

Dear Brother Faull,

I would like for you to discuss the imprecatory Psalms. They seem contrary to the teaching and the spirit of Christianity.

It seems that the Old Testament is inferior to the New Testament, as there is a cry for vengeance by the writer of the Psalms.

Please address this subject.

Answer:

So that my reader may see what my querist is speaking of, let's look at a few of these statements from the Psalms.

It may be better to speak of imprecatory statements in the Psalms than imprecatory Psalms, for such statements appear in many Psalms. (This sermon is available on tape or CD, which can be ordered at Summit.)

Here are some of many imprecatory statements.

- ↳ **Psalms 35:5-6**
- ↳ **II Samuel 24:16**
- ↳ **Psalms 55:15,23**
- ↳ **Psalms 58:6-11**
- ↳ **Psalms 69:22-28**
- ↳ **Psalms 109:4-20**
- ↳ **Psalms 139:19-22**
- ↳ **Psalms 137:8-9**

What are we to keep in mind about these verses?

FIRST

Remember, mostly, David wrote these and they are not like him in his person, for he in life was a very forgiving man.

Did he not forgive Saul, Shimei, Mephibosheth? This forgiving nature of David was seen in his behavior toward personal enemies, but his prayer here was the prayer of a

man who wanted judgement against God's enemies. What did David do to the man whom lifted his hand against God's anointed King Saul? He had him killed.

SECOND

Some of these are prophecies that the inspired Prophet David predicted as a prophet of what would happen to the enemies of Israel.

Psalms 55:15-23

Psalms 35:5-6 58:6-11

THIRD

Some of these are the words of Jesus that were foretold in the mouth of the prophet. The Psalm in which they appear are Messianic. That is, they are predicting what would be done to Jesus and what would happen to those who rejected the Messiah when He came.

Psalms 69 or **Psalms 109:1-4**

FOURTH

One must remember these Psalms were spoken by God's King in a theocracy. God was King and David was the anointed on earth. He was the servant and what they did against him was actually against God. He is telling what men whom commit treason against God is worthy of for their rebellion.

FIFTH

Some of them, David just turned the end of the wicked over into the hands of the God of justice rather than he himself having to deal with it as King.

SIXTH

They are pleas to God to administer justice on evil doers for he wants a God of justice not to forget that those who reject God are worthy of death.

Psalms 139:19-22

SEVENTH

Do not forget that in the midst of the prayer for their doom, is a prayer for the one he is praying against.

Psalms 109:4-5

EIGHTH

Do not forget that even in the Old Testament there are statements demanding forgiveness and help to personal enemies.

Leviticus 19:18, Exodus 23:4-5, Psalms 24:17

NINTH

These were for public prayer and praise for the worship of God. They were hyperbole seeking to teach the attitude of the desire for the avenging and justice against the enemies of God. **Psalms 6:6, Psalms 79:12**

TENTH

They were written to show God's people that they could trust and expect God to defend His people. **Psalms 55:23**

ELEVENTH

Some of these Psalms are quoted in the New Testament.

Psalms 69:22-23

Romans 11:9-10

Psalms 69:9

Romans 15:3

Peter quoted **Psalms 69:25** and **Psalms 109:9** when Judas' successor was chosen. **Acts 1:20**.

TWELFTH

Do not forget that in the New Testament there are imprecatory statements.

- ◆ **I Corinthians 16:22** - accursed....devoted to destruction.

- ◆ **Galatians 1:8-9, 5:12**

- ◆ **II Timothy 4:14**

- ◆ **Revelation 6:10**

In light of these thoughts, and someone wiser could do a better review on this, the imprecatory statements in the Psalms are neither ungodly, unchristian, nor even inferior thinking.

We need to see God in this light.

- a. God's enemies are our enemies and we need to count them as such.

- b. God will eventually avenge His people.

- c. God is a God of Justice, and we can expect that He will execute His enemies.

- d. We may, in godly indignation, look forward to the day that those who resist God's Will, ways, and works, will suffer the wrath of God's justice.