

Preaching the Psalms Series

(18)

Psalm 5

How to Deal with Lies and Slander,

Psalm 5:1-12

Psalm 5:1-12 (NASB)

¹“Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my groaning.

²Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to You I pray.

³In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order *my prayer* to You and *eagerly* watch.

⁴For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.

⁵The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity.

⁶You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.

⁷But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.

⁸O LORD, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me.

⁹There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.

¹⁰Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You.

¹¹But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You.

¹²For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.”

What are the imprecatory psalms?

The [book of Psalms](#) is rich with poetry, praise, joy, sorrow, and more. It was written by several authors, including King David. There are seven major types of psalms found in this book: [lament psalms](#), [thanksgiving psalms](#), [enthronement psalms](#), [pilgrimage psalms](#), [royal psalms](#), [wisdom psalms](#), and [imprecatory psalms](#).

An imprecation is a curse that invokes misfortune upon someone. Imprecatory psalms are those in which the author imprecates; that is, he calls down calamity, destruction, and God’s anger and judgment on his enemies.

This type of psalm is found throughout the book. The major imprecatory psalms are [Psalms 5](#), [10](#), [17](#), [35](#), [58](#), [59](#), [69](#), [70](#), [79](#), [83](#), [109](#), [129](#), [137](#), and [140](#). The following are a few examples of the imprecatory language gleaned from these psalms:

Psalm 5:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You.”

Psalm 17:13 (NASB)

¹³“Arise, O LORD, confront him, bring him low; Deliver my soul from the wicked with Your sword.”

Psalm 79:6-7 (NASB)

⁶“Pour out Your wrath upon the nations which do not know You, And upon the kingdoms which do not call upon Your name.

⁷For they have devoured Jacob And laid waste his habitation.”

Psalm 137:9 (NASB)

⁹“How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones Against the rock.”

When studying the imprecatory psalms, it is important to note that these psalms were not written out of vindictiveness or a need for personal vengeance. Instead, they are prayers that keep God’s justice, sovereignty, and protection in mind. God’s people had suffered much at the hands of those who opposed them, including the Hittites, Amorites, Philistines, and Babylonians (the subject of [Psalm 137](#)).

These groups were not only enemies of Israel, but they were also enemies of God; they were degenerate and ruthless conquerors who had repeatedly tried and failed to destroy the Lord’s chosen people. In writing the imprecatory psalms, the authors sought vindication on God’s behalf as much as they sought their own.

While Jesus Himself quoted some imprecatory psalms ([John 2:17](#); [John 15:25](#)).

John 2:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“His disciples remembered that it was written, “ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME.”

Psalm 69:9 (NASB)

⁹“For zeal for Your house has consumed me, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.”

John 15:25 (NASB)

²⁵“But *they have done this* to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, ‘THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.’”

Psalm 35:19 (NASB)

¹⁹“Do not let those who are wrongfully my enemies rejoice over me; Nor let those who hate me without cause wink maliciously.”

Psalm 69:4 (NASB)

⁴“Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; Those who would destroy me are powerful, being wrongfully my enemies; What I did not steal, I then have to restore.”

He also instructed us to love our enemies and pray for them ([Matthew 5:44–48](#); [Luke 6:27–38](#)).

Matthew 5:44-48 (NASB)

⁴⁴“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.”

⁴⁶“For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?”

⁴⁷“If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?”

⁴⁸“Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Luke 6:27-38 (NASB)

²⁷“But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
²⁸bleed those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”

²⁹“Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.”

³⁰“Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.”

³¹“Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.”

³²“If you love those who love you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners love those who love them.”

³³“If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners do the same.”

³⁴“If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is *that* to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same *amount*.”

³⁵“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*.”

³⁶“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

³⁷“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned.”

³⁸“Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, *and* running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”

The New Testament makes it clear that our enemy is spiritual, not physical ([Ephesians 6:12](#)).

Ephesians 6:12 (NASB)

¹²“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.”

It is not sinful to pray the imprecatory psalms against our spiritual enemies, but we should also pray with compassion and love and even thanksgiving for people who are under the devil's influence ([1 Timothy 2:1](#)).

1 Timothy 2:1 (NASB)

¹“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men.”

We should desire their salvation. After all, God “is patient . . . not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” ([2 Peter 3:9](#)).

2 Peter 3:9 (NASB)

⁹“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

Above all things, we should seek the will of God in everything we do and, when we are wronged, leave the ultimate outcome to the Lord ([Romans 12:19](#)).

Romans 12:19 (NASB)

¹⁹“Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.”

The bottom line is that the imprecatory psalms communicate a deep yearning for justice, written from the point of view of those who had been mightily oppressed. God's people have the promise of divine vengeance: “Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly” ([Luke 18:7–8 NIV](#); cf. [Revelation 19:2](#)).

Luke 18:7-8 (NASB)

⁷“Now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?”

⁸“I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”

Revelation 19:2 (NASB)

²“BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER.”