

PSALM 94: 1 LORD, you God to whom vengeance belongs, you God to whom vengeance belongs, shine out.

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An appeal to God against oppressors, Psa 94:1-7. Expostulations with the workers of iniquity, Psa 94:8-11. God's merciful dealings with his followers, Psa 94:12-15; and their confidence in him, Psa 94:16-19. The punishment of the wicked foretold, Psa 94:20-23.

This Psalm has no title either in the Hebrew or Chaldee. The Vulgate, Septuagint, Ethiopic, and Arabic, have "A Psalm of David, for the fourth day of the week;" but this gives us no information on which we can rely. In three of Kennicott's MSS. it is written as a part of the preceding. It is probably a prayer of the captives in Babylon for deliverance; and was written by the descendants of Moses, to whom some of the preceding Psalms have been attributed. It contains a description of an iniquitous and oppressive government, such as that under which the Israelites lived in Babylon.

Verse 1

O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth - God is the author of retributive justice, as well as of mercy. This retributive justice is what we often term vengeance, but perhaps improperly; for vengeance with us signifies an excitement of angry passions, in order to gratify a vindictive spirit, which supposes itself to have received some real injury; whereas what is here referred to is that simple act of justice which gives to all their due.

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PSALM 94: 2 Rise up, you judge of the earth. Pay back the proud what they deserve.

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Verse 2

Lift up thyself - Exert thy power.

Render a reward to the proud - To the Babylonians, who oppress and insult us.

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PSALM 94: 3 LORD, how long will the wicked, how long will the wicked triumph?

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Verse 3

How long shall the wicked triumph? - The wicked are often in prosperity; and this only shows us of how little worth riches are in the sight of God, when he bestows them on the most contemptible of mortals. But their time and prosperity have their bounds.

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PSALM 94: 4 They pour out arrogant words. All the evildoers boast.

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Verse 4

They utter and speak - יבִּיאוּ yabbiu, their hearts get full of pride and insolence; and then, from the abundance of such vile hearts, the mouth speaks; and the speech is of hard things, threatening which they are determined to execute, boastings of their power, authority, etc.

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PSALM 94: 5 They break your people in pieces, LORD, and afflict your heritage.

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Verse 5

They break in pieces thy people - This was true of the Babylonians. Nehuchadnezzar slew many; carried the rest into captivity; ruined Jerusalem; overturned the temple; sacked, pillaged, and destroyed all the country.

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PSALM 94: 6 They kill the widow and the alien, and murder the fatherless.

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Verse 6

They slay the widow - Nebuchadnezzar carried on his wars with great cruelty. He carried fire and sword every where; spared neither age, sex, nor condition. The widow, the orphan, and the stranger, persons in the most desolate condition of life, were not distinguished from others by his ruthless sword.

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PSALM 94: 7 They say, "The LORD will not see, neither will Jacob's God consider."

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Verse 7

The Lord shall not see - This was either the language of infidelity or insult. Indeed, what could the Babylonians know of the true God? They might consider him as the God of a district or province, who knew nothing and did nothing out of his own territories.

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PSALM 94: 8 Consider, you senseless among the people; you fools, when will you be wise?

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Verse 8

Understand, ye brutish - These are the same expressions as in Psa 92:6 (note), on which see the note.

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PSALM 94: 9 He who implanted the ear, won't he hear? He who formed the eye, won't he see?

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## Verse 9

He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? - This is allowed to be an unanswerable mode of argumentation. Whatever is found of excellence in the creature, must be derived from the Creator, and exist in him in the plenitude of infinite excellence. God, says St. Jerome, is all eye, because he sees all; he is all hand, because he does all things; he is all foot, for he is every where present. The psalmist does not say, He that planted the ear, hath he not an ear? He that formed the eye, hath he not eyes? No; but, Shall he not hear? Shall he not see! And why does he say so? To prevent the error of humanizing God, of attributing members or corporeal parts to the infinite Spirit. See Calmet.

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PSALM 94: 10 He who disciplines the nations, won't he punish? He who teaches man knows.

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## Verse 10

He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? - You, who are heathens, and heathens of the most abandoned kind.

He that teacheth man knowledge - We here supply shall not he know? But this is not acknowledged by the original, nor by any of the Versions.

Indeed it is not necessary; for either the words contain a simple proposition, "It is he who teacheth man knowledge," or this clause should be read in connection with Psa 94:11 : "Jehovah, who teacheth man knowledge, knoweth the devices of man, that they are vanity." As he teaches knowledge to man, must he not know all the reasonings and devices of the human heart?

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PSALM 94: 11 The LORD knows the thoughts of man, that they are futile.

PSALM 94: 12 Blessed is the man whom you discipline, LORD, and teach out of your law;

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## Verse 12

Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest - תיַסְרֶנּוּ teyasserennu, whom thou instructest; and teachest him out of thy law. Two points here are worthy of our most serious regard:

1. God gives knowledge to man: gives him understanding and reason.
2. He gives him a revelation of himself; he places before that reason and understanding his Divine law.

This is God's system of teaching; and the human intellect is his gift, which enables man to understand this teaching. We perhaps may add a third thing here; that as by sin the understanding is darkened, he gives the Holy Spirit to dispel this darkness from the intellect, in order that his word may be properly apprehended and understood. But he gives no new faculty; he removes the impediments from the old, and invigorates it by his Divine energy.

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PSALM 94: 13 that you may give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit is dug for the wicked.

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Verse 13

That thou mayest give him rest - He whom God instructs is made wise unto salvation; and he who is thus taught has rest in his soul, and peace and confidence in adversity.

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PSALM 94: 14 For the LORD won't reject his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.

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Verse 14

The Lord will not cast off his people - Though they are now suffering under a grievous and oppressive captivity, yet the Lord hath not utterly cast them off. They are his inheritance, and he will again restore them to their own land.

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PSALM 94: 15 For judgement will return to righteousness. All the upright in heart shall follow it.

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Verse 15

But judgment shall return unto righteousness - If we read יושב yosheb, shalt sit, for ישוב yashub, shall return, which is only placing the ו vau before the ש shin instead of after it, we have the following sense: Until the just one shall sit in judgment, and after him all the upright in heart. Cyrus has the epithet צדק tsedek, the just one, in different places in the Prophet Isaiah. See Isa 41:2, Isa 41:10; Isa 45:8; Isa 51:5. It was Cyrus who gave liberty to the Jews, who appeared as their deliverer and conductor to their own land, and they are all represented as following in his train.

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PSALM 94: 16 Who will rise up for me against the wicked? Who will stand up for me against the evildoers?

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Verse 16

Who will rise up for me - Who is he that shall be the deliverer of thy people? Who will come to our assistance against these wicked Babylonians?

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PSALM 94: 17 Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul would have soon lived in silence.

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Verse 17

Unless the Lord had been my help - Had not God in a strange manner supported us while under his chastising hand, we had been utterly cut off.

My soul had almost dwelt in silence - The Vulgate has in inferno, in hell or the infernal world; the Septuagint, τῷ ἄδη, in the invisible world.

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PSALM 94: 18 When I said, "My foot is slipping!" Your loving kindness, LORD, held me up.

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Verse 18

When I said, My foot slippeth - When I found myself so weak and my enemy so strong, that I got first off my guard, and then off my center of gravity, and my fall appeared inevitable: -

Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up - 'יסעדני' yisadeni, propped me. It is a metaphor taken from any thing falling, that is propped, shored up, or buttressed. How often does the mercy of God thus prevent the ruin of weak believers, and of those who have been unfaithful!

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PSALM 94: 19 In the multitude of my thoughts within me, your comforts delight my soul.

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Verse 19

In the multitude of my thoughts - Of my griefs, (dolorum, Vulgate); my sorrows, (οδυνων, Septuagint). According to the multitude of my trials and distresses, have been the consolations which thou hast afforded me. Or, While I have been deeply meditating on thy wondrous grace and mercy, Divine light has broken in upon my soul, and I have been filled with delight.

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PSALM 94: 20 Shall the throne of wickedness have fellowship with you, which brings about mischief by statute?

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Verse 20

Shall the throne of iniquity - No wicked king, judge, or magistrate shall ever stand in thy presence. No countenance shall such have from thy grace or providence.

Which frameth mischief - Devise, plan, and execute, as if they acted by a positive law, and were strictly enjoined to do what they so much delighted in.

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PSALM 94: 21 They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.

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Verse 21

They gather themselves together - In every thing that is evil, they are in unity. The devil, his angels, and his children, all join and draw together when they have for their object the destruction of the works of the Lord. But this was particularly the case with respect to the poor Jews among the Babylonians: they were objects of their continual hatred, and they labored for their destruction.

This and the following verses have been applied to our Lord, and the treatment he met with both from his own countrymen and from the Romans. They pretended to "judge him according to the law, and framed mischief against him;" they "assembled together against the life of the righteous one," and "condemned innocent blood;" but God evidently interposed, and "brought upon them their own iniquity," according to their horrible imprecation: "His blood be upon us and upon our children!" God "cut them off in their own iniquity." All this had, in reference to him, a most literal fulfillment.

PSALM 94: 22 But the LORD has been my high tower, my God, the rock of my refuge.

#### Verse 22

The rock of my refuge - Alluding to those natural fortifications among rocks, which are frequent in the land of Judea.

PSALM 94: 23 He has brought on them their own iniquity, and will cut them off in their own wickedness. The LORD, our God, will cut them off.

#### Verse 23

Shall cut them off - This is repeated, to show that the destruction of the Babylonians was fixed and indubitable: and in reference to the Jews, the persecutors and murderers of our Lord and his apostles, it was not less so. Babylon is totally destroyed; not even a vestige of it remains. The Jews are no longer a nation; they are scattered throughout the world, and have no certain place of abode. They do not possess even one village on the face of the earth.

The last verse is thus translated and paraphrased in the old Psalter: -

Trans. And he sal yelde to thaim thair wickednes, and in thair malice he sall skater thaim: skater thaim sal Lorde oure God.

Par - Alswa say efter thair il entent, that thai wil do gude men harme; he sall yelde thaim pyne, and in thair malice thai sal be sundred fra the hali courte of hevене, and skatred emang the wiked fendes of hell.

For different views of several parts of this Psalm, see the Analysis.