

# PSALM 10

Category: Deliverance ~ Occasion: Saints Persecuted

Author: Unknown

*1 Why standest Thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest Thou Thyself in times of trouble?*

*2 The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.*

*3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.*

*4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*

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

*6 He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.*

*7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.*

*8 He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.*

*9 He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.*

*10 He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.*

*11 He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: He hideth His face: He will never see it.*

*12 Arise, O LORD: O God, lift up Thine hand: forget not the humble.*

*13 Wherefore doth the wicked condemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.*

*14 Thou hast seen it: for Thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with Thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto Thee: Thou art the helper of the fatherless.*

*15 Break Thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till Thou find none.*

*16 The LORD is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of His land.*

*17 LORD, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble: Thou wilt prepare their heart, Thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:*

*18 To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.*

## **The Point:**

We cry out for God's mercy and judgment when we see the humble and fatherless oppressed by the proud wicked.

## **How do we feel in the recitation of this psalm?**

We wonder at God's "standoffishness" while those who have committed themselves to Him are persecuted. We are also struck by the arrogance of the wicked who sin with impunity, acting as if God doesn't care enough to intervene. Then we cry out in desperation for God's intervention, and by the end of the psalm we can say with confidence, "the Lord has heard our prayer."

## **What does this psalm teach us?**

*Verse 1.* This psalm is written from the perspective of one who is not necessarily receiving persecution himself, but is witnessing the persecution of others. As the martyr is taken by wicked hands to the stake and as the poor are victimized by tyrants, the Psalmist wonders why God is so far away from the scene. Is He disinterested in such sights? While His people are exceedingly troubled will God hide Himself and refuse to get involved? Of course, the answer is, "no." But such language is intended as the strongest of appeals to a heavenly Father who does care for His children.

*Verses 2–11.* The problem is stated simply in the second verse of the psalm. The wicked person, in his pride, persecutes the poor. Again, the contrast between the wicked and righteous is laid out as those who are proud and self-confident and those

who perceive themselves as poor and helpless. The wicked are further described in the succeeding verses by a number of different traits and behaviors. For example, they reward the covetous, or those that want other people's money and property. This is precisely what powerful governments do when they steal other people's money through excessive taxation and redistribute to their coveting and envying friends. We call this form of government "socialism." Moreover, the wicked man does not seek after God, nor is God in any of his thoughts. As you listen to him speak or watch the movies he produces, you get the impression that he is trying hard to pretend that God does not exist. God and His law are not even a consideration for his political decisions.

He is proud. He cannot imagine the possibility of his own demise. Assuming godhood for himself or for his civil government, he will produce great strife and war with his enemies (v. 5). This is precisely what lies at the root of the incitation of war between nations.

His mouth is filled with cursing, deceit, and fraud. Thus, by the words of his mouth he destroys relationships and violates the law of God. He devises ways to murder the innocent—especially those too weak to defend themselves (such as small babies and the elderly). He usually does this secretly and cloaks his actions in nice-sounding words and scientific language. In our world, this is the man who cloaks child-murder in words like "choice," "every child a wanted child," and "fetal tissue." In all of his wickedness he assumes that God either cannot see what he is doing or doesn't care about it.

*Verses 12–14.* Now the Psalmist turns back to God and appeals for His intervention. "Are You going to let these wicked men get away with what they are doing? Is it alright with You if these men despise You?" Do not take these questions as sarcastic or demeaning. These are not faithless rhetorical devices, for the Psalmist really does believe in God's ultimate judging hand as demonstrated by the following verses. The obvious answer to

such inquiries is, “Of course, God will not let them get away with their wicked impieties.”

We cry to God not merely to judge the wicked, but to help the poor and humble. These are described in verse 14 as those who have committed themselves to God. They are counting on God and truly believe that He will not let them down in the day of trouble.

*Verse 15.* Here is a brief imprecatory plea that God would break the arm of the wicked and evil man. It is a reference to incapacitating him from performing more evil deeds, to strip him of his power and influence to accomplish the wicked things he has planned. It is wickedness that is grieving to the saint, and his heart’s desire is an end of this wickedness.

*Verses 16–18.* The psalm ends fittingly with a true confession of what we believe about God and about His holy justice. Yahweh is King forever and ever! What are kings but those who have the power to establish law and then punish those who break it with impunity? Indeed, God is King and He will judge on the basis of His righteous law. The nations that reject God are as good as dead, for God will most certainly wipe them off the face of the earth.

Whereas the first verse asks God if He is hiding Himself from the troubles of His saints and the persecuting antics of the wicked, the final verses declare, with full confidence, that God has heard the heart cry of the humble and will judge their cause.

## How do we apply this psalm?

1. While the wicked count on God’s non-involvement in their lives, while they hang nothing on God, the humble hang everything on God. They are counting on God to finally deliver them in the day of trouble, and they are willing to wait until the last hour for that to happen. Which side are you on? Are you the proud and rebellious one who doesn’t need God, or are

you the one who knows his weakness and helplessness and your need for God's salvation? God saves the humble.

2. We are called to believe that God is perfect in His justice and mercy. His timing is perfect. It may appear that God is hiding from us in the day of trouble as fifty years go by and the church in China continues to suffer horrendous persecution. But God is above and beyond time and sovereign over all of these things. Be assured His apparent delay does not mean that He is unaware of our trials. Faith is confident that God knows and God will act in His time to preserve the humble and destroy the proud wicked who reject Him.

### **How does this psalm teach us to worship God?**

1. Worship includes consideration of our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world. After reviewing the fierce persecution against Christians presently taking place in North Korea or Iran, it would be good to recite a psalm like this one.

2. It is legitimate to present arguments to the Lord in worship, prayer, and song. We may appeal to God's promises and God's character or we may appeal by taking note of the pride and gross impunity of the wicked. Our worship may involve an urgent and reverent insistence that God intervene and save the helpless from destruction.

### **Questions:**

1. Name two Deliverance psalms.
2. How does the Psalmist describe the humble and the proud?
3. What is the situation in which we might read this psalm?
4. What is the imprecatory statement in this psalm?
5. What is the difference between the first verse of the psalm and the last two verses?

## Family Discussion Questions:

1. Are we really certain that God is with us and cares about us as we go through trials?
2. When we see unrighteousness in the world around us, do we seek justice? Do we desire it? Do we cry out to God for justice? And do we trust that God will work perfect justice in His time?

## PSALM 11

Category: Faith ~ Occasion: Enemy with the Upper Hand

Author: David

*To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

*1 In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?*

*2 For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.*

*3 If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*

*4 The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men.*

*5 The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth.*

*6 Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.*

*7 For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness: His countenance doth behold the upright.*

## The Point:

When the enemy has the upper hand we will trust in God who tries the righteous and judges the wicked.

## How do we feel in the recitation of this psalm?

We feel threatened by the wicked. We can, as it were, feel the hot breath of the Devil himself on the back of our neck. With confidence, we say that God is in absolute control of all men and will judge with perfect righteousness.

## What does this psalm teach us?

*Verses 1.* David begins the psalm with a personal faith statement as he confesses, “I put my trust in the Lord.” Some psalms speak of the humble in the third person, “they,” and some speak of the whole body of believers using the first person plural “we.” This psalm begins with the first person singular, “I,” in a personal testimony of faith and then moves to the third person plural, “*the righteous.*”

*Verses 2–3.* The threats to the soul of the righteous are outlined in the next two verses. Somebody has suggested that David should flee to the mountain as a bird where he will be free from predators: for the wicked seem bent on destroying the righteous man, and they appear to have the upper hand. In fact, they have already plotted the destruction of the righteous and now are ready to implement their plans. When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? When the foundations of law are corrupted, when men in power no longer fear God, and when God is no longer a consideration in schools and in the media, what can the righteous do? Whereas some have suggested that he flee to the mountains, David has another strategy—he will trust in God.

*Verses 4–7.* Yahweh is in absolute control and He is in His holy temple. We can be sure that He will judge the wicked with absolute precision in righteousness. But He is also with His church, the temple of the living God. Regardless of what wicked rulers will attempt to do to the righteous, God is with His people. He carefully inspects every detail of the thoughts, words, and actions of men and He will judge the wicked. Even the trials that come upon the righteous by the hands of wicked men are God’s trials. He uses them to confirm His people and to strengthen them. No persecution that the wicked bring upon the righteous is wasted. Amazingly, God uses these trials for the good of His people, and yet, at the same time, He will judge the wicked for bringing them on His precious church.

Some people are uncomfortable to read in verse 5 that God hates those who love violence. How do we explain the fact that God loved the world so much He gave His Son, while at the same time He hates the wicked? The Bible teaches both facts. Has God in the New Testament changed His relationship with men from hate to love? This is not possible, for the New Testament confirms His hatred of Esau (Rom. 9:13). Moreover, God's plan to send His Son and His love for the world was effective in the Old Testament as well. We must conclude that God's love for the world He created will result in the redemption of that world. But as for that specific part of His creation known as "the wicked," or those who love violence and will not repent of their rebellion, He cannot love them. The destruction of the wicked is described in verse 6 in dreadful terms—by fire and brimstone and a horrible hurricane force.

Hatred and love are contrasted in the last few verses. Hatred shrinks away from the object of hatred, while love is drawn to that which it loves. Hatred wants to put an end to that object of hatred, while love wants to promote and reward its object. Thus, God hates wickedness (and will one day see its eternal destruction), but He is drawn to righteousness. He turns His face away from the wicked and He can not bear to look at them. But He is drawn to the upright, those who have, by His grace, trusted in him, and repented of their sin.

### **How do we apply this psalm?**

Our lives are perpetually subjected to the threats of our enemies: the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Thus, our lives and souls are constantly in danger. Usually these threats are subtle and cannot be easily discerned. How often the righteous fall into the traps laid out for them by these tempters! During times of trouble and temptation we must trust in God, for He has a purpose for everything we experience. He is testing us and strengthening us through our trials. But in the end we know that the wicked man is under the constant, all-seeing eye of God who will judge him with a perfect judgment.



## How does this psalm teach us to worship God?

1. We express our utter confidence in God in worship, confessing that we really do trust in Him. Here is a psalm for the soul who rides in his tiny boat over the sixty foot waves through the storms of life. Charles Spurgeon rightly entitled this psalm “The Song of the Steadfast.” If the man of faith is headed for the worst trial of his life, he will sing a psalm like this one, all the while believing every word of it.

2. Some of the heart confessions of the psalms are personal and use the word “I,” and others are more corporate and express the faith of the church congregation. Such psalms would use the first person plural pronouns like, “we” or “us.” This teaches us that worship is both personal and corporate. In worship, we speak for ourselves and we speak for the corporate body of the church.

### Questions:

1. Name two Faith psalms.
2. Name an Imprecatory psalm.
3. Somebody has made a suggestion to David as he writes this psalm. What did they suggest to him and what is David’s response?
4. How are the foundations destroyed in a nation or group of people?
5. How can God hate the wicked and yet still love the world so much that He gave His Son to die?

### Family Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever felt the hot breath of the enemy on your neck? Have you felt intimidated when you were trying to witness the Gospel to a friend or neighbor? Do you ever fear persecution? How should we deal with these fears?
2. When you say, “I trust in the Lord,” do you really mean that? Is it a personal trust in God? It is important that we trust in the Lord as a family but it is also critical that each of us personally place our trust in God for salvation.

# PSALM 12

Category: Deliverance ~ Occasion: Spiritual Decline

Author: David

*To the chief Musician upon Sheminith, A Psalm of David*

*1 Help, LORD: for the godly man ceaseth: for the faithful fail from among the children of men.*

*2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.*

*3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things:*

*4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail: our lips are our own: who is lord over us?*

*5 For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD: I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.*

*6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*

*7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, Thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

*8 The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.*

## The Point:

Despite the arrogance and evil power of the wicked, God will intervene to save the humble and needy.

## How do we feel in the recitation of this psalm?

We are distressed at the spiritual decline we see around us, the proud boasting of the wicked, and the rarity of genuine faith. But as the psalm proceeds we gather strength and faith from God's promise of salvation, the purity of His words, and His powerful preservation of His church throughout the generations.

## What does this psalm teach us?

*Verse 1.* The Psalmist begins with a cry for help in a time of spiritual decline. When enthusiasm for God's worship wanes or when sound messages from God's Word are replaced with fluffy, vacuous, twenty-minute vignettes, it would seem that the godly are failing. Throughout our country we find symptoms like this. There are still many large churches and the appearance of godliness, and yet the net effect of all of this appears to be of little account—for the biblical faith, the biblical family, and freedoms continue to disappear. Among thousands of families in our neighborhoods and towns, it is hard to find a single godly man who will disciple his children each day in God's Word. This is the complaint of the first verse and many in the history of the Christian church find this intensely relevant.

*Verses 2–3.* Speaking even more specifically in the following verses, it seems as though everybody loves to listen to vain, empty words. When true words are spoken about our national sins, God's law, repentance and faith, most men instinctively turn away from such sharp light. They reject the truth. They would rather have their ears tickled by smooth, empty talkers. They want a message of some kind of faith without the hard call for repentance. They would prefer blessing without obedience to the covenant, and they would have a Savior without a Lord. They want to be told they are worth something in and of themselves, outside of a right relationship with God. With a double heart and flattering words they deceive themselves that they may feel good about themselves as they make their way down the path to hell.

Verse 3 indicates how Yahweh feels about such empty words. Have you ever seen somebody's tongue cut out of his mouth? If men were to do such things, we would call it cruel and unusual punishment. But the thrice-holy God who created the vast universe and rules it with perfect justice may cut out the tongues of those who speak deceit. Such preachers of empty, flattering words should take note. Besides fearing the removal