

Preaching the Psalms Series

(46)

Psalm 10

How to Deal with God's Silence and Delayed Justice, 10:1-18

A prayer for the overthrow of the wicked.

Psalm 10:1-18 (NASB)

¹ Why do You stand afar off, O LORD? Why do You hide *Yourself* in times of trouble?

² In pride the wicked hotly pursue the afflicted; Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.

³ For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, And the greedy man curses *and* spurns the LORD.

⁴ The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek *Him*. All his thoughts are, "There is no God."

⁵ His ways prosper at all times; Your judgments are on high, out of his sight; As for all his adversaries, he snorts at them.

⁶ He says to himself, "I will not be moved; Throughout all generations I will not be in adversity."

⁷ His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness.

⁸ He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the hiding places he kills the innocent; His eyes stealthily watch for the unfortunate.

⁹ He lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair; He lurks to catch the afflicted; He catches the afflicted when he draws him into his net.

¹⁰ He crouches, he bows down, And the unfortunate fall by his mighty ones.

¹¹ He says to himself, "God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it."

¹² Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up Your hand. Do not forget the afflicted.

¹³ Why has the wicked spurned God? He has said to himself, "You will not require *it*."

¹⁴ You have seen *it*, for You have beheld mischief and vexation to take it into Your hand. The unfortunate commits *himself* to You; You have been the helper of the orphan.

¹⁵ Break the arm of the wicked and the evildoer, seek out his wickedness until You find none.

¹⁶ The LORD is King forever and ever; Nations have perished from His land.

¹⁷ O LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will strengthen their heart, You will incline Your ear

¹⁸ To vindicate the orphan and the oppressed, So that man who is of the earth will no longer cause terror.

(Psalm 10:1-18) Introduction: “*Where are the police?*” is the cry when the lawless ravage communities and cities throughout the world. Sadly, even when catastrophic disasters occur, lawless mobs steal from the victims, loot shops and other businesses, and destroy property.

Often, when we see the horrific acts of evildoers upon innocent people, we wonder, “**Where is God? Why doesn’t He do something? Why does He allow this to continue?**”

These questions are asked by David in the tenth psalm. Some scholars believe [Psalms 9 and 10](#) were originally one song. The two share a partial acrostic pattern—each verse begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

In addition, [Psalm 10](#) lacks a specific heading and both address God’s justice upon the wicked. However, other scholars believe that they were intended to be two different songs.

David’s questions remain unanswered at the end of the psalm, as they do today. [Psalm 10](#) teaches us how to respond to the fact that in “**the present age, injustice is rampant.**”

This is, *How to Deal with God’s Silence and Delayed Justice*, [Psalm 10:1-18](#).

- 1. A basic question of life: Why does God seem so far off in times of trouble (evil and wickedness) (v. 1).**
- 2. The cause of trouble and evil in the world: The wicked (vv. 2-11).**
- 3. The answer to the trouble and evil on earth (vv. 12-18).**

2. ([Psalm 10:2-11](#)) The cause of trouble and evil in the world: The wicked.

[Psalm 10:2-11 \(NASB\)](#)

²“In pride the wicked hotly pursue the afflicted; Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.

³For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, And the greedy man curses *and* spurns the LORD.

⁴The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek *Him*. All his thoughts are, "There is no God."

⁵His ways prosper at all times; Your judgments are on high, out of his sight; As for all his adversaries, he snorts at them.

⁶He says to himself, "I will not be moved; Throughout all generations I will not be in adversity."

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¹⁰He crouches, he bows down, And the unfortunate fall by his mighty ones.

¹¹ He says to himself, "God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it."

God is sometimes blamed for the trouble in the world. Some people become upset, even bitter at God because He did not prevent some tragedy from occurring to them or a loved one. But God is not responsible for the rampant evil and injustice that frequently seems to prevail. Wicked people—people who follow the impulses of their fallen nature and the influence of satanic forces—are the source of violence and oppression. Note eight truths that summarize the character and conduct of evildoers:

a. The wicked pursue and take advantage of the weak (poor) ([v. 2](#)).

[Psalm 10:2 \(NASB\)](#)

² "In pride the wicked hotly pursue the afflicted; Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised."

Pride was the original sin against the Lord. Lucifer (Satan), the highest archangel created by God, had a deep desire to exalt himself over God (see below note #1 [Isaiah 14:3-23](#), esp. [12-14](#) for more discussion).

NOTE # 1 Isaiah 14:12-14

[Isaiah 14:12-14 \(NASB\)](#)

¹² "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!

¹³ But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north.'

¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

Lucifer's fall from heaven now takes place ([vv.12-23](#)). In the Hebrew, *Lucifer* literally means *day star* or *morning star*. [Ezekiel](#) says that Lucifer was the highest being ever created by God ([Ezekiel 28:12-15](#)).

[Ezekiel 28:12-15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹² "Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared.

¹⁴ You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you *there*. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.

¹⁵ You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you.'"

a. This morning star was cast from his exalted position from the heights of heaven itself ([v.12](#)).

Isaiah 14:12 (NASB)

¹² “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!”

b. What was the sin that caused such a terrible fall, especially for one who had held such a prominent position and had been exalted so highly? His great sin was pride. In his innermost thoughts, Lucifer had set his heart upon exalting himself as high as the heavens.

He was consumed with selfish ambition...

- to exalt his throne, his position above all the stars of God ([v.13](#); see [Genesis 11:3-4](#))

Isaiah 14:13 (NASB)

¹³ “But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north.’”

Genesis 11:3-4 (NASB)

³ “They said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and burn *them* thoroughly.” And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar.

⁴ They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *will reach* into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

- to be the very one worshipped on the sacred mountain
- to exalt himself above the clouds, to be like the Most High God Himself ([v.14](#))

Isaiah 14:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

Isaiah 14:12-14 (NASB)

¹² “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!

¹³ But you said in your heart, ‘**I will** ascend to heaven; **I will** raise my throne above the stars of God, And **I will** sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north.’

¹⁴ ‘**I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will** make myself like the Most High.’

Note the five “**I wills**” of Lucifer in these verses. Within his innermost thoughts, he was exalting himself above God. Just as people down through history have exalted themselves, ignoring and even denying the LORD, so this morning star was ignoring the LORD and exalting himself. His personal will and ambition were set against God.

c. Lucifer’s fate was sealed: he was brought down to the very pit of hell, that is, to its lowest depths ([v.15](#)).

[Isaiah 14:15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵ “Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.”

d. Lucifer’s end will be most shameful and humiliating ([vv.16-17](#)). People will gaze at him and mock him, reflecting upon his astronomical fall.

[Isaiah 14:16-17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶ “Those who see you will gaze at you, They will ponder over you, saying, ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms,

¹⁷ Who made the world like a wilderness And overthrew its cities, Who did not allow his prisoners to go home?’”

e. This morning star will have a dishonorable burial, for his body will not lie in state like other kings ([vv.18-20](#)).

[Isaiah 14:18-20 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁸ “All the kings of the nations lie in glory, Each in his own tomb.

¹⁹ But you have been cast out of your tomb Like a rejected branch, Clothed with the slain who are pierced with a sword, Who go down to the stones of the pit Like a trampled corpse.

²⁰ You will not be united with them in burial, Because you have ruined your country, You have slain your people. May the offspring of evildoers not be mentioned forever.”

f. Even the king’s offspring will never be mentioned again ([v.20](#)).

[Isaiah 14:20 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁰ “You will not be united with them in burial, Because you have ruined your country, You have slain your people. May the offspring of evildoers not be mentioned forever.”

g. The king’s empire will be utterly destroyed by God Himself ([vv.22-23](#)).

[Isaiah 14:22-23 \(NASB\)](#)

²² “I will rise up against them,” declares the LORD of hosts, “and will cut off from Babylon name and survivors, offspring and posterity,” declares the LORD.

²³ “I will also make it a possession for the hedgehog and swamps of water, and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction,” declares the LORD of hosts.”

END NOTE # 1 Isaiah 14:12-14

Pride is first on God's list of abominations or sins that He passionately hates (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Proverbs 6:16-19 (NASB)

¹⁶ “There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:

¹⁷ Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood,

¹⁸ A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil,

¹⁹ A false witness *who* utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.”

Pride is the root of most sins against other people. The wicked have inflated opinions of themselves, and they do whatever is necessary to satisfy themselves at the expense of others. Plotting and scheming to find ways to exploit other people, they especially prey on those who are weaker than they, those who do not have the resources to defend themselves. David prayed that the wicked would be caught in their own schemes, that the evil they planned for others would come upon them.

b. The wicked brag about their lustful cravings: They praise the greedy and denounce the Lord (v. 3).

Psalms 10:3 (NASB)

³ “For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, And the greedy man curses *and* spurns the LORD.”

People who exploit others are often proud of their selfish, sinful desires, and shamelessly boast of their wicked deeds. They admire and look up to those whose hearts are greedy, just like theirs. They salute and study the ways of those who are most successful in taking what belongs to others for themselves. They glory in the very activities the Lord deeply despises.

c. The wicked are prideful and do not seek the Lord: They give no thought or consideration to God (v. 4).

Psalms 10:4 (NASB)

⁴ The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek *Him*. All his thoughts are, “There is no God.”

Pride is not only exalting self above God and His commands; it is also completely ignoring God, acting as if He does not exist. Every person knows *within* himself or herself that there is a God (Romans 1:19).

Romans 1:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ “Because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.”

According to the Bible, an honest atheist does not exist: every individual who denies the existence of God lies against what God has revealed to him or her *deep*

within. The sin of the wicked is that they do not respond to that revelation; they do not seek to know the God who has been revealed within the inner recesses of their hearts. There is no room for God in their lives, so, as a result, they reach the full potential of their sinfulness. They become wicked abusers of others.

Romans chapter 1 explains their dive into depravity:

Romans 1:21-22 (NASB)

²¹ “For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

²² Professing to be wise, they became fools.”

Romans 1:28-32 (NASB)

²⁸ “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are gossips,*

³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

³¹ without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

³² and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”

d. The wicked seem to succeed despite being haughty and disobeying God’s commandments: They sneer at any who get in their way ([v. 5](#)).

Psalm 10:5 (NASB)

⁵ “His ways **prosper** at all times; Your judgments are on high, out of his sight; As for all his adversaries, he snorts at them.”

Psalm 10:5 (KJV)

⁵ “His ways are always **grievous**; thy judgments *are* far above out of his sight: *as for* all his enemies, he puffeth at them.”

Scholars have disagreed for centuries over the meaning of the word translated in the **KJV** as *grievous* (**yachilu**). Other reliable versions translate it as *prosper*. The point of the verse is this: the wicked man is firm in his pride and disregard for God and His commands. *Thy judgments* (**mishpat**) may refer to God’s divine laws that govern the human race, which are overlooked by the wicked. Or it may refer to God’s justice upon the wicked man, which he seemingly never sees. It appears that he continues unchecked in his evil ways and sneers in contempt upon all who try to stand up to him.

e. The wicked are self-sufficient: They feel happy and secure as though they will be forever trouble-free ([v. 6](#)).

Psalm 10:6 (NASB)

⁶ “He says to himself, “I will not be moved; Throughout all generations I will not be in adversity.”

The wicked are confident in their continued success. They are convinced that they cannot be brought down. **“In his prosperity, the wicked man presumptuously takes to himself the privileges of the righteous. God has promised that they will not be moved ([15:5](#); [16:8](#); [21:7](#); [62:2](#); [112:6](#)).”**

Psalm 15:5 (NASB)

⁵ **“He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.”**

Psalm 16:8 (NASB)

⁸ **“I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.”**

Psalm 21:7 (NASB)

⁷ **“For the king trusts in the LORD, And through the lovingkindness of the Most High he will not be shaken.”**

Psalm 62:2 (NASB)

² **“He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.”**

Psalm 112:6 (NASB)

⁶ **“For he will never be shaken; The righteous will be remembered forever.”**

The wicked are snared by a false sense of security, which is another manifestation of their pride.

f. The wicked have mouths that are full of cursing, lies, and threats—that plot trouble and evil ([v. 7](#)).

Psalm 10:7 (NASB)

⁷ **“His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness.”**

The blackness of the wicked man’s heart spews out of his mouth ([Luke 6:45](#)).

Luke 6:45 (NASB)

⁴⁵ **“The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”**

Five evils that he arrogantly and contemptuously voices are listed:

⇒ **Cursing (*alah*)**—he swears oaths or makes promises he has no intention of keeping.

⇒ **Deceit (*mirmah*)**—craftiness, guile, treachery; this is the word used of Jacob’s swindling of his brother ([Genesis 27:35](#)), and of the Antichrist’s dishonest dealings ([Daniel 8:25](#); [Daniel 11:23](#)).

Genesis 27:35 (NASB)

³⁵ **“And he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing.”**

Daniel 8:25 (NASB)

²⁵ **“And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his**

influence; And he will magnify *himself* in his heart, And he will destroy many while *they are* at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency.”

Daniel 11:23 (NASB)

²³ “After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small *force of people*.”

⇒**Fraud (toke)**—threats and intimidation used to force others to give him his way; oppression.

⇒**Mischief (amal)**—trouble and grievous toil directed at others.

⇒**Vanity or evil (aven)**—“deceptive speaking which leads to sorrow.”

g. The wicked are lawless (**vv. 8-10**).

Psalms 10:8-10 (NASB)

⁸ “He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the hiding places he kills the innocent; His eyes stealthily watch for the unfortunate.

⁹ He lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair; He lurks to catch the afflicted; He catches the afflicted when he draws him into his net.

¹⁰ He crouches, he bows down, And the unfortunate fall by his mighty ones.”

David used two familiar images to depict the threat of evildoers. **First**, they are like a lion waiting to pounce upon its prey (**vv. 8-9^a**).

Psalms 10:8-9 (NASB)

⁸ “He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the hiding places, he kills the innocent; His eyes stealthily watch for the unfortunate.

⁹ **He lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair; He lurks to catch the afflicted; He catches the afflicted when he draws him into his net.**

They sit in the shadows where they wait to seize innocent victims in their mighty jaws and drag them back to their dens where they will secretly devour them. Spying on the helpless from behind the bushes, they patiently wait until they are most vulnerable to attack.

Second, they are like hunters (**v. 9^b**).

Psalms 10:9^b (NASB)

⁹ “**He lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair; He lurks to catch the afflicted; He catches the afflicted when he draws him into his net.**”

They spread their nets, bait them, disguise them, and wait for the innocent to fall into them. Picture all the dishonest financial schemes directed toward the naïve, greedy, and desperate in our world today. Picture the attempts of the substance industries—tobacco, alcohol, illegal drug dealing—to trap people by causing them to become addicted to their harmful products. Picture the pornography and sex industries, which prey upon sinful lust and upon those involved in unfulfilling relationships. Picture the deception of materialism and the advertising industry. Again, and again, the weak fall into their traps (**v. 10**).

Psalm 10:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ “He crouches, he bows down, And the unfortunate fall by his mighty ones.”

h. The wicked think that God will overlook their sin—that God will not hold them accountable ([v. 11](#)).

Psalm 10:11 (NASB)

¹¹ “He says to himself, “God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it.”

Satan is the master of deception, and like the naïve who fall for the wicked man’s schemes, the wicked man himself has fallen into Satan’s snare. Because he does not experience immediate retribution, he thinks that God has overlooked his evil deeds and is not going to hold him accountable. “**He mistakes God’s patience with evil for God’s lack of interest in justice and the innocent victims.**” God’s warnings of judgment are meaningless to him because they are not instantly carried out. This was the trick Satan used against Eve: he tempted her to ignore God’s threat of judgment ([Genesis 3:3-4](#)).

Genesis 3:3-4 (NASB)

³ “But from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’”

⁴ The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die!”

Further, the wicked man thinks he can conceal his evil deeds from God, that God will not see Him. He proudly overlooks God’s omniscience, the fact that He sees and knows all ([Pr. 15:3](#); [Jb. 34:21](#); [Jer. 16:17](#)).

Proverbs 15:3 (NASB)

³ “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.”

Job 34:21 (NASB)

²¹ “For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, And He sees all his steps.”

Jeremiah 16:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ “For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity concealed from My eyes.”

Thought 1. Pride is prone to rear its ugly head even within the hearts of believers. Sinful attitudes that characterize those who have plunged into the depths of wickedness can creep into the lives of believers as well. Look into the mirror of this passage and see if your reflection appears in any of these verses ([James 1:23-25](#)).

James 1:23-25 (NASB)

²³ “For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

²⁴ for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

²⁵ But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.”

Examine yourself for...

1. selfishness
2. arrogance
3. a sense of superiority over others
4. taking advantage of others
5. boasting of things that displease the Lord
6. admiring celebrities or the rich who have prospered through sinful means
7. ignoring the presence of God
8. acting as if God does not see you
9. a false sense of security
10. deceptive, dishonest speech
11. believing you will get by with sin

James 4:6 (NASB)

⁶ “But He gives a greater grace. Therefore, *it* says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”

Psalms 94:7 (NASB)

⁷ “They have said, “The LORD does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob pay heed.”

Proverbs 15:3 (NASB)

³ “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.”

Proverbs 16:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ “Pride *goes* before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling.”

Ecclesiastes 8:11 (NASB)

¹¹ “Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.”