



Psalm 94

WHY DOES EVIL SEEM TO PROSPER?

The tone of Book IV in the Psalter is clearly different from the preceding message of Book III. Instead of a repeated rehearsal of the nation's devastation at the hand of international enemies, this book represents a more mature perspective on the "permanent dwelling-place" and the "perpetual dynasty" promised in the Davidic covenant. Book IV concentrates on the ancient reality that God himself is his people's dwelling-place and that Yahweh is their King...a perspective that has been fostered by stretching the people's faith through their experience of the exile. ...Greater trust must be placed in the eternal kingship of Yahweh, who will be true to his covenantal promise to David.

—O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*

An overview of the themes of the five books of the Psalms:

- Psalms 1-41: Opposition to God's Anointed King
- Psalms 42-72: Communication to the Nations
- Psalms 73-89: Devastation and Despair of God's People
- Psalms 90-106: Faith in God's Sovereign Kingship
- Psalms 107-150: Consummation and Celebration!

To a people suffering under oppression and struggling with their faith, Book IV repeats one theme over and over, "The LORD reigns" (93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; 103:19 cf. 1 Chr. 16:31).

THE PSALMIST'S STRUGGLE — How long will You let those who are evil celebrate their sin and succeed in their plans?

1. They are _____ (94:2).
2. They are _____ their sin (94:3).
3. They are _____ arrogant words (94:4).
4. They are _____ Your people (94:5).
5. They are getting away with _____ (94:6-7).
6. They have _____ their evil (94:20-21).

When evil is in power, growing stronger, and succeeding in their plans, it not only brings pain and suffering to God's people but also creates a crisis of faith. *Is God truly sovereign?*

The theme of God the Judge is closely allied with that of God the King. —Alexander Maclaren

Revenge is an act of passion, vengeance of justice; injuries are revenged, crimes avenged.

—Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-84)

In a world of violence it would not be worthy of God not to wield the sword; if God were not angry at injustice and deception and did not make the final end to violence, God would not be worthy of our worship.

—Miroslav Volf

Triumph. Heb, *alaz*, "to jump for joy, celebrate" (Ps. 28:7; 96:12).

God seems not only to be letting them continue their evil acts but also to be jubilant in their power.

—Allen P. Ross

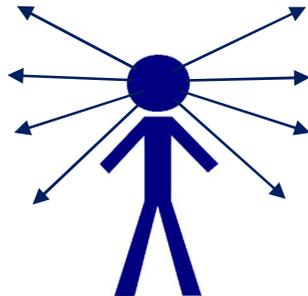
The root cause of human problems is arrogance, which then leads to other problems, the end of which is oppression.

—John Oswalt

They attempt to legalize their wicked course by passing statutes that would regularize what they are doing. —H. C. Leupold

THE PSALMIST'S CONFIDENCE — The LORD reigns!

- In my doubts, I am reminded that God _____ and _____ all the motives and actions of all people and that all self-centered thoughts and plans are ultimately futile (94:8-11).
- In my difficulties, I am reminded that God uses suffering to _____ me and to teach me to rest in Him. God will never forsake His people and righteousness will prevail in the end (94:12-15; cf. Prov. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:1-11).
- In my anxieties, I am reminded that God will strengthen me, His _____ will hold me up, and His comforts can delight my soul (94:16-19; cf. Phil. 4:4-13; Rom. 5:1-5).



- In my anger, I am reminded that God is the righteous Judge who is coming to judge the earth. The sin of those who reject God will ultimately come back on their own heads and those who find refuge in Him will be saved (94:20-23; Ps. 2:12). Thus, I can live in peace and display God's love (cf. Rom. 12:17-21).

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What are you anxious about? What things are distracting your mind and pulling you toward fear and worry? How is knowing and trusting in God's steadfast love an antidote to anxiety?
- What are you angry about? What is boiling your blood? How can knowing and trusting in God's justice enable you to live in peace?
- What do you think God is trying to teach you right now in the midst of the challenges and difficulties that you are going through?

The three best safeguards against falling into sin are to remember, first, that there is an ear which hears everything; secondly, that there is an eye which sees everything; thirdly, that there is a hand which writes everything in the Book of Knowledge, which shall be opened at the Judgment. —J. M. Neale

I have learned to kiss the waves that throw me up against the Rock of Ages. —C. H. Spurgeon

Anxieties. Hebrew, *sar'apim*, "thoughts which divide and distract the mind" (Gesenius).

If God, by the affliction that is upon thee, shall teach thee how to loathe sin more, how to trample upon the world more, and how to walk with God more, thy afflictions are in love.

...If God by afflictions shall teach thy proud heart how to bow more low, thy hard heart how to grow more humble, thy critical heart how to grow more charitable, thy carnal heart how to grow more spiritual, and thy self-willed heart how to grow more quiet, thy afflictions are in love.

...If God shall teach thee by afflictions how to live to Christ more, how to lift up Christ more, and how to long for Christ more, thy afflictions are in love.
—Thomas Brooks (1608-80)

Hell's punishment fits sin's crime because sin is divorce from God. The punishment fits the crime because the punishment is the crime. Saying no to God means no God. ...Hell is sin eternalized. Hell is not so much an external punishment added to sin, as it is sin come to full fruition.

—Peter Kreeft