

# Speaking to One Another in Psalms

## *Imprecatory Psalms*

- Introduction:
1. The Imprecatory Psalms are among the most difficult for people to get their heads around.
  2. An imprecatory psalm is one in which the author curses another and calls down God's judgment upon him.
  3. How can such strong language come from men of God?
  4. How do we make sense of (Psalm 18, 35, 69, 109).

### **I. How Do We Account for Imprecatory Psalms**

- A. Ramblings of uninspired and wicked men.
1. While there are statements contained in Scripture that are uninspired and spoken by wicked men, these are not among them.
  2. Jesus and his disciples quoted from these psalms.
    - a. Psalm 69:4 = John 15:25.
    - b. Psalm 69:9 = John 2:17.
    - c. Psalm 69 & 109 = Acts 1:20.
  3. It ignores the charitable attitude displayed by David.
    - a. Saul - 1 Samuel 24:1-15; 26:1-25.
    - b. Abishai - 2 Samuel 16:10,11.
    - c. Saul's descendants – 2 Samuel 9:3.
- B. There was a lower ethical standard in the Old Testament.
1. New Testament writers used imprecatory statements, including Jesus.
    - a. (Matthew 10:14) Cities that would not receive them.
    - b. (1 Corinthians 16:22) Anathema.
    - c. (Revelation 6:9-10).
  2. The Old Testament did not allow one to bear a grudge (Leviticus 19:18).
  3. The Old Testament taught people to deal kindly with others (Exodus 23:4,5).

### **II. How to Properly View These Psalms**

- A. They are based on a desire for divine judgment and not personal retribution.
1. David was praying for the people upon whom he was calling these judgments (Psalm 109:4-5).
- B. Consider his motives for writing.
1. He may have in mind the vindication of God's cause (Psalm 79:10).
  2. He may be wanting the righteous to take courage (Psalm 35:26ff).
  3. He may wish the wicked to be taught to fear God (Psalm 64:7-9).
- C. It can be a language difference between Western and Eastern cultures.
1. They frequently spoke in the superlative.
  2. (Psalm 3:7; 57:4; 58:6,10).

- Conclusion:
1. What the imprecatory psalms teach me are twofold.
  2. We need to have a greater love for God and righteousness.
  3. We need to have a greater hatred for sin (Romans 12:9).