

Dr. Bruce Waltke, Psalms, Lecture 13

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This is Dr. Bruce Waltke and his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 13, Imprecatory Psalms.

We have behind us, of course, the Holy Scriptures, but we have the church fathers and the wonderful saints throughout the ages and teachers.

We're on the cusp of history. We're the heirs of the wonderful music of Beethoven, Bach, and all of that. We thank you that we are the heirs of all these ages.

Thank you for the heir of the teachers that went before us. Thank you that you've given us the grace to discern what's good and what's bad and help us to be discerning in all these things. Help us to hold fast to that which is good and to spew out that which is bad.

Give us that discrimination. Give us grace in the way we speak. Give us love in the way we think.

Give us joy in you and praise for you. Bless us then for this hour. Give us the graces we need to study your word appropriately and beneficially. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

All right. We've been looking at different approaches to the Psalms and we're now in the form of a critical approach. Yesterday, we looked at praise Psalms. We began the morning session with a praise Psalm, Psalm 92, or Thanksgiving Psalm, Psalm 92.

Then we jumped into this massive material on the petition Psalms. We saw that it's the dominant note. Most Psalms are petition or lament Psalms.

It's worthwhile that we notice that that is not abnormal, nor do we ever grow out of it and go beyond it. We'll be there and lament until our dying breath, trusting God even in death. But it's part of our maturation, spiritual development, our salvation.

But above all, it's there for the praise of God, where he demonstrates through us his triumph over death, sin, death, and the devil. So, through our despair, he triumphs over evil. He chose us for that purpose that we might praise him as the living God, as the triumphant God, and how privileged that we should be elected to this position.

We've reflected on different aspects of the petition Psalms. So, one thing we reflected on was the situations in which the Psalms may find themselves. So, he may

find himself at the temple and he prepares the Psalm for his lament at the temple, but not always.

He's sometimes removed from the temple, but even then he's looking forward to get back to the temple where he can worship God. So, he's oriented to the source of a spiritual life at the temple where the water flows freely that nourishes the palm tree and the seed of Lebanon, to speak of the righteous. So we looked at those different situations.

And then one of the situations is the enemy. And so, we spent time thinking about who the enemy is and we noticed all basically these extensive moral terms that the enemy is really a spiritual enemy. He's the enemy of God's people.

He's opposed to the kingdom of God. And so, it's really a spiritual warfare. We ended on the enemy with Gunkel's, I think, bad interpretation because Gunkel sees it as having been written during the second, that these Psalms were for people in the second temple.

There's no king. There's no political enemy. And he thinks that the Psalmist is sick.

So, therefore, who is the enemy of the sick person? And he draws a conclusion. It's more imaginary. And he talks about primitive feelings by which he means he's ruled by his emotions and not by the best of rational thought, so to speak.

And the result of that is that the enemy is really, the persecuted is the one that's in trouble in a way, it seems to me. So, it's just astounding to me that he could draw that conclusion. Fortunately, he hasn't been followed because now we recognize that really they're not imitative.

Although some still think they're from the second temple period, they do not think they're imitative of a king in the first temple period. So that was the enemy. And then we considered different motifs.

That's where we ended. We ended up with different motifs, namely the address. The important point here is that it is sin when you're in distress, not to turn to God.

That you either turn to God or you turn to something else. And that takes us back to Psalm 4, where it is a sin to depend upon anybody but God. It's a denial of faith.

And so, we didn't reflect on that last hour, but it's an important point that in distress, as the salmon returns to its original spawning grounds at death, as the bird flies south in winter toward the sun and the warmth, the saint intuitively turns to God for his salvation or her salvation. And so, I would add that to the address. We didn't comment on that.

Then the major section is the petition itself. And, well, no, then there is the, we looked at lament and then we looked at the petitions. And without redoing all of that, we said, the major petition is that you will be delivered.

And we commented that that is both a divine intervention to rescue us out of our situation. And it's a juridical concept that God does it because it's right for us. And we reflected more on that, what the Psalms can be, some Psalms are penitential, sometimes a protest of innocence.

And in the Psalter, the Psalmist is never in ambiguity about whether he's right with God or he's wrong with God. If he's wrong with God, then he prays that God will forgive him. He will also pray God will protect him from wrong and save him.

So, he stays in a right relationship with God. And therefore, the other side of it is protest that I am innocent. Therefore, it's right that God should intervene and save me.

And he can have confidence in that situation. Those are some of the highlights of things we discussed in that hour. And then we looked at the confidence section and some of the reasons he has confidence and he has confidence because of who God is holy and righteous and just.

He has confidence because he knows who he is and he knows he's a king or he's on the side of God. And we know who we are. And so, you can have confidence.

Not only do we know God's attributes, but we know our history that we have been here. God's people have been here from the garden of Eden and we're still here and so forth. So those are some of the things we looked at.

We didn't do anything with communal lament. We'll skip that. I'm going to be looking at a communal lament psalm, later on, Psalm 44.

Oh, and then we were going to do theology. I didn't, I said, part three would be theology and I didn't do anything with the theology of the psalms. As I recall, I said, I would be doing something with that.

Maybe though I'll go do that after the problem of the imprecatory psalms. Okay. So we looked at petition psalms broadly.

And now on page 164 of your note, the imprecatory psalms, what are called imprecatory psalms. It's really a misnomer. They're not going down curses on the enemy.

They're praying that God will avenge them for the wrong being done to them by the enemy. As we noted in the last hour, there were about 50 petition psalms. These psalms normally, almost all of them, not 63, but almost all of them are petitioning God for deliverance from their distress.

About 35 of them go beyond the positive of deliverance to the other side of it, to punish the enemy. It's those psalms that we are now concerned about, this whole motif that God will avenge and punish the enemy. And so I define it on page 164.

It's one in which the psalmist prays that God will avenge the wrongs done to him by the enemy, by punishing the enemy. I wouldn't call them prayers for revenge. That's to judge their spirit.

I believe I would rather say to avenge because the issue is justice and so to right the wrong, to avenge them. Justice demands that evil be paid back. I would rather define it that way.

Obviously, these psalms present a problem for the Christian who lives in light of the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is given to the disciples for the kingdom of God. It is not given to the state.

There's a big mistake that comes out of the brotherhood of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all men of liberalism. They try to take the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount and apply it to the state. So, the state will turn the other cheek.

The state will not use the sword. The ethics of the church and the state are very distinct. The ethics of the church is the cross where you die for your enemy.

The ethics of the state is a sword, Romans chapter 12. He gave the sword to avenge the wrongs. It leads to mass confusion if you don't make a distinction between the church and the state and the different forms of ethics that we're dealing with here.

So, the psalmist, didn't have that distinction in the Old Testament because it was a theocratic state. So therefore, you did not separate the kingdom of God from the kingdom of Israel. They were coextensive with one another.

You didn't make that kind of distinction that we get with the church being a spiritual body. We're no longer a political organization. We live together with the state and we depend upon the state to right the wrongs.

We don't take it into our own hands. We expect the state to uphold justice. That's Romans 12 and 13.

That's the responsibility of the state to uphold justice. But the church is persecuted. So, the question is, how does the church respond to this kind of persecution? Do we respond as they did in the Old Testament and pray God will punish our enemies? That doesn't seem to jive with the Sermon on the Mount to me where God said, where Jesus says, if they slap you on the right cheek, turn to them the other also.

He says also, do not resist the evil. He says, pray for those who persecute you. He means persecute by saying, God bash their babies against the rocks.

He means to pray for them, for their salvation. And the prayer of himself on the cross is to forgive them. They don't know what they're doing, which they don't really.

I think they're fools and they're blind. That's the prayer of Stephen as they're stoning him to death, forgive them for what they do. So, it's hard to put together, turn the other cheek, and pray for them and love you.

It was said that you should love your neighbor and hate your enemy. I say to you, love your enemy and pray for them that persecute you, which should be our response. So that's the problem that we're having.

Now, when I face a problem like that, what I normally do is I try to think my way through all kinds of solutions. How can I solve this as a solution? To me it's biblically right. That's what I'm going to try to do in the rest of this lecture is to try to find a solution.

How we as Christians should think about harmonizing the Old Testament with the New Testament and how we should think about using the Psalms and understanding this motif within these Psalms for ourselves as Christians. So that's trying to set up the problem. First of all, unacceptable solutions are that I give the names there.

They say they're not really prayers, they're prophecies that God, instead of saying, may the Lord punish them. They say the Lord will punish them. They read it as a prophecy, a promise that this is what's going to happen.

So, they don't read them as petitions. That's one solution to the problem. I give the readers there.

There's some who hold to that within the history of Christian doctrine. The reason for that is that in the Hebrew language, you can't really distinguish very often between what we call a jussive, which is a command form. May he punish versus what we call a specific future, he will punish.

It's amazing ambiguity in the language, but very often the translator has to make a judgment, whether it is a wish or a statement of fact. That's the kind of thing you

grapple with when I wrote my Hebrew grammar. The reason I wrote the grammar is I was preparing myself for writing commentaries and I realized so much grammatical work had to be done before I got into a commentary that I just sat down and wrote a grammar and give me the background for it.

So, I call it an introduction, but it's a typically German introduction. Okay. So, in any case, but there are some forms that are clearly jussive without getting into technology, but there are some forms, there's no ambiguity.

So, this solution is not satisfying because I know there are jussives in it. I think the translators, by and large, I think in this case, I think they have it almost 99% correct. They are truly petitions wishing that God would do this and praying that God would do it.

Page 165. Another solution is that they're just plainly, they're not right. They're non-Christian and we should reject them.

This goes the whole gamut from the devilish and they're wrong all the way through to they're not really quite sanctified. I give you the gradations of saying it's really not right. Some say they're really wrong and some say they're partially wrong, but you still end up they're wrong when you're all finished.

So, I give you some extreme statements. This one is by Kittel, the scientific study of the Old Testament. He says, they're by mean-spirited individuals who thought only of thirst after conquest and revenge.

That's a pretty strong statement. Now, even more surprising is C. S. Lewis, who has trouble with these Psalms. I quote him, even more devilish.

In one verse is the otherwise beautiful 137, where blessing is pronounced on anyone who will snatch up a Babylonian baby and beat its brains out against the pavement. They are indeed devilish, but we must also think of those who made them so. That's not very high view of inspiration for me.

I have a lot of respect for C. S. Lewis. He's one of the great apologists of the church, but he doesn't have to me, a solid enough view of Scripture. I could never write that, that they're devilish and it's wrong.

I just finished reading a book by Alistair Hunter, Introduction to the Psalms. He says I'll give you these. He quotes a lot of these Psalms and he begins it by saying, if you have stomach for it, and he just, he's an absolute liberal in this book.

More moderate is that you have the statement by Beardsley. I'll give you the statement there. David is in the twilight spiritually.

Well, it seems to me that in something like this, we ought not to use metaphor. You ought to be a bit more clear with what you mean by twilight. That could be interpreted in different ways, but it could mean you're still in the dark and it's still not right.

I wouldn't want, or this is John Bright. It's God's wholly committed man, yet a man who was estranged from God's spirit. Now, if he's estranged from God's spirit, then he's certainly not speaking in God's spirit.

He's essentially saying they're not inspired of God because he really doesn't have the spirit of God when he's saying this. So, he's a man for God, but he's speaking in the human spirit, which is a way of saying they are wrong. Nicely, a nice way of saying it, but it's still wrong.

I can't go there. This is now from Albert Barnes. These are very, very conservative.

What actually occurred in the mind of the psalmist and are preserved for us is an illustration of human nature partially sanctified. So, this whole kind of moderate way of saying it, it's really not sanctified. It's not really of the Holy Spirit.

We're in a twilight zone here. And that's not decisive enough for me. I'm pretty clear cut in my thinking and I don't like fudging around.

I like this twilight and partially. Let's say, are they right? Are they wrong? Are they profitable for doctrine or are they unprofitable for doctrine? Are they edifying or are they not edifying? That's I want to cut clean. So, I'm not going there.

My objections are it's theologically continuous. It's a bad doctrine of inspiration. And there is no indication in the psalms themselves that the Spirit censored this portion of Scripture.

In fact, there's no indication in the Bible that the Spirit of God is censoring them. In other words, God can change dispensations. For example, with Peter, when he says, eat the unclean foods, that's a tremendous change that's taken about.

But you don't get anything clearly saying this is not of God. So that's number two. That needs a little bit more clarification.

In fact, they're all part of this destroying the enemy is really part of the Holy War motif in the Old Testament of destroying the enemy. God commissioned them to go to war and they had an obligation to go to war to establish the kingdom of God. And I don't see this apart from the whole idea of where Moses prayed that the Lord would scatter the enemies.

These kinds of prayers are also found in the prophets. So, it's all part of God eliminating the enemy. It's in the warp and woof of the Old Testament.

The New Testament cites these imprecatory prayers and they cite them approvingly, interestingly enough. So, for example, in Acts 1.20, for it is written in the book of Psalms, may his camp become desolate and let there be no one to dwell in it and let another take his place, his office. And he applies that to Judas who is going to be eliminated.

And he cites that Psalm with reference to Judas approvingly. And he also justifies another taking his place from the book of Psalms. Fifth, you find similar prayers in the New Testament, especially in the apocalypse.

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, how long sovereign Lord, how holy and true until you would judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood. Now that's those who have already gone on into glory and they're praying that they will be avenged.

And in heaven, they're still praying this prayer. They're not censuring it. They're still using it, but the question still remains, what do I do with the Sermon on the Mount and the words of Jesus on the cross? But you can see why I think you cannot say they're devilish because I find it in heaven itself.

So, and this severe treatment of certain enemies in the New Testament. Paul says to be angry. And I think he means moral indignation.

I think it's wrong if you don't have moral indignation, but that doesn't mean we should pray that God will zap them. But I'm just saying moral indignation is appropriate. My problem is there isn't more moral indignation.

I cannot understand how evangelicals can vote for certain candidates without moral indignation about that candidate. So, yeah, Mike. Take this and apply it today to like ISIS over there, killing Christians.

Rampantly, we have people in the Middle East with IBS and it's unbelievable the amount of death and destruction and moral suffering, innocent people, particularly, you know, we're in the Kurdistan area. And how do you see that in this day and age, us praying, oh, their blood would be avenged by a military? What would be your thoughts relative to us in our prayers in our day against the enemies of the Lord over there? Yeah, that brings it right down. Again, I would have to make the separation between church and state.

And so therefore I wear two hats. I wear the hat of the church and I wear the hat of the state. And as I wear the hat of the church, my first response is to pray for their salvation.

They don't know what they're doing and I don't think they do know what they're doing. I want to respond to them in love and win them to Christ. I don't want to zap them.

I do, but I know it's wrong. I want to follow my Lord who said, turn the other cheek. So, I'm not going to resist them as a Christian, but I expect the state, it's established for righteousness to establish the right order.

I expect the UN and I expect the United States to step in as it's able and to punish the murderers. So therefore, I think we ought to vote for people who will uphold righteousness with moral indignation and punish the enemy to the extent they're capable of doing it. So that would be my thinking and how I would respond to it.

Okay. The other side of it is that, well, another concept is I'm saying why I took up those who want to say it's prophecy. I have to rule that out.

Those who say they're wrong in effect. I tried to answer why I couldn't say that they were wrong. On the other hand, I come to the third one is that we use them directly and we pray that God will zap the enemy, which I said, I can't do.

And so to give an example of this, when I originally was thinking of this material, I was in Oregon and this was back in 1982. So, I've been thinking about this for a few years now. So anyway, I happened to be reading the Oregonian and it was a time when E. M. Paisley was coming over to the United States and Alexander Haig.

So, this goes back to Jimmy, you know, early Reagan administration. And Alexander Haig was bringing, the secretary of defense was bringing over Ian Paisley. So anyway, this is Bob Jones.

Oh, and Alexander Haig was opposing Ian Paisley and Bob Jones was favoring Ian Paisley. And he was opposed to Alexander Haig and what he was doing. So, this is what he said, I hope you all, students of Bob Jones, pray that the Lord will smite him.

That is Alexander, hip and thigh, bone and marrow, heart and lungs, and all there is to him that he shall destroy him quickly and utterly. That's what he was telling the Bob Jones students, an evangelical student, school, that they should pray, not that God would save Alexander Haig, but they will zap him, hip and thigh and so forth. That is unchristian to me.

So, I reject that too. That to me is inconsistent with Jesus' teaching and it's inconsistent with the practice of Jesus. And I do not find that in the church.

I just can't go that route. Okay. So, I brainstormed it and I know what I can't accept.

So, what can I accept? And since we're all in a growth process, I call the next section, thinking my way through this, Toward a Solution. That would help me. And now we're on page 167, Toward a Solution.

The first thing we should understand is that these are by saints and they're suffering for the kingdom of God. And they're suffering gross injustices. In other words, before you criticize them, step into their shoes and see what they're facing, gross injustices.

I thought this was by Derek Kidner, 160. Pardon? Yeah. Well, at any rate, Note 366, Rory Prest.

Yeah. I forgot about that. He was my student at a region who wrote a thesis on the enemy in the Psalms.

Anyway, he says, most commentators read the Psalms from the comfortable perspective of security and economic affluence. Few have experienced the agony of utterly unprovoked, naked aggression and gross exploitation. It is questionable whether such a detached discussion on responding to enemies would take place in the face of people with manifestly evil intentions.

In other words, he's sympathizing with their situation of gross injustice. We can sit here and we can think about it. We can debate it in the comfort of this beautiful home in which we find ourselves.

We need to enter into that world to appreciate what they're up against. I think it's a worthwhile saying. It doesn't solve it, but it helps out.

The next one, I think does help us. The prayers are righteous and just. In other words, that God would right wrong is righteous and it's just.

They're just prayers. So, these prayers assume that the civil courts either will not uphold justice or cannot uphold justice. In other words, it was for the state to uphold justice.

But what happens when David's case, when the king, like Saul is king, and he doesn't uphold justice, what does he do? Where does he turn? Where is he going to find justice? He's looking to the God of justice to uphold justice. So, these prayers are asking God to uphold justice. I don't find fault with that.

In fact, I must affirm that, that God upholds justice and he does punish evil. These prayers are consistent with the very character of God to set a topsy-turvy world right side up. That's what they're praying for.

I find that profitable for doctrine. That's wholesome doctrine. I find that helpful.

They're consistent with the Old Testament concern for retribution of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The implicative Psalms entail a very high view of justice. In other words, they really believe God is just and they are offended and they think wrong when justice is not enacted.

Here C. S. Lewis, I find quite helpful. He says something I think very significant in his *Reflections on the Psalms*. He notes such expressions are lacking in pagan literature because as he puts it, the Jews had a firmer grasp on right and wrong.

He writes, if we are to excuse the poets of the Psalms on the grounds that they were not Christians, we ought to be able to point to the same sort of thing and worse in pagan authors. Perhaps if I knew more pagan literature, I should be able to do this. But in what I do know, a little Greek, a little Latin, and of Old Norse, very little indeed.

I am not at all sure that I can, that is that he does not, he cannot find this in the pagan literature. I can find in them lasciviousness, much brutal insensibility, cold cruelties taken for granted, but not this fury or luxury of hatred. One's first impression is that the Jews were much more vindictive and vitriolic than the pagans.

So, the pagans, their literature is lascivious. It's violent, but it is not morally indignant. Now, Lewis wrote *Reflections on the Psalms* some years ago.

What he said about pagan literature is to my mind, true of our literature, full of lasciviousness, and violence. As Bill Bennett pointed out in his book, there is a lack of moral indignation. The reason we have a lack of moral indignation is we don't have a God who upholds right and wrong.

We took our God and we have no absolute standards. Therefore, without an absolute standard in an age of relativity, how can you talk with moral indignation and say something is wrong? Nobody's sure what's right and what's wrong anymore. We don't know what sin is.

We don't talk about sin anymore. So, if you don't have absolute standards, how can you have moral indignation? So, what Lewis said about the pagan literature, I think is true of our society. What he described there, to me, describes today, amazing.

Page 31, thus in his book, thus the absence of anger on the bottom of page 167, thus the absence of anger, especially that sort of anger, which we call indignation can, in my opinion, be a most alarming symptom. That is the lack of moral indignation is an alarming symptom. If the Jews cursed more bitterly than the pagans, this was, I think, at least in part, because they took right and wrong more seriously.

For if we look at their railings, we find they are usually angry, not simply because these things have been done to them, but because they are manifestly wrong or hateful to God, as well as to the victim. The thought of the righteous Lord, who surely must hate such things as much as they do, who surely, therefore, must, but how terribly he delays, judge, or avenge is always there, if only in the background. So, they are righteous and they are just is the second point that I'm making.

They are necessary that we have absolute moral. We have moral indignation that comes from a clear sense of right and wrong. But in our age, where relativity, we're not sure what's right and what's wrong anymore.

The young people don't know what's right and what's wrong anymore because we've taken the Bible out of the school and we have lost our absolutes in our society. Third, the New Testament upholds the justice of God. God will answer the prayers for justice.

This is the Lord's prayer, your kingdom come, your will be done, which is to uphold justice. Jesus said, and he talked about the widow, an unjust judge. She with shameless audacity kept pestering the judge until he did what was right.

She wanted justice. Jesus says, and will not God bring about justice? For his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night, will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will we find faith on the earth that God will do it.

So, he is saying clearly God will uphold justice. It's just what the prayers are praying for. So Jesus is not censoring these Psalms.

So, I find that a useful second step. They're not only concerned about right and wrong and moral indignation, but Jesus upholds that God will avenge the wrongs. And again, compare Matthew 7.23 with Psalm 6.8. And he talks about final judgment.

He says, then they will go away to eternal punishment, but righteous to eternal life. He projects the judgment is in the future, eternal punishment, and eternal life. So, we'll say more about that.

But God, the point I'm making is Jesus upholds the notion of justice. That's not contradictory to God now praying for their salvation before the time of justice. Another point, C, the prayers are faithful.

They trust God, not themselves, to avenge gross injustices against them. In other words, these are prayers of faith. They are not avenging themselves.

They are depending upon God to avenge them. Those are great statements of faith. What the Bible will not tolerate is the person who avenges himself.

We saw that in Psalm 8.2 to eliminate the foe and the self-avenger who takes it into his own hands instead of depending upon God. So, they're faithful. They're trusting that God will avenge because they can't avenge for themselves, the pious.

They can depend upon the state. They can depend upon God, but David will not avenge himself. He wouldn't even, on Saul, he wouldn't avenge himself in spite of gross injustice because Saul had been anointed and he was God's property.

God had to dispose of his property. He could not dispose of God's property. So he couldn't do it for himself.

He had to depend upon God. These are not implications to call down curses upon someone, but prayers, and petitions, depending upon God. And that's totally consistent with Old Testament theology.

This is seen in the life of David says Kidner. There had been few men more capable of generosity under personal attack than David, as he proved by his attitudes towards Saul and Absalom to say nothing of Shimei. Sarah, when she feels wronged by Abraham, says, either kick Haggai out of here or I go.

See, she doesn't do that. The Lord judged between me. She turns it over to God to right the wrong.

That's a prayer. That's a woman of faith that God will right the wrong. She doesn't take it into her own hands.

By contrast, the wicked avenge themselves as Lamech did. And he said, if God avenged Abel, he will avenge the wrong sevenfold. He will get revenge.

That's well, let's see, that's the descendant of Cain. Pardon? Yeah. Well, let's look it up.

I have a bit of Genesis 4 where I bungled up the verse. Let's go to Genesis 4 and get it straight. Lamech, there we are.

Genesis 4.23, Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zechar, listen to me. Wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me.

If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech 77 times. So, he does it. He killed a man and he avenged himself.

That needs more work. I should have my commentary here. But in any case, Lamech is being censored for avenging himself.

Yeah. Okay. Eduardo, page 169.

So far, I've said, they are righteous and they are just. I said, they are faithful and their prayers of faith that God will right the wrong. And D, they are ethical.

They are asking God to distinguish between right and wrong. And that's ethical. So I give this psalm, judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, according to my integrity, O my righteous God.

O righteous God, whose searches, minds, and hearts bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure. So they are edifying because they're ethical. They distinguish right from wrong.

Now the problem today is that we don't distinguish right and wrong. And they clearly identify what's wrong and what's right. And I think that's very important.

It ties in with all the others, but I think it's worth a separate point to make that point that they are ethical. E, page 170, they're righteous, faithful, ethical, and they are theocratic. That is, they are looking for the establishment of a kingdom of righteousness by the moral administrator of the universe.

The earthly king asked no more of the heavenly king than the latter asked of him. That is, God told the king to uphold justice, to deliver the oppressed, and punish the oppressor. That's justice, deliver the oppressed, punish the oppressor.

And that's what the king had to do. The king is asking no more of God than God asked of him. And he's asking God, as you as a king of kings, I'm asking you to uphold justice.

I think that's worth a separate sort of solution. Next, prayers are theocentric. They aim to see God praised for manifesting his righteousness and justice in the eyes of all.

In other words, if you have an administrator administration that doesn't uphold the law and doesn't uphold justice, it tarnishes the reputation of that administration. And so, therefore, these prayers are theocentric and they're praying that all the world will see that by punishing the wicked, that Israel worships a righteous God. So, they are concerned for a theocentric aim, which is to see God praised for manifesting his righteousness.

May those who delight in my vindication shout for joy and gladness. May they always say, the Lord be exalted, who delights in the wellbeing of his servants. My tongue will speak of your righteousness and of your praise all day long.

So, they're concerned for God's reputation. And that in turn goes right together with the next one is that they are evangelistic. That is, they aim for the conversion of the earth by letting all men or women see that the Lord is most high over all the earth.

That at the temple emissaries would come from other nations and that they would see that Israel's God upholds justice. So, may they ever be ashamed and dismayed. May they perish in disgrace.

Let them know that you, whose name is the Lord, that you alone are most high over all the earth. I meant to put a quote in there. Another point, they're just, they're faithful, they're righteous, they're theocratic, they're theocentric.

They are political, hoping that the world will see that Israel has a righteous God and the prayers are covenantal. That is to say, the wrong against the saint is seen as a wrong against God, that they are together with God. So, that when they are being persecuted, God is being persecuted because they represent God.

So, it says in Psalms, I endure scorn for your sake. Shame covers my face. I'm a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my own mother's son.

For zeal for your house consumes me and the insults of those who insult you fall on me. So, the wrongs being done are wrongs being done to God. I suggest the prayers are Oriental.

They're full of figures of speech. And I think some are hyperbolic. Furthermore, we should understand, and this is under Jay, that these maledictions are conditional.

That is all punishment is conditional. All prophecies of judgment are conditional. Prophecies don't automatically come to pass.

You might want to take a look at that in the famous temple sermon in Jeremiah chapter 18. If you want to turn with me there. He goes down to the potter's house

and he discovers that you can give a prophecy, but if the people change, then the prophecy changes.

I'm saying that if the people change, the prayer changes. They are all conditional that if the enemy were to repent, these maledictions would be lifted. They wouldn't be there.

But here's the prophecy. This is the word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah. This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord.

Go down to the potter's house and there I will give you my message. So, I went down to the potter's house. I saw him working at the wheel, but the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands.

So, the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seen best to him. Then the word of the Lord said to me, he said, cannot I do with you Israel as this potter does, declares the Lord. Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand Israel.

If at any time I announce that a nation or a kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down, and destroyed. And if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. And if at another time I announce that nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted.

And if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it. So, prophecy is always contingent upon a person's response. So that if it predicts doom and the people repent, the doom will not come to pass.

If it predicts good and the people turn to evil, the good will not come to pass. We often say promises and prophecies are sure. They're certain to come to fulfillment.

They're always conditional upon how people respond. And I'm suggesting that in prayer, yes, he's going to judge, but understand if they repent, then God's blessing will flow on them. I've found that helpful for me to understand.

They're not in cement that God's going to zap them regardless. They have a chance to repent. Oh, I think it does.

I really doubt it. Yeah, that's true. Right.

I know it's just, it is frightening. You're right, Mike. Again, prayer must be held in dialectical tension with the concept of divine mercy and grace.

There is always mercy and grace and the prayers are political. I'll let it go with that. My conclusion, these prayers conform to sound doctrine and they are profitable for doctrine and for correction and instruction in righteousness that we may be equipped unto every good work.

I thank God for these prayers. They're edified. They're ethical.

They are faithful and trusting. They are God-oriented for his praise. However, I do not think they're appropriate for our age in the light of Jesus' teaching.

Prayer for justice apart from praying for forgiveness is inappropriate for the new Israel. The judgment is now postponed to the final day of judgment. The church does not enact judgment now.

It trusts God for the future. You have that famous illustration. I think you're familiar with Jesus' use in John 4 of Isaiah 61.

No. Well, that's the passage, but there's a tremendous contrast between Isaiah and Jesus' use of it. Well, let's take a look at it.

It's that's right on Isaiah 61 and verses one through four. No, verses one through three and four. Okay.

The Spirit of the sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, released from darkness for the prisoner, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God. We'll stop there.

Now turn over to Luke 4 and see how Jesus uses it in identifying it for himself. Luke 4.18 and keep that passage open. You'll see how Jesus modifies it.

Luke chapter four and verses 18 through 20. This is his first sermon in the temple at Nazareth. We get the context in verse 16.

He went to Nazareth where he had been brought up. On the Sabbath day, he went into the synagogue as was his custom. He stood up to read and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him.

Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written, the Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Then he rolled up the scroll and gave it back.

Do you see the contrast? You see where he cut it off? He read Isaiah 61 and he stopped in the middle of the verse. And he says in verse 61, he was sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim freedom for the captives, release from darkness for the prisoners, proclaim the years of the Lord's favor. And he rolled up the book.

He did not read and the day of vengeance of our God. This is not the day of God's vengeance. He didn't come to bring God's vengeance.

He stopped. Very instructive. This is not the day of vengeance.

This is the day of God's favor. This is the day when we offer salvation. This is the time of salvation, the day of salvation.

We live within that understanding and that context of the day of God's favor. So, we pray that our enemies will find salvation, will find release from their prison and all that darkness and God's favor. And we trust God's vengeance for the future that he will do what's just.

So, we live in faith. So, my point is they are doctrinally sound but practically inappropriate for the church. That's what I conclude from my understanding of the scripture.

We can now more clearly distinguish the sin and the sinner. Verse two, the kingdom comes spiritually today, not carnally. We're not establishing an earthly kingdom.

We leave judgment in the hands of God. That's what was the unjust judge. I'm not too happy with number five.

I'll let it go at that. And so, I'll stop the lecture there. And so, I find that helps me toward a solution toward a very difficult problem in the Psalter.

Okay. So, that's the lecture on implicative Psalms. Well, I don't hear as well.

I've got two hearing aids, Brittany. So, I got to come over here to hear it. So, based upon your analysis and the qualifications that you get, where would you place Psalm 137 about the Babylonians? Blessed be the one who bashes the baby.

Where would you put that on your scale of A to L? Is it theocratic? Is it theocentric? Is it a little bit of where would you have it? I didn't thank you very much, Brittany. Turn back, if you will, in your notes in which I really deal with the Psalm as a whole. And this is on page 162.

So, the question is, where would I put Psalm? How would I handle Psalm 162? And how do I understand that in light of everything we've been talking about? Here's the Psalm. By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked for songs.

Our tormentors demanded songs of joy. They said, sing us one of the songs of Zion. And we now know what they are.

How could we sing songs of the Lord while in a foreign land? If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you. If I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy.

Remember, O Lord, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. Tear it down, they cried, tear it down to its foundations. Daughter of Babylon, by that daughter, there's just a, the word for city in Hebrew is feminine.

And therefore cities are feminine and called daughter. And we used to be daughter of Babylon. That's confusing.

So, NIV translated daughter of Babylon. That's the intention. Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction.

Blessed is the one, that is, we discuss blessed, that is one who will be rewarded in the future. Blessed is the one who repays you according to what you have done to us. But blessed is the one who does that.

Blessed is the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks. In verses one through four, we have the congregation of lament. The fact is they are refusing to sing a song in Babylon.

And the reason is it would be throwing pearls before swine in effect. It won't do it. Now they have three implications that God will punish against self, against the Edomites, and against the Babylonians.

First against self, against his hand that he will not have the skill to play, and his tongue that he won't have the ability to talk and sing anymore. Against the Edomites for gloating over Zion's destruction and against Babylon for raising Zion. I'll skip Slack's comment.

Page 164, Tu Nota Bene. Zion is the place of God's saving presence on earth. That's the locus of salvation.

They want to destroy, they mock, they're mocking the place God has chosen to bring blessing on the earth. That's the context of it. The passion that throbs in his implication is not mere nationalism, but zeal for God's kingdom.

And that's what he has zeal for God's kingdom. Another one, Oriental warfare spared neither women nor children. The prayer is for strict justice.

The prayer practice aimed to terminate further. It was aimed to terminate further revenge. But there are exceptions if the condemned repent.

So, in other words, when the Babylonians destroyed Israel, they destroyed their babies. That's the nature of Oriental warfare. Strict justice would be the other side of it.

I know it's hard, but that's the nature of just warfare. Furthermore, we have to understand there are exceptions. In other words, according to the law, it says, when the Lord, your God brings you into the land, you are entering to possess and drive out before you many nations, Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you.

And when the Lord, your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. You cannot coexist. You must destroy the evil totally, make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.

That's the Old Testament. Rid the earth of evil and make no treaty with them. But notice what happens when they actually get into the land.

What I call attention to is Joshua 2. You have Rahab, the prostitute, Canaanite, and she repents. She acknowledges Israel's God. The law did not have her in view.

She obtained mercy. This is not nationalism. This is a spiritual war.

And when she hid the spies, which was her faith in the Lord and not in Baal and the Canaanite gods, she was brought into the covenant family. Interestingly enough, Achan, the Judean, who was within the tribe of Judah, when he kept the Babylonian garment and violated the Torah, the instructions of holy war, it was not a war of plunder. It was a war on behalf of righteousness.

So, when he violated and used it for his own aggrandizement, his own wealth and prestige of garments, and so forth, then he is put to death. The harlot is saved. The Judean is put to death.

So, you have to read the law in light of the law. See the problem is some people just simply go by the law. The law is the entire narrative.

You have to interpret the law in light of what happened. The law, according to Deuteronomy 22 is both David and Bathsheba should have been put to death. She never cried out.

I don't want to judge, but I'm just saying the Bible is a falter. So, I'm not either, but I'm only saying, according to the law, they should have been put to death, the adulteress and the adulterer should have been put to death, but David repented. He couldn't restore life to Uriah.

He couldn't destroy, give back purity, Bathsheba, but he was forgiven. And I would say with the Babylonians, if anyone repented and repented of the evil that they had inflicted, Israel had done them no harm. It was an unjust thing.

They were just plundering them to destroy their temple and get their silver and get their gold and make them slaves. I mean, it was just evil, wicked. If any of them repented, this prayer would not be applicable.

That's why I was saying these maledictions are all conditional on the fact that you're not repenting. And so normally children follow their parents and all the hatred we have normally is because children were raised in a certain context or they're raised in the context of love within the church. So that's how I've, Brittany, that may be helpful in understanding that very difficult psalm.

It helps me. So, thank you for asking the question. Yes, Eduardo.

Your kingdom come, your will be done. Yes, but I'm not sure he means by that your kingdom come with the sword. I think he means your kingdom come through the faithful prayers of your people and through this work of the Holy Spirit.

So, I don't think he's saying that they're going to bring, this would be Islam. We don't bring the kingdom in with the sword. We bring it in with prayer, and grace.

So, the symbol of our symbol is the cross. The symbol of Islam is the sword. That's what we're discussing.

It's a radical, radical difference between them. Absolutely. You can't miss it.

And the Marines, Thomas Jefferson is the one who understood Islam and he understood they were our enemy. I understand the reason the Marines have these high collars is so that the Tunisians couldn't cut off their heads with their swords. That's what I understand.

He understood the danger of Islam. He didn't want to go to war, but they were exacting back then, a ferocious amount of money of \$225,000 a year. There was extortion money and Thomas Jefferson finally had it.

And that's why we think from the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli, we will fight our country's battle on the land as on the sea. I didn't have a thought, but that's helpful. Thank you.

Very good. Dr. Walke, one more follow-up question, if I could. Earlier, we were talking about the distinctions between the response of the church versus the response of the state.

So, it's a Christ culture kind of question. Well, let's just say, what do you do if you've got the Christian who is in the office of the presidency, who is having to battle against ISIS? So I'm always tempted to ask the question, I mean, do you act as a representative of the church because you are a Christian, even though you're not representing the church in that position, you're representing the state. So, but does that present a moral dilemma to the person holding that office because you are a Christian? For me, it wouldn't.

For me, it would be, I was elected to a political office on behalf of the state. If I were elected to be a bishop of a church and I represent that people, that would be a different story. But I'm in a political arena and I'm acting therefore in a political arena.

So, I wouldn't have any ambiguity there to use the sword. I think it would be wrong not to use the sword if I have the capability and I see wrong. But it seems to me they're all too ready to protect Islam and all too ready not to protect Christians.

Why? 250,000 Yazidis and Kurds and people in Iraq. You know, the church has gone from 2 million people down to less than 300,000. It's been a horrible thing for the believers over there.

That's right. It's been the history of the church in the Middle Ages. The Pope was, they used the sword on behalf of the church and they killed the saints.

That was within the church. As a result of that, they had the division between Holland and Belgium. Belgium is largely Roman Catholic because they killed off all the Protestants.

But we're here. It's been the history of the church. It's just part of it.

This is the profound thought of God and he will win out. That's our hope. Yeah, this is why you can think hard on it.

That's what school is about. Oh, yes. I think they are.

I think that's a good point. I think we, well, we have to resist the devil. I'm not sure I want to make a dichotomy here.

I'm going to resist the devil, but I'm also going to know that it is God who has to defeat him. We're engaged in spiritual warfare. At the end of Ephesians 4, we put on the whole armor of God.

What covers the whole thing is prayer. So, therefore I want to put on that whole armor, spiritual armor of faith and sort of the Spirit, but I have to have it clothed in prayer that it might be victorious.

This is Dr. Bruce Waltke in his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 13, Imprecatory Psalms.