

**Psalms 9-18
are a second
group of
"trouble
psalms"**

• Perhaps from the time of David's conflict with Saul

**Extermination
of
wickedness
one day is
part of the
good news of
salvation**

• Psalms 9 and 10 are connected

**Joyful
gratitude to
God**

**The hope of
an end to evil**

Psalms 9 and 10 rejoice in the certainty that sin will be wiped out of existence sooner or later! It was David who wrote it (*A Psalm of David*, says the title). Psalms 9-18 continue the 'trouble-psalms' (as I call them) which David wrote during his various conflicts with his enemies. Perhaps Psalms 9-18 were written at the time of David's conflict with Saul. Psalms 9-10 deal with the abolition of evil; Psalm 11 deals with the foundations of society and the need for persistent optimism. Then Psalm 12 refers to slander, Psalm 13 to delay, Psalm 14 with the folly of godlessness, Psalm 15 with the qualifications for fellowship with God, Psalm 16 with a security that can continue even in the face of the threat of death. In Psalm 17 David is surrounded by enemies and Psalm 18 explicitly tells us that it refers to a time when David was rescued from the hand of King Saul.

We begin with a conclusion! However great our conflicts may be we can take it that evil will one day be entirely abolished. The extermination of evil is certain. When men and women sank into wickedness in the days before Noah, God said 'I will blot out man ... from the face of the land' ¹. Something similar happened to Sodom and Gomorrah. God destroyed the cities of the plain, so that when Abraham went back to look at them he saw only 'the smoke' which 'went up like the smoke of a furnace' ². Extermination of wickedness is part of the good news of salvation. David rejoiced in the thought of it.

Psalms 9-10 could be a single psalm that somehow became divided into two, or it could be that two psalms were somehow brought together to make one psalm. I shall take it as a psalm that was written in two stages with a part 2 developing a theme in part 1. The whole two-part psalm is loosely based on the Hebrew alphabet. Verses 1-2 both begin with *aleph* - the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Verse 3 begins with *beth*. Verse 5 has *gimel*. *Daleth* is missing. Verse 6 has *he*; 7-10, *waw* (4 times); 11, *zayin*; 13, *cheth*; 15, *teth*; 17, *yodh*; 18, *kaph*. At that point we are half-way through the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 10 begins to continue the acrostic, for *lamedh* appears as the first letter of the first verse of Psalm 10. But then the acrostic breaks down. *Mem* is missing (unless we are meant to hear it in *bimezimmoth* in verse 2). *Nun* comes mid-sentence in verse 3 (*naphsho... ni'ets*). *Samekh* can be heard in *besukkah* (verse 9) and *ayin* in the repeated word for poor (*ani... ani*, verse 9) and at the beginning of verse 13. *Pe* seems to be missing (although it is found in *pihu* in verse 7, and *penau* in verse 11). *Tsade* is missing (or out of order in verse 5). But then the psalm ends in a more regularly acrostic manner with *qoph*, *resh*, *shin*, *tau*, appearing at the beginning of verses 12, 14, 15, 17. It looks as if David began an acrostic psalm celebrating the triumph of righteousness over wickedness ¹ and then later expanded it with another psalm in which he prayed that the triumph would happen soon! The expansion continued the acrostic pattern, but only in a partial manner.

In Psalm 9 the poet is celebrating the extermination of evil. Evil will not last for ever. It will be removed from planet earth. Psalm 10 will be a prayer that this triumph might not be delayed.

David begins with an expression of joyful gratitude to God.

¹ I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart;
I will recount all of your wonderful deeds
² I will be glad and exult in you;
I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

We rejoice in the hope of an end to evil. In 9:3-10 David is rejoicing in the thought of wickedness coming to a final end. In any situation there will come a point where wickedness is turned back. It cannot continue for ever.

¹ Genesis 6:7

² Genesis 19:28

¹ Psalm 9

• *God's doing*

And when wickedness is removed and destroyed it is happening because of what God is doing. David's enemies turn back because God has decided it is time that the wicked should fall - and then God removes them from the scene altogether. God only has to appear and his mere presence utterly ruins his enemies. When Jesus said 'I am He', his enemies fell to the ground at his presence ¹. He could have utterly destroyed them in that second.

¹ John 18:6

• *God acts in righteousness*

God acts in righteousness. He did something for David which totally changed the situation and ruined his enemies.

³When my enemies turn back,
they stumble and perish before your presence.
⁴For you worked for me a just decision;
you sat enthroned as a judge over my case, giving righteous judgement.

• *God reveals who is right and wrong*

God eventually reveals who is right and who is wrong.

⁵You have rebuked the nations; you have made the wicked perish;
you have blotted out their name forever and ever.

• *God's punishment is irreversible*

After God rebukes the nations he eventually - and the key word is 'eventually' - destroys them so thoroughly that their very names will be forgotten. Wickedness will be exterminated. Righteousness will utterly and totally prevail. It will be 'eternal punishment' in the sense that it will never be reversed.

⁶The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins;
their cities you rooted out; the very memory of them has perished.

God's kingship

The extermination of wickedness is a reflection of the kingship of God.

⁷But Yahweh sits enthroned forever;
he has established his throne for judgement..
⁸And he judges the world with righteousness;
he judges the peoples with uprightness.

Good news

The extermination of wickedness is good news! It gives hope for oppressed people. He helps the needy now; and he promises a total end to oppression eventually.



⁹And Yahweh is a stronghold for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble

• *Hope for the oppressed*

The knowledge that God's righteousness will be finally victorious inspires faith in the here-and-now. David says:

• *Faith in the here-and-now*

¹⁰And those who know your name put their trust in you,
for you, Yahweh, have not forsaken those who seek you

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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