

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

The psalmist speaks against his inveterate enemies, Psalm 109:1-5. He prays against them, and denounces God's judgments, Psalm 109:6-15. The reason on which this is grounded, Psalm 109:16-20. He prays for his own safety and salvation, using many arguments to induce God to have mercy upon him, Psalm 109:21-31.

The title of this Psalm, To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, has already often occurred, and on it the Versions offer nothing new. The Syriac says it is a Psalm of David, when the people, without his knowledge, made Absalom king; on which account he was slain: but to us (Christians) he details the passion of Christ. That it contains a prophecy against Judas and the enemies of our Lord, is evident from Acts 1:20. Probably, in its primary meaning, (for such a meaning it certainly has), it may refer to Ahithophel. The execrations in it should be rendered in the future tense, as they are mere prophetic denunciations of God's displeasure against sinners. Taken in this light, it cannot be a stumbling-block to any person. God has a right to denounce those judgments which he will inflict on the workers of iniquity. But perhaps the whole may be the execrations of David's enemies against himself. See on Psalm 109:20 (note). Ahithophel, who gave evil counsel against David, and being frustrated hanged himself, was no mean prototype of Judas the traitor; it was probably on this account that St. Peter, Acts 1:20, applied it to the case of Judas, as a prophetic declaration concerning him, or at least a subject that might be accommodated to his case.

Verse 1

Hold not thy peace - Be not silent; arise and defend my cause.

Verse 2

The mouth of the wicked and - the deceitful are opened against me - Many persons are continually uttering calumnies against me. Thou knowest my heart and its innocence; vindicate my uprightness against these calumniators.

Verse 4

For my love they are my adversaries - In their behalf I have performed many acts of kindness, and they are my adversaries notwithstanding; this shows principles the most vicious, and hearts the most corrupt. Many of the fathers and commentators have understood the principal part of the things spoken here as referring to our Lord, and the treatment he received from the Jews; and whatever the original intention was, they may safely be applied to this case, as the Psalm 109:2, Psalm 109:3, Psalm 109:4, and Psalm 109:5 are as highly illustrative of the conduct of the Jewish rulers towards our Lord as the following verses are of the conduct of Judas; but allowing these passages to be prophetic, it is the Jewish state rather than an individual, against which these awful denunciations are made, as it seems to be represented here under the person and character of an extremely hardened and wicked man; unless we consider the curses to be those of David's enemies. See the note on Psalm 109:20 (note).

But I give myself unto prayer - $\text{וַאֲנִי תְפִלָּה}^{\text{TM}}$ $\text{וַאֲנִי תְפִלָּה}^{\text{TM}}$ (vaani thephillah); $\text{וַאֲנִי תְפִלָּה}^{\text{TM}}$ And I prayer. The Chaldee: $\text{וַאֲנִי תְפִלָּה}^{\text{TM}}$ (vaana atsalley), $\text{וַאֲנִי תְפִלָּה}^{\text{TM}}$ but I pray. This gives a good sense, which is followed by the Vulgate, Septuagint, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Anglo-Saxon. The Syriac, $\text{וַאֲנִי תְפִלָּה}^{\text{TM}}$ will pray for them. This, not so correctly; as dreadful imprecations, not prayers, follow. But probably the whole ought to be interpreted according to the mode laid down, Psalm 109:20. The translation and paraphrase in the old Psalter are very simple: -

Trans. For that thynge that thai sulde hafe lufed me, thai bakbited me; bot I prayed.

Par - That is, that sulde haf lufed me for I was godson, and thai bakbited me sayande, in Belzebub he castes oute fendes; bot I prayed for thaim.

Verse 6

Let Satan stand at his right hand - As the word $\text{שָׂטָן}^{\text{TM}}$ (satan) means an adversary simply, though sometimes it is used to express the evil spirit Satan, I think it best to preserve here its grammatical meaning: $\text{וַאֲנִי תְפִלָּה}^{\text{TM}}$ Let an adversary stand at his right hand: $\text{וַאֲנִי תְפִלָּה}^{\text{TM}}$ i.e., Let him be opposed and thwarted in all his purposes.

All the Versions have devil, or some equivocal word. The Arabic has (eblees), the chief of the apostate spirits; but the name is probably corrupted from the Greek $\text{δίαβολος}^{\text{TM}}$ (diabolos); from which the Latin diabolus. the Italian diavolo, the Spanish diablo, the French diable, the Irish or Celtic (diabal), the Dutch (duivel), the German teufel, the Anglo-Saxon (deofal), and the English devil, are all derived. The original, $\text{וַאֲנִי תְפִלָּה}^{\text{TM}}$, comes from $\text{וַאֲנִי תְפִלָּה}^{\text{TM}}$ to shoot or pierce through.

Verse 7

immaculate innocence by his resurrection from the dead.

The whole of this Psalm is understood by many as referring solely to Christ, the traitor Judas, and the wicked Jews. This is the view taken of it in the analysis.