

PSALM 129 vs 1

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This is the 10th of 15 psalms... sometimes called: **A Song of Ascents**... thought by some to be sung in praise to the LORD of glory... used in the all-night ceremony to begin **Passover**, **Pentecost** and **the Feast of Tabernacles**.

Charles Spurgeon wrote: I fail to see how this is a step beyond the previous Psalm; and yet it is clearly the song of an older, more tried individual, who looks back on a life of affliction in which he suffered all along, even from his youth. Inasmuch as patient endurance is a higher, or at least more difficult, grace than domestic love, the ascent or progress may perhaps be seen in that direction. For now, we know: some through the fire, some through the flood, some through great sorrow, but all through the blood.



Probably, if we knew more about the stations on the road to the Temple, we should see a reason for the order of these Psalms, for now, we must take the songs as we find them. It is a hymn mingled with sorrow and strong resolve, reminding us of Ruth, Amos and Habakkuk.

A Song of Ascents,

¹ Many times they persecuted me from my youth, may Israel / the one ruled by God now say:

² Many times they persecuted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me / they might have repeatedly given their best shot, but it was to no avail; they lost! If God be for us, who can be against us? what can man do to me?.

³ The s.o.b. plowers plowed on my back: they extended their furrows / NASB, the picture is a scourged man with welts on his back. No different than what Frederick Douglass and many others experienced; as if the sadistic enemy – which was as cowardly as they were cruel, delighting in their cruelty, they missed not an inch, but went from one end of the field to the other – Charles Spurgeon.

The criminal scourgers tore the flesh, as plough-men furrow a field. The people were maltreated by godless criminals given over to the romans with their cruel whips; the back of the nation was scored and furrowed by oppression... even with our tax-payer's stolen dollars.

⁴ The LORD is righteous: He cuts in two the cords of the wicked / whatever men might be, YHWH remains just, and therefore will keep covenant with His people and deal out justice to their oppressors sooner or later, but always at a time and place He chooses; usually when the fools least expect it.



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The Lord has put an end to the thick cords of domination and tyranny over us, that harnessed us; these cords of wickedness, God has cut – Hermann Venema; and to that we say: **AMEN!**

⁵ Let them all be confused and turned back who hate Zion, / let all the enemy be mortally wounded; remember, by bringing grace, glory, and turning from the evil way. Thus some enemies and persecutors of the people of God have been confounded and turned to faith in Christ the Messiah of God; as Paul, who full of wrath was going to Damascus that he might slaughter more believers, but was graciously confused and mystified on the road – Thomas Le Blanc, 1599-1669.

⁶ Let them be like grass on the housetops, which withers before it grows up / Yes, no man thinks it worthy to be cut down, every man permits it to brag for a while, and to show itself to men from the housetops as though it were something when it is nothing. Yes, though all things be in quiet, yet as grass on the housetops, little by little it withers away through the heat of the sun; so tyrants perish and vanish. The faithful, in suffering, prevail and overcome; but the wrongdoer is overthrown, and the miserable perish, as the history of all times and ages plainly witness – Martin Luther, 1483-1546:

⁷ with which the reaper does not fill his hand; or the one who binds sheaves fill his arms / there won't be enough of the withered, wilted grass to carry. And because there will be nothing left of those who hate Zion,

⁸ nor do those who pass by say, The blessing of the LORD be on you: we bless you in the name of the LORD. / this verse ends with some heavenly humor: no wise man will pray "God bless the mowers or reapers"... who would be emptyhanded; those who work their cruelty against the people of God will be no more. This psalm concerns the Israel of God – those who are **ruled by God**. It is uncertain when it was penned, probably when they were in captivity in Babylon, or about the time they return. The people **ruled by God** have weathered many storms, and still are threatened by its enemy – Matthew Henry, 1662-1714.

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