

TRUSTING THE JUDGE OF ALL (Psa 94)

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This past year, 260 million Christians lived in high persecution areas; 2,983 Christians martyred; 3,711 believers detained without trial, arrested, sentenced or imprisoned (Open Doors USA). How should we respond? Psa 94 is not everything but it is a start: 1) we trust the sovereign LORD and pray, 2) we urge others to trust Him, 3) we testify of His faithfulness to us. Things we must NEVER do: 1) take revenge into our own hands, 2) harden our hearts toward our persecutors, 3) forget God's mercies while we suffer, 4) lose hope that in the end, God will set everything right, justifying and rewarding the righteous, and condemning and punishing the wicked.

In a world of injustice, we keep trusting the LORD, the Judge of all.

American Christians are persecuted far less, but we should sympathize deeply with those worse off (Heb 13.3). Their suffering should be felt in our hearts and often found in our prayers. We should pray as one with them because truly, they are our beloved brethren in Christ. If you find it hard to say amen to every word of Psa 94, either you don't know Christ or you haven't taken to heart the plight and pains of the persecuted.

I. Our Prayer of Trust (1-7). Prayer itself an exercise of faith (Rom 10.14).

- We plead for justice (1, 2). "O" → intense emotion. "LORD God," God who causes to be, extremely reverential title. We plead for God to deliver us (implied) from our persecutors (esp. human governments, v. 20) by taking away their power and giving them exactly what they deserve—no more, no less. Divine "vengeance" is solely God's prerogative (Rom 12.19). It is perfect justice, not capricious. When He judges, His perfections shine forth. It is right to pray for this and to praise God when it is done (Rev 19.1, 2).
- We protest the injustice (3-7). It looks like they are winning (3) and this is intolerable. They obscure God's glory and usurp His place by their arrogant boasting (4). They also torment and murder His weak ones (5, 6). They think God will never punish them and thus they impugn His knowledge, power, and faithfulness (7). Public sacrilege and violence against Christians deeply trouble every godly person.

⇒ When we are trusting God, we pray like this!

II. Our Recommendation of Trust (8-15). Lovingly, we call to repentance. Their hateful treatment of others will boomerang except they repent.

- Your persecutions are senseless (8-11). They are "brutish," stupid, dull-hearted (Heb. lex.). "Fools" (opp. of "wise," spiritually). Moral badness joined to hard-heartedness (8). God who gave them ears and eyes will hear and see all that they do (9). God who disciplines sinners and teaches the ignorant surely knows their sins and will "correct" or "rebuke" (alt.) them. He knows their thoughts

are "vanity," empty, worthless (Heb. lex.). Such censure may bring felt conviction leading to contrition, repentance, and salvation.

- Your victim is beloved by God (12-15). Don't mess with HIM (ult. our LJC, Matt 3.17) or any in Him! A reverie in prayer about the case of a righteous man. "Blessed" (12) is shorthand for the most enviable state of well-being, happiness (even as persecuted). He has the great advantage of divine chastening/instruction (12) with a view toward his ultimate rest from adversity (13a). His persecutors, by their sin, are only digging their own graves (13b). Counterintuitively, God's people in distress are still better off, constantly His loved ones, kept according to His covenant, His "inheritance" ("heritage," v. 5), preserved by Him as most precious (14). Verse 15 is obscure; possible translation: "For justice will prevail, and all the morally upright will be vindicated."

⇒ The only hope for persecutors is that they may realize their hostility is senseless, dangerous to THEM, and repent, trusting the Lord.

III. My Testimony of Trust (16-23). Individual, personal testimony of a truly righteous man, suffering persecution, yet trusting the Lord.

- The LORD is my Savior (16-19). I need a deliverer from many evil threats (16). The LORD has been my deliverer (17). Proof is my survival and praise! On the verge of being lost (apostasy or death), the LORD held me up (18). He quelled my anxious thoughts and gave me comfort and joy (19). "According to the multitude of my griefs within my heart, thy consolations have soothed my soul" (LXX, Brenton) → His comforts are sufficient for me. Our testimony, yes?
- The LORD is their Judge (20-23). A corrupt throne that brings misery to God's people by unjust decrees has no fellowship with God (20). A conspiracy of powerful persecutors condemn the innocent man to death (21), but he still trusts in the LORD and finds God to be his refuge (22). This God who, wisely and mercifully, lets such injustices continue for now, will finally rise up against these enemies and pay them back according to their wicked deeds, cutting them off eternally from all His mercies (23). When the Judge of all finally comes, He will smite the earth with His rod, slay the wicked with His breath, and then all the violent men will be removed in His wrath, and they shall not hurt nor destroy any more in His new creation, because the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11.4-9)!

Our LJC has exactly this faith and spirit. He was the greatest sufferer of persecution with the greatest trust in God, and He is our great Example (1 Pet 2.23; cf. 4.19). He came the first time as Savior (John 3.17) and will come again on the last day as Judge of all (2 Tim 4.1). Ω