

Psalm 10

A quick review: In Psalm 1 we were introduced to the concept that there are just two groups of people: those that follow the counsel of the ungodly, and those that follow God. Those that followed God would flourish, while those that did not would ultimately perish.

Psalm 2 continued in that theme, and set the context of the discussion, applying it to the kingdom. The ungodly would take counsel against the LORD and his anointed, chosen king, and the righteous would follow the LORD's anointed.

In the following psalms David expanded on that, elaborating more on the troubles that he was going through personally. And he explained more about who his enemies were: corrupt people; liars who went around speaking falsehood. They'd even pretend to be for him when they were against him. They were accusing him of things that he had not done to justify their own rebellion. And their goal was to undermine him and take away the kingdom.

Psalm 7 brought things to a head, when it called David's enemies Cush, lumping them in with the father of the kingdoms of darkness, Babylon and Assyria. And in that psalm David described how God would destroy them; God himself was going to make war against them.

In Psalm 8 it described the peace and prosperity that would come to Israel through David's kingdom, after God had stilled the enemy and avenger through him.

Finally, in Psalm 9 it described how some of the heathen that were left, who had been rebuked but not yet destroyed, would eventually turn back against David after being brought into subjection, and once more seek to overthrow the kingdom. And at that time they'd be utterly destroyed. David was confident that God would save him when this happened, because it was God who maintained David's right and his cause. God had begun his work with David, and he wouldn't turn back now. David knew he was undeserving, that he'd failed as king in the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba, but David knew that God had extended him mercy, that he might praise him in the gates of Zion.

In Psalm 10, David is going to continue in the theme of Psalm 9, talking about the wicked and how God will judge them and cause them to perish, bringing deliverance to the poor and oppressed.

Psalm 10 doesn't actually take us beyond where we stopped in Psalm 9, in terms of what would happen to David's kingdom. Instead, Psalm 10 just looks back at what God has done for David up to this point, and asks some fundamental questions about life and David's experience.

In other words, I don't think that Psalm 10, despite the way that it starts out, is written during a troubling time in David's life. It isn't tied to any particular event in his life. He doesn't even reference himself at all. No part of this Psalm is about David himself, or even his enemies particularly. He is looking back on his experience, and applying it in a very general way. He's contemplating that, and asking God some questions about why things happen the way that they do.

This psalm is a prayer. We've had two psalms of praise, but last time David ended with a little prayer. And now he's praying again.

For such a long prayer David only asks God for 3 things. Except for those three verses, the rest of the psalm is mostly spent describing the nature of the wicked oppressor. Then in the last third of the psalm David begins describing God's nature and his ministry of judgement. The psalm is basically divided into two parts, the first two-thirds that talk about the wicked, and the last third that talks about God.

Contrast that with David's plea for mercy in Psalm 9. He didn't describe his own sins one by one and ask God for mercy. He asked in as few words as possible. Here he's going to go on about the sins of the wicked for the better part of the psalm. So David isn't afraid of talking about sin, he just has common sense about when to do it and when not to.

David has described his enemies some already. In Psalm 1 he gave us a pretty good general description of the righteous. Then in the later psalms he's told us different things about the wicked, but mostly he's been talking specifically about his enemies. He's now going to give us a more general description of the wicked. Not just his enemies, but the wicked in general.

Now he starts off with a question:

Last time we talked about our expectation, our hope in Christ, of his eventual return and his coming kingdom. We talked about how that isn't just our hope, it is also the earnest expectation of the creature, and that Christ himself is waiting and hoping for it as he is seated on the right hand of God.

We've been talking about Christ's kingdom and his millennial reign since Psalm 8. And we've talked about it as something to look forward to. But not until the end of Psalm 9 have we come to a place that specifically contrasted that hope with what we experience day to day as we wait for it. It wasn't until Psalm 9:18 where it said "For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever," that it spoke of this as a hope and expectation. We've talked about how David prayed for God's judgement to come, but here in Psalm 10 David isn't talking about his own enemies. He's talking about ours. So that gives us a bit of a different perspective as we think about this. Here David is applying this directly to us. It's not just a general hope that we have, here David has made it very personal to each individual.

Verse 1

Psalms 10:1 Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?

So in this psalm David is asking God why he stands aloof, why he hides himself in times of trouble, why he allows wickedness and oppression to continue.

As we go along, it will become clear that David is not asking this for himself. David isn't the one going through trouble. David has been delivered.

To really appreciate this psalm, we need to consider the context that it is in, based on what's come before. Yes, David has experienced his share of troubles. But he's been delivered from them. God has heard David's cry and saved him, he's brought him deliverance. And so David has now resumed his throne. Not only have his enemies been defeated and destroyed, and he and his kingdom given peace and prosperity, but God has promised that when any of his enemies turn back against him, they'll be destroyed too. God's even promised David that his kingdom would continue for ever, that his son will sit upon his throne. To top it all off, God has forgiven David of his one fault, and granted him refuge in his mercy.

David is looking forward to a wonderful future where he doesn't have to worry about rebellion or his enemies, far or near, anymore. He can sit back, relax, enjoy God's goodness and mercy, and get down to writing those psalms of praise he's promised. He can get down to the rewarding task of declaring God's greatness and goodness, and ensuring his praise unto all generations. David has it made.

But here's David's next psalm, and it isn't a psalm of praise. It's a prayer. David's asking God for something again. He's pestering him again.

Now what more could David possibly want?

Well, David doesn't want anything, for himself. But David is looking out at his kingdom, and he realizes that while he's been delivered, others have not. He is now freed from trouble, but there are others in his kingdom that are still going through troubles. His enemies have been destroyed, but there are other wicked people who haven't been destroyed.

David is looking out at the "little people". His subjects. Israel, God's chosen people. And what he sees is that, while his suffering is over, there are others that are still being oppressed. There are still wicked men who are troubling the poor and needy.

And David can understand what they are going through. David can relate to that. Every time he sees it it makes think of the trouble he went through.

So David can't ignore that. He's not just going to selfishly sit there on his throne above it all, and not care what happens to the little guy. Instead, his very first psalm, which it seems like it should have been another psalm of praise, is his petition to God, asking why he hasn't delivered these other people yet.

"Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?"

We talked about how David has been delivered from his enemies. God has promised him a kingdom of peace, and that any of the heathen that turned back against him would be turning right into hell.

And yet David was still asking God for deliverance. He was looking out at those that were still being oppressed, and he was asking God to bring not just a general, national deliverance, as he had done in saving the kingdom of Israel from their enemies, but to bring individual salvation to each oppressed subject in his realm.

In this I see a beautiful picture of Christ. I see Jesus, who has already been delivered from this world, sitting on the right hand of God in heaven. Like David his kingdom has been made sure unto him. He's going to reign for ever and ever. But like David, Christ isn't just sitting back and enjoying his glory. He's looking down at us, his brothers and sisters, and asking our Father to deliver each and every one of us from oppression.

Like Israel, we've received a general salvation. All mankind has been saved from sin and uncleanness in Christ. We talked a bit about that last time. But we also noted that though we have been saved from sin, we haven't been saved from infirmity. We're still waiting for the adoption, and the redemption of our bodies.

We've received the general salvation, but we haven't personally been saved from all the oppression and sickness and death on this earth. We are still persecuted, we are still oppressed.

And though Christ has been delivered from that, he's been delivered from his enemies, his persecutors, his oppressors, he's not silent before God in seeking that each of us would experience the same thing.

Just as David could understand what the poor and oppressed were going through, Christ understands the troubles that we go through. And like David he wants to see every one of his subjects delivered.

Which is why, like us, Christ is earnestly waiting for and expecting his kingdom to come, and all our enemies to be made his footstool.

Now, David is the king of Israel. God has established his throne. He is their judge. He can put any man in Israel to death, and nobody can stop him. He's going to instruct his son to make an inquisition for blood after all. So he is fully capable of finding and destroying the wicked.

So why is he coming to God, and asking him why he isn't judging them. Isn't that David's job? Shouldn't he be asking himself that? If David sees all of this wickedness and oppression, why isn't he stopping it himself?

Well, David is no fool. He wouldn't be coming to God asking this if he wasn't doing his own duty as king. David wouldn't be coming to God for judgement if he wasn't performing his own duty of judgement. So we can be sure that David is doing everything that he can to deliver the poor and oppressed out of trouble, knowing the trouble that he went through.

In coming to God and asking him to take up the cause of the poor and oppressed, David is clearly acknowledging his own inability to solve the problem. David is acknowledging here that he isn't able to deliver these others by his own power and might.

That's quite an admission, coming from the one who has been ordained to be the strength of Israel, the one through whom God has promised to still the enemy and the avenger. The one whose son has been declared to be the prince of peace.

How do we reconcile the fact that David is the ordained savior of Israel, with the fact that there are wicked oppressors under his dominion, and he can't do anything about it? That seems to be contradictory.

But it really isn't. You see, David was ordained to still the enemy and avenger. Not all wicked people, just the enemy and avenger. God promised to save Israel through David. And he has done that. He has delivered Israel from their enemies.

David was ordained to bring God's general salvation to Israel. They were saved generally, as a nation, as a people. Not individually.

So David is looking around now that God has brought general salvation to Israel, and is seeing that there is still a need for something else. That God's work isn't finished. That there is still wickedness and oppression. That there still needs to come individual salvation. Many poor and needy still need to be delivered from their oppressors.

David has received individual salvation himself, from all of his enemies, because he is the one that the general salvation was brought through. God had to deliver him personally in the process of delivering Israel generally, because it was through him specifically that God had promised to bring that deliverance to Israel.

So David has received that total and full salvation from all his enemies, from all wicked men, from all oppression. But he looks out at his subjects, and sees that they haven't yet. Many of them are still in need of individual salvation. They're still in need of being delivered from their oppressors.

And what David has realized is that God had equipped him to bring a general salvation to Israel, but that he hadn't equipped him to fully bring that individual deliverance to all who need it.

And it isn't that David himself is deficient in some way. It isn't that David is a bad judge, and just doesn't make a very good peacetime king.

The task of bringing individual deliverance is just something that no one man can do. To bring individual deliverance you have to investigate the life of every single individual in your realm, and personally hear their case and give judgement. That's just something that no one man can do.

If everyone in the whole nation of Israel was coming to a single man for judgement, they'd never get heard. As you recall, Moses tried that, and his father-in-law told him if he kept it up it would both kill him, and also the people wouldn't all get their cases heard. It just can't be done.

Now, there is a solution to that. Which Moses father-in-law suggested to him. You can appoint a bunch of judges underneath of the highest judge, and they can hear most of the cases. Only a matter that is too hard for them would they bring to the chief judge. Much like we have a

supreme court, which only hears the cases of those who actually need the law itself to be clarified or corrected in some way.

So in that way, you can make sure everybody's case get's heard. And that's the sort of system that they continued to use in Israel. The law was always administered by a tiered framework of judges. At first there was a single judge at the top, like Moses or Samuel, and later there was a king instead, like David.

So David has a whole slew of judges helping him, what is his problem? Why can't he root out all wickedness and oppression?

Well, the weakness of the many-judge system, is that you're no longer depending upon the integrity of single individual. You're depending upon the integrity of hundreds and thousands of judges. If some of them are corrupt and take bribes, then oppression and wickedness can still go on.

So this is why David, despite being king, cannot destroy all of the wicked oppressors. He can't take personal responsibility for hearing the cause of every one of his subjects, and he can't take personal responsibility for the actions of all of the judges. Because he can't be constantly vetting every judge. There is no way to construct a working system that will depend only upon his own integrity. He's got to simply do what is right and hope that others will also, because he's only one man and he can't look into every case himself to make sure no funny-business is going on.

David realizes that in any system, there is always corruption. There is always oppression. And so despite being king, David cannot bring individual deliverance to all in his realm who need it. If that is going to happen it's going to need to be God's doing.

Remember that David has talked before about how he is surrounded by liars and deceivers. He knows that there is wickedness hidden here and there. It's caught him off guard before. He's had personal experience. And he knows that only God, who tries the hearts and reins, can search it out and deliver each poor and oppressed individual. So that is what he's asking God to do.

So David has first-hand experience of how there is corruption even at the highest levels of government. He's actually been on both ends of that, knowing what it's like to be oppressed, and also what it is to be an oppressor.

David himself was part of a big cover-up in the matter of Bathsheba. Killing a man and taking his wife is the worst kind of oppression. So David knows very well how there is oppression even among the highest judges, and how you can try to keep everything quiet so that nobody ever finds out, or even realizes that they're being oppressed.

So David knows that there is oppression and corruption going on, even when he doesn't see it. He knows that looking on the outward appearance is not enough, you have to try the reins and heart. And since only God can do that David knows that to rid his land of oppression and wickedness he needs to appeal to him to do it.

And so David is praying and asking God to look on those who are in trouble and help them. Not to hide himself, or stand afar off, but to be near where he can see what is going on and judge the wicked and deliver the oppressed.

And just in case he needs a reminder, David's going to tell him what sort of thing to look for.

We talked about how that although David was the king of Israel, God's anointed, he couldn't bring individual deliverance to every one of his subjects. Because that is a job that no one man can do. That's why David was asking God to do it.

But we look to one man, who not only has brought the general salvation from sin to all mankind, but can also, because he is God, and can try the hearts and reins, bring individual salvation to each poor and oppressed individual.

He can make an inquisition for blood. He can destroy all of the wicked while providing a refuge for the poor and needy. He can seek out and kill each proud worker, and deliver the humble.

It is only in Christ's kingdom that full liberty from oppression, full justice, can be realized. Until it comes there will always be wickedness and oppression in law and government. We can minimize it, but we can't eliminate it.

And so that is why, like David, we ask God to send Christ and destroy the wicked and set up his kingdom.

Verse 2

Psalms 10:2 The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

Now David will begin describing the troubles that he is seeing people go through. He's going to tell God about all of the horrible things that the wicked are doing.

PRIDE

The first attribute of the wicked that he points out is pride. In some ways that might seem strange, because sometimes it seems like pride doesn't really hurt anyone but the prideful. It doesn't seem to really have immediate physical consequences for anybody. "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me."

But what David is going to show here, is how pride ultimately does hurt. How it turns into actions. How it becomes sticks and stones in the end.

You see, David has firsthand knowledge of this, he knows what pride can do. Pride is the underlying thing that led to all his trouble with Absalom. David was proud and thought that since he was king he could take this man's wife and kill him and nobody would find out or be able to stop him. Then people were proud against David, they thought that they could overthrow him and take the kingdom, despite the fact that he was the LORD's anointed.

So what David is going to point to repeatedly as the root cause of oppression, is the pride of the wicked. It is the pride in their heart that ultimately turns into these terrible actions.

"The wicked in his **pride** doth persecute the poor."

This verse is basically a summary of what is to follow. The next 9 verses are going to expand on this statement, backing it up with a detailed explanation of how pride turns into oppression. Of how pride fuels the wicked's persecution of the poor.

As a side note, adding it up, this verse plus the next 9 verses makes 10 verses in Psalm 10 that are going to talk about the oppression of the wicked. It's only fitting that it should be so, as 10 is the number of law and judgement in scripture—10 commandments, 10 thousands of his saints come with Christ when he brings judgement on the ungodly, etc.

The second half of the verse is a summary of what David is going to ask in response to this wickedness and persecution: "let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined."

David wants the wicked to be caught in their own trap, just like he said would happen to all his enemies at the end of Psalm 9.

David is going to expand on that request in the last 7 verses of this psalm. That's a good number, the number of perfection or completion. David's asking God to fulfill, to perfect or complete his judgement against all the wicked. So he talks about that in the last 7 verses. And that's a good thing to ask as a judgement on the wicked. There is nothing more humiliating than being caught in your own trap. There is nothing more humiliating than having all of your careful plans end up backfiring on you, and destroying you instead of whoever you had intended them for.

You'll see this theme a lot in scripture, God really enjoys irony, causing the wicked to fall by their own counsel. He does it all the time.

I'm reminded of that fool we were talking about, you heard on the news, how he didn't like the mugshot they put up of him. He was proud. He was proud of how he looked. So he took his own mugshot, and when it went viral on the internet someone recognized him and turned him in. So what happened to him? He was taking in his own devices. He's a perfect example of this verse.

So that's the basic outline of this psalm: these next 10 verses are going to talk about the wicked and why they are worthy of God's judgement, and then the final seven verses are going to talk about how God would bring that judgement to completion.

Now let's look closer at why pride is so central here. Let's look at some other passages that talk about pride.

Leviticus 26 talks about what will happen to Israel if they refuse to keep God's commandments:

Leviticus 26:14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;
15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant:
16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.
17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.
18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

That's seven things that God will do to them to punish them. Seven punishments, and if you'll note, they are a progression:

1. Terror.
2. Consumption.
3. The burning ague.
4. Their enemies will eat everything that grows from the seed that they sow.
5. They will be slain before their enemies.
6. Those that hate them will reign over them.
7. They will flee when none pursueth.

And so God will complete his first round of punishment on them. But if they still won't hearken to him, he'll punish them seven times more:

19 And I will break the **pride** of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:

20 And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.

If the first seven punishments aren't enough, he'll bring seven more. He *will* break the pride of their power.

What is implied here is that the root cause of them breaking his covenant and refusing to return, though he calls them and punishes them, is pride. The root problem at that point is pride.

It's one thing when you sin, and you know you've done wrong, and seek forgiveness. It's one thing when you are rebuked for your iniquity and you confess and seek mercy. It's one thing when you are punished and promise not to offend a second time.

We'll accept that. We'll forgive that. We'll show mercy, when there is repentance.

But when somebody is proud, and refuses to repent, even after being punished seven times for their sins, that's different.

We look at those two things differently. We look at the person differently, don't we? And rightly so. Because there is a fundamental difference between the repentant sinner and the unrepentant one. It's not that one has sinned worse than the other. It's that they have a different heart. One has humbled himself and acknowledged his sin and begged for mercy, the other is too proud.

So that's why pride is the defining character of the wicked that David is pointing out here. When David is talking about the wicked in the psalm, he isn't talking about all sinners. He himself is a sinner. He's talking about wicked people, people who are proud and do not repent and seek God's mercy.

And you'll find that throughout the Bible. There are righteous people and wicked people. And the difference between them isn't that the righteous people don't sin. The difference is that the wicked people are proud and refuse to seek God's mercy. They seek sin out and don't care. The righteous try to avoid it.

And so the righteous, the sinner who seeks God's mercy, escapes God's wrath. But the sinner who refuses to seek God's mercy, is considered wicked, and God will bring their judgement on them to the full.

Here's a passage that is a good demonstration of that:

2 Chronicles 32:24 In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the LORD: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign.

25 But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

26 Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

Here is Hezekiah, king of Judah. He gets sick, and God tells him he's going to die. But Hezekiah begs God to remember his works and to heal him. So he does.

But after that Hezekiah becomes proud, and God's wrath is upon him. God is wishing that he hadn't healed Hezekiah. And he tells Hezekiah that he and all Judah are going to go into captivity to Babylon.

But it doesn't happen. Because Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and all Jerusalem, the LORD postponed his wrath against Judah.

So because of their pride, the LORD's wrath was against them, but when they humbled themselves, his wrath was held back.

So it is pride that brings God's wrath. Because it is the proud that refuse to seek mercy, that refuse to be reproved. Those that will humble themselves escape the wrath of God.

Here's an example of that:

Ezekiel 16:49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, **pride**, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

So what was the sin of Sodom? Pride. And God poured out his wrath on them and destroyed them.

And you'll note that one result of that pride that it pointed out there was that they did not strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. They allowed oppression to take place unabated. The same thing that David is talking about here.

It's interesting that in pointing out the sin of Sodom, God doesn't mention their sexual perversion. He talks about their pride and oppression. That's very up to date. Today the radical homosexuals have created the pride movement. You've probably heard of Baltimore Pride. They admit that they are proud. And they are also oppressors. They seek to oppress the poor and needy, levying fines and forcing people out of business. They are proud oppressors.

So pride is what caused God's wrath to be poured out on Sodom.

So in seeking God's judgement, his wrath to be poured out against the wicked, David is pointing out the pride of the wicked.

It is in pride that they persecute the poor, and David is going to point out that since they are proud, they won't seek God or accept his correction either. God will have no choice but to judge them to the full and to pour out his wrath on them.

We talked about pride, and how it is the pride of the wicked that leads to oppression.

We've talked about pride in relation to the kingdom of Christ before. In Isaiah 28 it contrasts the crown of pride with the crown of glory of the LORD:

Isaiah 28:1 *Woe to the crown of **pride**, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!*

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

*3 The crown of **pride**, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:*

4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

So when Christ comes back it is to destroy the crown of pride of all those who would take the kingdom to themselves.

But all the residue of the people, all of the saints, will be crowned with the glory of the LORD. And he will also give the spirit of judgement to them that sit in judgment, and strength to them that turn the battle to the gate; that justice might be done, and every sentence executed. The poor will be delivered, and the wicked destroyed. There will be no more oppression.

Verse 3

Psalms 10:3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.

David has pointed out the pride of the wicked, and how they persecute the poor. And he's asked God to let the wicked be taken in their own devices. And now he's going to explain how the pride of the wicked leads to oppression, and why God should take the action of bringing judgement on them. Why they need to be stopped cold.

BOASTETH

Here in this verse David gives us the proof that the wicked are proud. Pride is something in the heart, you can't see it. But David is going to point to the actions of the wicked that reveal that pride very plainly.

"For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire."

The wicked man boasts about what he wants to do. He boasts about the things that he wants. He's a proud boaster.

You know, that's something that can be used against them. When they think they have the upper hand sometimes you can catch them boasting about their plans. You can get them monologging, boasting about what they're going to do. And then sometimes they'll end up getting caught that way.

So the wicked are boasters, but not just about who they are. It doesn't say they boast about what they have, but what they want, what they desire, what they're going to get or do.

The wicked will boast about what he wants to do, and doesn't care whether it is right or wrong.

That's a big contrast to the righteous man, who doesn't want to sin, and begs God's mercy when he does.

It talks about boasting here. Well, the Bible tells us that the antichrist will be a boaster:

Daniel 11:36 *And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.*

So he will be a boaster and oppressor. The most horrible persecution that has ever come on this earth will come in the kingdom of the antichrist.

But when Christ returns his crown of pride shall be trampled under foot.

COVETOUS

It says that "the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth."

So the wicked person does two things, that demonstrate their pride. First, they are boasters, and second, they bless the covetous.

Let's look at what it means to be covetous. Coveting, in and of itself, is not wrong. That is, it isn't wrong to want something. In fact, there are things that we should want. The Bible even commands us to covet certain things:

1 Corinthians 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

So Paul wrote the church at Corinth that they should earnestly desire to prophesy. They should covet the best gifts.

But what about the tenth commandment? "Thou shalt not covet." There is no such thing in the Bible. The Bible never says just "thou shalt not covet," that's taken out of context. Here is what it says:

Deuteronomy 5:21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's.

It didn't make a blanket statement, "thou shalt not covet." What it said is, don't covet, or desire, anything that belongs to somebody else. Don't desire to have something that isn't rightfully yours.

Think about the commandments that come right before that:

Deuteronomy 5:17 Thou shalt not kill.

18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

19 Neither shalt thou steal.

20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.

These are all things that you would do to get your neighbor's stuff. They all follow in the same context of taking something that isn't yours.

Stealing and committing adultery. That comes from coveting, desiring something that doesn't belong to you. God said don't take it—and don't even covet it, because it isn't yours.

Killing someone, or bearing false witness against them to cause them to be put to death, those again are both things that you might do if you were seeking to take something from your neighbor. And there are examples of that in scripture.

So, as a side note those last 5 commandments are good to have posted in a courtroom, because they are directed at judges. Don't oppress or pervert judgement as a judge, and don't let others get away with it either.

So covetousness, being covetous in nature, when the Bible talks about that, is isn't just talking about wanting something. Usually it's implying that you're wanting something, even if it rightfully belongs to somebody else.

Here in Psalm 10 it says that the wicked person blesses people who are covetous. They bless those who want things that aren't rightfully theirs.

That's the foundation of modern liberalism. Socialism, communism, all forms of Marxism, they are designed to bless the covetous. Those who preach them bless the covetous. Take the money from the rich. Never mind that it's rightfully theirs, don't you wish you had it? And it is all a lie. The Bible cause them vile:

Isaiah 32:5 The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. 6 For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.

The vile person, the so-called "liberal", will speak villainy. They'll work iniquity in their heart, and practice hypocrisy. They think up wicked things to do, and how they can be hypocrites and deceive people.

And it says they will utter error against the LORD. They'll say things about God that are error, lies, stuff they've just made up, to deceive people.

But at least they're loving people right? At least they care, at least they are big hearted, at least they'll help some people.

Nope. That's not what will happen, because that isn't what they want. They aren't big hearted, they're hypocrites.

They want to make empty the soul of the hungry, and cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. They'll pretend to be liberal, a giving, caring person. But they aren't. They're a villain who is blessing the covetous, just so that they can get what they themselves want. And in the process they'll take away even what the poor and needy person does have.

7 The instruments also of the churl are evil: he **deviseth** wicked **devices** to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.

What did it say in Psalms 10:2? "The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined."

And in Isaiah it says that the churl devises wicked devices to destroy the poor.

So the wicked bless the covetous. They pretend to be liberal, and speak good to them who want what belongs to others.

Why do they do that? Why do they bless the covetous? Because they themselves are covetous. They aren't really liberal. They never give their own stuff to others. They just encourage the covetous to desire the things that belong to other people—themselves excepted of course. They bless them for wanting what other people have.

Why? Because they want it too. They're covetous too. So they encourage that in other people, because it makes them feel better. And because there's strength in numbers. If enough covetous people are around, they'll have a better chance of getting what they want.

So they bless the covetous so that they can eventually help the covetous person get what they want, at their own personal enrichment. In fact, probably exclusively at their own enrichment, because they really want it all to themselves. They want even what little the poor person has, so they're just practicing hypocrisy to use them as a means to their own end, fulfilling their own heart's desire.

That's a horrible, horrible thing. And that's why David is pointing it out. Because God hates covetousness. He says here that the LORD abhors it.

What covetousness is, when put into practice, is oppression. And David is seeking deliverance from that, for all his people. And so he's pointing out to God how the pride of the wicked leads to oppression. How, if God doesn't stop them and judge them, they'll put that covetousness into practice, and the poor and needy will be oppressed.

Verse 4

Psalms 10:4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

David is seeking God's intervention here, to stop oppression, because it is a job that no man can do.

And David is taking a two-pronged approach to doing that. First, he's proving that oppression is surely happening, how the pride of the wicked will guarantee it.

And second, David is convincing God that the only way to stop the proud wicked men from causing oppression, is if God himself intervenes.

David wants to convince God that he should judge, based on the horror of the wickedness and oppression that will take place, and based on the fact that there is no alternative.

In this verse David adds some weight to the idea that God's judgement is the only thing to be done for the wicked.

David points out, that the wicked man will not seek after God. He has already pointed out the pride of the wicked, how it is pride that leads to oppression. The wicked is proud and doesn't care about others.

And David's point in this verse, is that if the wicked is proud enough to oppress others, he's proud enough to ignore God too.

The argument that David is making is that God has to act in judgement, he has to destroy the wicked and not just rebuke them or warn them, because their proud and won't hear his rebuke. Remember how God punished Israel seven times for their sins, and they still wouldn't hear him for their pride. He said he'd have to punish them seven times more. And in fact he had to do that four more times. Anything less than utter destruction of the wicked from among his people, total consumption of the proud.

And so David is pointing out to God, that he can't slack his hand. He can't just bring a little judgment on the oppressors. He can't just correct them in measure. He's got to pour out his wrath on them, because they will not be humbled.

They're proud enough to oppress, they're proud enough not to hear the LORD's rebuke.

He's beginning that line of argument in this verse. But he starts off slow. In this verse he starts with the most basic premise: what if these wicked oppressors are seeking God, and just don't know what they're doing is wrong. So then why should God pour out all his wrath on him?

David dispatches that idea right away: "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God."

They're never going to come to repentance on their own, their never going to question whether what they are doing is wrong. They're never going to seek after God, because they're proud, they don't think they need him for anything.

In fact, David says that "God is not in all his thoughts." He never even thinks about God, all he thinks about is himself and his boastings in his heart's desire. He's never going to be convicted

by himself or his own actions. He never even thinks about God, much less seeks him. So he'll never find him and turn into the right way. The only thing for God to do is bring judgement.

Verse 5

Psalms 10:5 His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

The way of the wicked is always grievous. He never does anything right. He's always walking in his own way, never in God's ways.

God's "judgments are far above out of his sight." So again, there's no hope that he'll be convicted on his own. He's walking in his own ways down on the paths of darkness. God's way and his judgement and the light of his countenance are far above out of his sight. All he can see is the pride of his own countenance.

GRIEVOUS

What does it mean for his way to be grievous? Let's look at a few times that the Bible talks about God being grieved with the wicked.

Before the flood of Noah God said that he was grieved by man:

Genesis 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it **grieved** him at his heart.

7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

So when the way of the wicked is grievous, it makes God want to destroy him. That's when God decides to kill him. He wanted to destroy the whole earth.

God was also grieved by Sodom and Gomorrah:

Genesis 18:20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very **grievous**;

21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

So God heard that their sin was very grievous, so he went down to see if it was true. And when he found out that it was he brought judgement on them and destroyed them.

So a grievous sin is a sin that requires punishment. The grievously wicked must be destroyed. God cannot stand to let them live, he utterly destroys them.

David is pointing out grievous sin that these oppressors are doing, sin that grieves God so much that he destroyed the whole world for it, that he's destroyed cities, because of sin that grieves him. It's sin that God cannot help but judge. And David is seeking that judgement to come upon the oppressors throughout all his land.

So what is that sin that is so grievous? David has already told us what it is. Listen to what it says in *Isaiah 10*:

Isaiah 10:1 Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed;
2 To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!

Grievousness is unrighteousness in judgement. Unrighteous in government.
It is grievous to take away the right from the poor, to rob the fatherless and the widow.
God said woe unto them that write such grievousness.
That's a grievous thing to God, and David knows it, and won't let God forget it.

Here is how God responds to that kind of grievousness:

Jeremiah 23:16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.

17 They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.

18 For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?

19 Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a **grievous** whirlwind: it shall fall **grievously** upon the head of the wicked.

20 The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

God's fury and wrath are poured out grievously upon the grievous wicked. Those that lie and bless the covetous that walk after their own heart's imagination and desires. God destroys them. His anger cannot be turned away until he has done it.

So David knows how to put together a good prayer that will really get God's wrath stirred up against the wicked, leaving him no choice but to destroy them.

*We talked about the grievousness of the wicked. How their pride leads to oppression of the poor, and how God abhors that and it is very grievous to him.
And we read from Jeremiah 23, which talked about God's response to that:*

*19 Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a **grievous** whirlwind: it shall fall **grievously** upon the head of the wicked.*

20 The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

*So God's response to the grievousness of the wicked is a grievous punishment. A grievous whirlwind that will go forth in fury, and come down upon the head of the wicked.
It says that this will happen in the latter days. But it assures us that just because there is a long wait for it, that doesn't mean that it isn't going to happen. "The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart."
Christ will surely return in fury, with storm and whirlwind, and bring judgement on the wicked, executing God's anger.*

PUFFETH

So the way of the wicked is always grievous, and God's judgements are out of his sight. He's too proud to seek after God, he just ignores him. So the wicked will never find God on his own. David has made that clear, and in the process stirred God's wrath.

But David knows that God is merciful. He's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. So he has set out to prove that the wicked will never repent. He's proven that he won't come to God on his own. But maybe God could send a messenger, somebody else, to convict him. To make him think about what he is doing, and see the error of his ways. Nope, that won't work either: "as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them."

He's a proud man, and won't listen to anyone. He won't listen to God or anybody else either. He just puffs at all his enemies. He doesn't take them seriously. He's too puffed up in his pride and his own heart's desire.

David is making a good case here, that God will have no choice but to bring his wrath down on these wicked oppressors. He's leaving him no alternative. There is no way that God can turn them into the right way, they'll have to be judged and destroyed.

Verse 6

Psalms 10:6 He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.

See, the wicked won't listen to warning. They won't hear anybody telling them that they're riding for a fall. They won't believe they'll ever be in trouble or that there is a day of reckoning coming. They're too caught up in their heart's desire, in their own pride, that they go around boasting about. So you can't get his attention by warning him, because he won't believe that evil could ever befall him.

So like we said, you cannot send a messenger to turn him from the error of his ways. He'll just think of them as an enemy, and puff at them.

By the way, the word "adversity" is used 10 times in the Bible. Coincidence, of course.

We talked about how the wicked, because of his pride, will not seek after God. How there is no chance of his repenting, because he's too proud to consider God's judgements or to listen to warning from others.

And that explains a lot. That explains why God will bring hell and destruction upon the wicked, despite the fact that it says he is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

If God doesn't want any to perish, if he wants all to come to repentance and escape his wrath, but some people do perish, then by logical induction, they must have refused to repent.

There are those that are too proud to repent, they refuse to do so, leaving God no choice but to destroy them.

It is this pride that explains how some of the heathen can turn back after 1000 years of prosperity in Christ's kingdom and come against him.

The wicked person doesn't believe that he'll ever be in adversity, that his enemies will ever catch up with him. He's too proud to consider that possibility. So God cannot correct him in measure, he has to burn them up.

Verse 7

Psalms 10:7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.

So David has made his case that the wicked will not be turned from his wicked way, he'll have to be destroyed. Now he's going to give us some more detail on what the pride of the wicked leads to. He's going to talk about their oppression.

The first thing that David points out, in this verse, is that the wicked oppressor is a liar. He talked about him blessing the covetous earlier. Well, the wicked is also a curser. He blesses the covetous but he also curses people.

And you can't trust him because he's deceitful too. And fraudulent.

The word fraud is used only twice in the Bible, and it means exactly the same thing that it means to us today.

James 5:4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by **fraud**, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

So fraud is keeping back that which is not yours. Stealing money from your laborers.

And he talks about how these same people are rich, and live in pleasure, and kill the just. That's going to fit right in with the next verses here in Psalm 10.

So the wicked man is a deceiver, and a liar. He speaks mischief and vanity, stirring things up over nothing. You can't take him at his word because he's a vain talker, saying a bunch of nothing that he doesn't really mean.

And I think David is implying here, that even if the wicked did pretend to turn from his ways and repent, you couldn't believe him. He's a deceiver, you couldn't believe him if he did ask for mercy. That is why God, who judges the reins and hearts will have to judge them.

Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

These are the same things that it's talked about in this psalm, in that order:

- Pride, verse 2.
- Boasting (arrogancy), verse 3.
- The grievous way (evil way), verse 5.
- Mouth full of deceit, cursing, and fraud (froward mouth), verse 7.

So these things go together. You could look at them as a progression, each naturally follows the others. If you have one, you'll have the rest of them.

David has shown that here, how pride will lead to boasting, walking in a grievous way, with lies and deceit and fraud. Blessing the covetous, and robbing the poor.

Verse 8-9

Psalms 10:8 He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.

9 He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.

So here we have arrived at a description of what David's original premise was in verse 2: "The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor."

David is showing how pride ultimately leads the wicked to murder the innocent, and rob the poor. He is proud, and will destroy anyone who stands in his way of getting what he wants. He wants more power and money, and the poor and needy are an easy target.

So he deceives them, and kills them in secret.

Verse 10

Psalms 10:10 He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

You see, the poor think that the wicked oppressor is their friend. They don't know that they're being oppressed. They don't know that he's out to get them.

The wicked blesses them, he blesses the covetous. But secretly he kills them.

He deceives them, pretending to humble himself, but it's all an act. It's all just so that they can be destroyed.

"He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones."

David has first-hand experience of this. This is exactly what Absalom did when he was trying to steal away the kingdom.

2 Samuel 15:1 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.

3 And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

So Absalom would tell everybody that they were right. He was just flattering them. He was lying to them. He wasn't judging justly. He was blessing the covetous. He didn't care about these people, he just wanted to use them to get the throne, he didn't care what happened to them after that.

4 Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

And then Absalom was a proud boaster, talking about how good of a judge he would be, what he would do if he was judge in the land.

5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

So Absalom would make a show of being humble. When somebody got ready to bow before him, he'd quick catch hold of them and embrace them and kiss them just like they were his equal.

But it was all a show. Absalom didn't care about them. Absalom didn't care how many people died trying to destroy David and his followers. And a bunch of them did.

So like the wicked that David is describing here, Absalom didn't care whether the poor lived or died. He tricked them into thinking that he was on their side, but it was all for his own advancement.

David knows that there are still people like that out there in his kingdom. He's been delivered from his adversaries, but he knows that there are still others who are being oppressed. And he can't bear the thought of that, so he's asking God to judge and destroy all the wicked.

We talked about Absalom, and how he pretended to be a friend of the poor and needy, how he promised them things, how he pretended to humble himself before them, when he really didn't care whether they lived or died. He was just speaking flatteries to try to take the kingdom. Satan and the antichrist are a lot like that. They promise people good things, speaking lies and flattery, and pretend to care. When really, they don't. They know that in the end those that follow them will be thrown into hell. But they don't mind using them to obtain power in the kingdom now.

They lie and say that God will never bring judgement. But he will.

I hate to end on such a sour note, but we'll be looking more closely God's response to the wickedness and oppression of Satan and evil men next time.

Until then, we can take comfort in the fact that this is something that Christ himself makes intercession to God for, earnestly expecting his kingdom to come, when he can finally destroy all the works of darkness, and give each of us full liberty from the curse and wickedness.

Verse 11

Psalms 10:11 He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.

So the wicked man doesn't think of God, or if he does, he thinks that God doesn't pay attention to oppression. He thinks that because God hasn't judged them or rebuked them yet, he never will. They think God doesn't see or care what they do.

That's a very foolish thing to think, isn't it? But that is what the wicked man believes in his heart. He thinks that if God is a judge, he must be unjust just like they are. He turns away and let's oppression go on unpunished. That's what they're implying.

And that's why David is pointing this out. Not just to show how wicked and foolish these people are, but to stir up God's wrath.

David knows that somebody saying that God doesn't hear the cry of the oppressed, that he can't see the wicked, that makes God angry. They are saying that God is either stupid, weak, or

unrighteous. And nobody wants to have that said about them. Much less the King of the universe.

So David is pointing that out, because he knows it will get God's ire up.

But there is a second reason that David is saying this. He's pointing out that if God is silent and does not act, if he does not judge the oppressed, the wicked will be right. If God doesn't bring judgement, the wicked will be essentially saying the truth about him. That he doesn't care, that he doesn't judge.

So God has to act, he has to do something, not just for the sake of the poor and oppressed, not just because the wicked deserve it, but to preserve his own integrity, to maintain his name on this earth.

David has not only proved the wicked worthy of destruction, he has not only proved that God has no alternative but to destroy the wicked to end their wickedness, but he's now proving that God must act, as the righteous judge.

David is not questioning God's justness. He's not questioning God's righteousness. He's not questioning whether God will bring judgement. But the wicked are.

David knows that God is the just judge, he judged him and saved him. So that's why he asked the question in verse 1, "Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?"

David knows that God is the judge, and he knows that there is some judging that needs to be done, and that only God can do it. He's proven that here. So he's asking God why he isn't doing it.

Why hasn't God judged the wicked? Why does it seem like he is behaving the way the wicked want him to, not the way the righteous want him to? David knows he is the God of the righteous, not of the wicked. So he's asking God why sometimes it seems like the wicked are right and God doesn't see oppression.

It is a good question, a question that lots of people ask at some point in their life. "Where was God? Why wasn't he there when I needed him? Why didn't he help me?"

And there isn't a simple answer here. David is actually going to give us a complex answer, with multiple different parts to it, not just here but over the next several psalms.

But here David has set the stage for it, he's posed the question. "Why was David delivered but God isn't delivering me from trouble?" David is going to answer that question. It is a question he asked himself: why was he delivered but others aren't?

So that ends those ten verses talking about the wicked and why they are worthy of judgement, why God needs to judge them. Next time we'll move on to the second part of the psalm, the next 7 verses, which talk about how God will bring that judgment.