

Jonah 4 – Imprecatory Psalms

Jonah was influenced by legalism of Jewish pride. He reflected his cultural prejudice against Gentiles. Jonah knew God's character but did not reflect God's heart. Exodus 34:1-14. Jonah had a me-centered Gospel. It was all about him, his reputation, his fame, his popularity, his position in the eyes of others.

Jonah had limited revelation. This was before Jesus.

- He knew no Jesus
- No Isaiah 53
- No Lamentation 3:22-23
- No Romans 3:23 and 6:23
- No John 3:16
- No Calvary's cross, no lamb of God
- No love your neighbor
- No forgive them they know not
- No "Go ye into all the world..."
- No James 1: If we say we have no sin..
- No James 2:13 mercy rejoices over judgment.

Jonah - "Imprecatory Psalms"

Reflect a desire for God's holiness and defeat of unrighteousness. It's never personally directed, but at a general class of "the ungodly."

Imprecations are expressions provoked by the horror of sin. David prayed this way because of his deep sensitivity to the ugliness of evil.

Many believe these "prayers" (if it is even legitimate to call them "prayers") are beneath the dignity of the Christian and are not to be viewed as examples for us to follow.

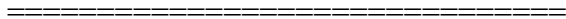
They are, rather, the expressions of man's sinful desire for vengeance on his enemies.

These psalms, so some have said, are not God's precepts but man's "defective prayers". They are "cold-blooded" expressions of "malignant cruelty" and must never be regarded as inspired of God.

Scriptures Against Imprecatory Psalms

- Deuteronomy 33:11 God has no delight in the death of the wicked.
- 2 Peter 3:9 He is not willing (desiring) that any should perish but all should come to repentance.
- Matthew 5:44 Love your enemies.
- Luke 23:34 Father forgive them they know not what they do.
- James 2:13 Mercy rejoices over judgment
- John 3:16 For God so loved the world...
- Ephesians 5:1 Be imitators of God as dear children
- Lamentations 3:22-23
- Romans 3:23/ 6:23

"Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."



EXAMPLES OF IMPRECATORY PSALMS

“Make them bear their guilt, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; because of the abundance of their transgressions cast them out, for they have rebelled against you” (Psalm 5:10).

“Let them be put to shame and dishonor who seek after my life! Let them be turned back and disappointed who devise evil against me! Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the Lord driving them away! Let their way be dark and slippery, with the angel of the Lord pursuing them! For without cause they hid their net for me; without cause they dug a pit for my life. Let destruction come upon him when he does not know it! And let the net that he hid ensnare him; let him fall into it- to his destruction!” (Psalm 35:4-8)

“Let those be put to shame and disappointed altogether who seek to snatch away my life; let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who desire my hurt! Let those be appalled because of their shame who say to me, ‘Aha, Aha!’” (Psalm 40:14-15)

“For their crime will they escape? In wrath cast down the peoples, O God!” (Psalm 56:7)

“Pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you, and on the kingdoms that do not call upon your name!” (Psalm 79:6)

Honestly, that’s only a fraction of the Psalms in which prayers for the judgment of God’s enemies are found. Here is a more complete list, in case you’re interested in reading all of them: Psa. 5:10; 6:10; 7:6; 9:19-20; 10:2,15; 17:13; 28:4; 31:17-18; 35:1,4-8,19,24-26; 40:14-15; 41:10; 54:5; 55:9,15; 56:7; 58:6-10; 59:5,11-14; 63:9-10; 68:1-2; 69:22-28; 70:2-3; 71:13; 79:6,10-12; 83:9-18 (cf. Judges 4:15-21; 5:25-27); 94:1-4; 97:7; 104:35; 109:6-19,29; 119:84; 129:5-7; 137:7-9; 139:19-22; 140:8-11; 141:10; 143:12.

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/10-things-you-should-know-about-the-imprecatory-psalms.html?amp=1>

We can't dismiss the problem by insisting such prayers are found only in the Old Testament or that they reflect a sub-standard morality inappropriate to the New Testament Christian. Both testaments present the same perfect and exalted standard for life. God's moral law is immutable and is everywhere the same. We must be careful never to pit Scripture against Scripture, as if to suggest that the OT calls for a different, perhaps inferior, ethical response to one's enemies than does the NT.

Furthermore, one must address the fact that in the NT similar "imprecations" on the enemies of God are found (see especially Luke 10:10-16; Galatians 1:8; 5:12; 1 Corinthians 16:21-22; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 2 Timothy 4:14; Revelation 6:10; 19:1-2). Consider the prayer request: "Thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10). This is to invoke divine judgment on all other kingdoms and all those who oppose the reign of God. Even Jesus used imprecatory language in Matthew 23:13,15,16,23,24,27,29, and especially 23:33. See also his use of Psalm 41:8-10 in Matthew 26:23-24 as a pronouncement of God's judgment on Judas.

Consider Peter's citation of the imprecatory section in Psalms 69 and 109 in reference to Judas Iscariot: "For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let his homestead be made desolate, and let no man dwell in it'; and, 'His office let another man take'" (Acts 1:20). Peter is here citing an invocation of judgment and a curse against the one who betrayed God's Messiah.