

Psalm 9-10: The Lord sits enthroned forever



Psalm 9-10 (9) (Mode 3. 3....12 / 4...271)

Remembering the ways in which God has demonstrated his power and love for his people in the past, the psalmist is moved to gratitude. By bringing about the defeat of Israel's enemies, God has revealed himself as a just judge who 'has not forsaken those who seek you'(9:10).

The psalmist prays that God will act again now against those who are causing his suffering (9:13).

The prayer of thanks and petition in the first section of the psalm (Psalm 9) gives way to a lament in the second section (Psalm 10).

God is slow to respond to his cry. Those who are acting contrary to God's justice are getting away with it; indeed, they are flourishing.

In spite of this, the psalmist reiterates his faith in God as the one who hears the cry of the oppressed.

That these two psalms are to be read as a single unit is indicated by the acrostic structure: the first letter in each line of the first stanza (9:1-2) begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the first letter of each line of the second stanza (9:3-4) begins with the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and so on through the whole of Psalm 9-10.

It is kept as one psalm in the Greek Septuagint Bible [LXX] where it is numbered as Psalm 9 – a numbering which was continued in the Latin versions, and so in the liturgy.

We will observe other differences in numbering between the Hebrew and Greek-Latin-liturgy versions of the psalms (see Psalms 114-116 and 146-147), but this difference here is the reason for the liturgical numbering being regularly one behind that found in most modern bibles, which number the psalms according to the Hebrew numbering.

Psalm 9

[λ] {'alep}

My Lord, with a full and grateful heart
I proclaim your wonderful deeds.
In festive jubilation, I celebrate you,
singing your name to music, O Most High.

{ב} [bet]

As my enemies retreat before you,
they stumble and perish.

From your throne you pass judgment in my favour,
O just judge.

You chastise the nations, you destroy the wicked,
blotting out their name.

[א] [gimel]

You chastise the nations, you destroy the wicked,
blotting out their name. [verse 6 transferred]

The Lord sits enthroned forever,
issuing judgment.

[ד] dalet is missing

{ה} {he}

The enemy is destroyed. Memory of them has perished.
You razed their cities to the ground.
Justly you judge the world
and govern the nations.

[ʔ] [waw]

You are a stronghold for the oppressed.
You strengthen them in times of trouble.
Those who know you put their trust in you,
You never forsake those who seek you.

{ז} [zayin]

Sing praises to the Lord who dwells in Zion,
declare his deeds to the people.

God avenges the afflicted
and never neglects their cry.

{n̄} {het̄}

Pour your grace over me, Lord. Look how oppressed I am.
You are the one who draws me back
from the gates of death,
that I may recount your praises at the gates of Zion,
and celebrate your deliverance.

[v̥] [tet̥]

The nations have fallen into the pit they dug,
trapped in the net they concealed.

The Lord is revealed by the exercise of judgment,
when the wicked are snared

by what they themselves have done.

[ʹ] [yod̲]

The nations that forget you, God,
will go down to the realm of the dead.

Rise up, O Lord! Do not allow people's insolence.

In your presence let the nations be judged.

{כָּ} {kəp}

For the needy will not always be forgotten,
nor the hope of the poor be in vain.
Strike them with terror, Lord.
Let the nations know they are mortal [ʻenosh].

Psalm 10 in Hebrew.
Continuation of Psalm 9 in Greek

{ו} {lamed}

Where are you, Lord, when we need you?

Why do you hide?

The wicked in their arrogance hound the poor,
but they get tangled in their own intrigues.

[מ] {mem}

The wicked boast of their ambition,
the greedy are full of self adulation.

[נ] {nun}

They dismiss the Lord:

‘There is no god to whom I must give an account!’

What schemes they devise!

Their lives are twisted.

[D]

{To begin with a sameku requires an alteration to the text}

They have no concern for your judgments.

They defy all who disagree with them.

*They think in their heart: ‘I will never be shaken,
nothing will get in my way!’*

[פ] [peh] - should be after ץ]

From their mouths come deceit and fraud;
their speech is full of malice and lies.
They wait in ambush;
they murder the innocent under cover of secrecy.

[י] [‘ayin]

Stealthily they watch for the helpless;
they lurk in secret like a lion in its den,
that they may seize the poor
and drag them away.

[פ]

{To begin with a tsadeh requires adding 'The innocent'}

The innocent, weighed down with oppression,
cannot withstand the violence of the wicked.
They think: 'God has forgotten,
has hidden from us and will never notice.'

{12} {kop}

Rise up, Lord; O God, do something.

Do not forget the oppressed.

Why should the wicked spurn you, God,
and say in their hearts, 'He will not call us to account'?

[ר] [resh]

But you do see! Indeed, you observe trouble and grief,
that you may repay those responsible.

You make it your business to take note of evil.

You are the helper of the orphan.

[שׁ] [shin]

Break the power of the wicked, who do evil,
so that if anyone seeks them out, they will not be found.
The Lord is king for ever.
The nations will disappear from the land.

[ת] [taw]

Lord, you hear the longing of the poor;
you listen to them and strengthen their hearts.
Protect the rights of the orphan and the oppressed.
Never again may they sow terror, people made from earth.