

A Study Guide for Day's article on Imprecatory Psalms

I - Background information

A- Introduction

- 1) What are imprecatory psalms?
- 2) As explained in the second paragraph, what are the three ways of looking at imprecatory Psalms?
- 3) What four points does the author make to support his statements that the above views are unlikely? What are the imprecatory psalms concerned with?

B - Giving Examples

- 1) List the two articles that the author critique for their perspective of the imprecatory psalms? What author does he mention as discussing the place of imprecatory psalms in the NT?

C - Justification of the imprecatory Psalm

- 1) How does God's character influence the way that we see the imprecatory psalms? What implications does God's character have on how we should view the imprecatory psalms?
- 2) The author asks how can it be right to ask God to bring about such vengeance, however, he goes on to explain that vengeance is connected to what two concepts?
- 3) In addition to the psalms associations as mentioned above (Q 6), what other aspects of the psalms help to justify such harsh requests?

II - Looking at Specific Psalms

A – Psalm 58: A Curse against a societal enemy

- 1- Who were the objects of David's imprecations? How is this ironic?
- 2- What kind of people were these judges that David asks God to judge? Would God's judgment of these people benefit the righteous people of God?
- 3- What does the imprecatory psalms base their theology upon? What part of scripture can Psalms 58 be closely compared to?

B - Psalms 137: Curse against a national or community enemy

- 1- What word has been used to characterize the 137th psalm? What do many Christians think about the last three verses?
- 2- What is the historical context of this psalm? How might this justify what was written in the psalm?
- 3- What is Lex Taliones and how does it apply to the imprecatory Psalms?

C – Psalm 109: A Curse Against a Personal Enemy

- 1- How does the situation itself help to justify David's harsh wishes for his enemy? In what way is his asking God to punish his enemy better than not?
- 2- What aspect of the Abrahamic covenant justifies imprecatory Psalms? Does the author believe that this part of the covenant carries over to NT and modern times? What NT examples does the author use to support his point?
- 3- How do OT imprecations and concepts manifest themselves in the NT? At the same time what OT command must we keep in mind?
- 4 – Does Jesus, the very one who commands us to love our enemies use imprecatory psalms? How can imprecatory psalms actually be part of showing love to your enemy?

III – Examples of imprecation

- 1- Describe the incident when Jesus curses something – what did he curse, why did he curse it, and what was the end result?
- 2- Who does Paul curse and what is the curse that he prays is brought against these people?
- 3- Who does Peter Curse and why? Why doesn't the curse come to pass?
- 4- What curse is present in the book of revelations? Who is cursing whom? What do these petitions tell us about the prayers of the saints today?