

# “LORD, WHERE ARE YOU WHEN IT HURTS?”

## Psalm 10

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### INTRODUCTION

There is no reason to question Davidic authorship of this psalm. David composed both 9 & 10 since psalm 10 is in no way inferior to 9, and the language and thought structure have many similarities; these marks of similarity are too many to regard as a coincidence. Yet, the psalms are too different to have originally been one as many have maintained: thanksgiving vs. supplication, different personality—author stays in background in 10, different direction—internal foes mainly in 10 instead of the nations, no musical notation for 10.

This psalm has a quite extensive description of the wicked that are in opposition to the kingdom of God. If some complain that David is too harsh in his position toward the wicked here, note that these men do not seem to have been very likely prospects for conversion. This psalm approaches the problem with the wicked differently than Psalms 37 & 92—which show that “the prosperity of the ungodly is short-lived” (Leupold, 119). Here the “Psalmist calls upon God to chastise the unbridled insolence and scorn of the wicked” (Perowne, 164). It seems here “as if God winked at evil.” Here we see the **prosperity (5), security (6), insolence (2-4, 11), deceit (7), and violence (8-10) of the wicked.**

David focuses on the gravity of the current situation for the helpless and weak godly ones as caused by the rampant wickedness of “wicked” men. The term occurs **five times** in the chapter (vv. 2, 3, 4, 13, 15) and “wickedness” once—v. 15; but also compare “mischief” and “iniquity” --v. 7, and “evildoer --v. 15). The characteristic of these “wicked” persons that stands out in this chapter is “*arrogance* (v. 2—coming from a root that conveys the idea of “swelling”. Other terms showing such arrogance are “boasts” (v. 3), “haughtiness” (v. 4). It is evident that David has a studied acquaintance with these “wicked”; he knows their character and motives and realizes how “deep-seated their iniquity is. This may well be incorrigible wickedness.”

These wicked “add God-ward insult [“Curses” and “spurns”—v. 3; “there is no God”—v. 4; “God has forgotten, He has hidden His face; He will never see it”—v. 11; “spurned God”; “thou wilt not require it”—v. 13] to man-ward injury. Kidner observes that they protest too loudly of their impunity before God—such protests betray a basic inner insecurity (p. 71—see vv. 4, 6, 11, 13). When they say, “*There is no God,*” this is merely “bravado”, for their **self-talk**—vv 11, 13: “God has forgotten” etc., and “Thou wilt not require it”—**contradicts** the statement. However, their deeds and choices are in harmony with such godless language, for the word “thoughts” in v. 4 is really the word “schemes”—same word as used in v. 2. Kidner remarks, and such a comment is true of most supposed “atheists, “**He is a practicing atheist, if hardly a convinced one.**”

**Man-ward injury:** He basically thinks of himself and practically worships himself as seen in the usual meaning of “boasts” in v. 3—“praises.” He concerns himself with only “his soul’s desires (v. 3). Therefore

these wicked oppress the defenseless with impunity (2a, 8, 9, 10). The various terms used for the oppressed ones are: “afflicted” (v. 2, 9—2 times, 12; “humble” v. 17; “innocent” v. 8; “helpless” vv. 8, 10, 14; “orphan” vv. 14, 18; “oppressed” v. 18. The word for “helpless” is found only in this psalm; the variety and uniqueness of these words in this combination shows “the pathetic state of the victims” (p. 71 Kidner).

One of the wicked man’s favorite tools is his tongue (v. 7). With it he uses:

1) *Curses*, 2) *“deceit”*, 3) *“oppression”*, 4) *“mischief”*, and 5) *“wickedness.”*

**The Believer’s Concern in light of all this:**

- God seems to “stand afar off” (v. 1).
- The tyrant’s “ways” seem to “prosper at all times” (v. 5).
- God’s “judgments” seem to be “on high away from his sight” (v. 5). David here intends **“to touch the nerve of this problem and keep its pain alive, against the comfort of our familiarity, or indeed complicity, with a corrupt world”** (Kidner, p. 71).

I. THE TYRANT’S BOAST (vv. 1-11)

David begins by expressing the problem: v. 1.

- Yahweh stood afar off “in the distance.”
- Yahweh “hid himself in troublous times” [or “hid His eyes”—often accompanies this word—or covered His ears so as not to hear—Lam. 3:56.]
- The same expression occurs of men who either 1) do not deal with wickedness (Lev. 20:4; I Sam. 12:3) or 2) do not come to the aid of those in misery (Pr. 28:27).
- Compare similar passages: 22:1, 11, 19; 35:22; 38:11, 21.
- His is not “a complaining murmuring” but rather “an ardent desire” that Yahweh would act in accord with “His nature and His promise” (Del. p. 961).
  - A. Insolence (2-4, 11),
  - B. Prosperity (5),
  - C. Security (6),
  - D. Deceit (7),
  - E. Violence (8-10).

II. THE VICTIM’S PRAYER (vv. 12-18)

A. Request for Divine Intervention (12-15)

B. Assurance of Divine Response (16-18)

Kidner notes that the victim’s “faith keeps breaking through” (p. 72).

CONCLUSION

God will arise, lift up His hand, not forget (12), He sees and beholds (14), He helps (14), He breaks the arm of the wicked and evildoer (15), He seeks out wickedness until none can be found (15), He is King forever (16), He has heard, He will strengthen and incline His ear, He vindicates the orphan and oppressed (18):

**That men of the earth may cause terror no more (18).**