

A Short Study in the Problem of Psalm 109Tom V. Taylor
Faith SeminaryOpening the Subject

This paper compares the interests and activities of Psalm 109 with Matthew 5:43-44. It is part of a wider range of treatment of imprecatory (cursing) material in the Bible and as such neither fully exegetes the Psalm nor fully discloses the complete import of Matthew. It seeks chiefly to show the inherent harmony in passages which otherwise seem far apart. The Matthew passage seems to forbid any ill-wishing to a foe. The 109th Psalm is fairly full of it. If that antithesis is kept in mind, it will form a handy background for the rest of the study.

First, a word on the current controversy. Much modern "scholarship" has deemed portions of the Bible morally inferior. Among these sections are the Old Testament accounts of war, genocides, and individual sins, as well as the "imprecatory Psalms", the Psalms of cursing. That godly men should express themselves in this manner is regarded as contrary to the teaching and examples of Jesus and some popular liberals have suggested that such passages should be deleted from the Scripture.

But even among more moderate minds one may be perplexed about some outpouring of wrath by a Bible writer. Accepting the inspiration of Scripture, we may yet find ourselves timidly asking "Why" after strong expressions of hate. We may not be as verbose or emphatic as some critics but our inner beings may lean reluctantly in the same direction. Therefore some study in this general area is needful not only for a