the psalmist's plea? (v. 1) How had the wicked treated him? (v. 2-3)
2. In contrast, how had David treated them? (v. 4-5) Had this love effected their repentance?
3. *Perhaps verses 6ff might best be seen as a petition to return upon the heads of those who mistreated others the same kinds of things they had done to others.* What does David ask the Lord to do to the wicked? (v. 6-8)
4. What did David ask concerning the wicked man's family and belongings? (v. 9-13)
5. Why did David petition God to treat the wicked man in this way? (v. 14-16) What did he say the wicked loved? (v. 17-19) What then did he want these curses to be to his accusers? (v. 20)
6. How did David want the Lord to treat him? (v. 21) Why? (v. 22-25)
7. What did David urge the Lord to do? (v. 26-27) What did David want the wicked to understand from the Lord's intervention? (v. 27-29)
8. What did David pledge to do? (v. 30) Why? (v. 31)
9. In whom in the NT did these imprecations find a fulfillment? (See Ac. 1:20) In this sense, David's afflictions might even be typical of the sufferings of what other NT person?