

A Christmas Psalm?

Psalm 10

[Note: I encourage you to read all of Psalm 10 on your own. I include only a couple verses below in the body of this devotion.]

First of all, Merry Christmas to all of you. I pray that you have a blessed remembrance of the birth of our Saviour.

At first glance, Psalm 10 doesn't seem to have much to do with Christmas. It speaks of wickedness and evil doers who seem to get away with doing whatever they want, thinking that God doesn't see. The psalmist even begins this psalm by wondering where God is, what He is doing, and why He isn't acting.

There are times we all feel that way, I think.

So the psalmist cries out (v. 12): **Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up your hand; forget not the afflicted.** A prayer for God to help.

And *that's exactly what happened at Christmas*. God arose. He lifted His hand. The Son of God came down from heaven and was born as a baby. Why? Because God did not forget the afflicted. He did not forget we who are afflicted by sin - both the sin within us and the sin that comes upon us from others - but remembered His promise to send us a Messiah, a Saviour.

That's what Christmas is all about: God's promise fulfilled. The Son of God born as the baby Jesus, who would then grow up and rise up for the afflicted again - rising up on the cross to be afflicted for the afflicted, to die for the dying, so that in His resurrection from death, we too rise with Him to life.

That's good to know and gives us hope.

But what about the afflictions of this world and life that we are suffering under now? What about the wickedness and evil that seem to be winning now? What about my cry for help now?

This psalm reminds us that your Father in heaven sees and knows your afflictions, and that just as He acted in sending His Son, so He will keep His promises to you. His timing may be different than yours (how long before He sent His Son?), and His ways may be different than yours (they weren't looking for a baby Saviour born from a virgin!), but in the end, God's timing and way were perfect.

So to pray this psalm is to remind us of the one greater than the wickedness and evil in this world, and that He does keep His promises. All of them. He acts for you. And so even if your Christmas isn't merry, it is blessed.

Or as the Lutheran hymn writer Paul Gerhardt once wrote:

*Thou Christian heart, Whoe'er thou art,
Be of good cheer and let no sorrow move thee!
For God's own Child, In mercy mild,
Joins thee to Him; how greatly God must love thee!*

*The world may hold Her wealth and gold;
But thou, my heart, keep Christ as thy true treasure.
To Him hold fast Until at last
A crown be thine and honor in full measure.*

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Dear Jesus, thank You for rising up from heaven and coming down to me as the babe of Bethlehem, only to rise up again for me on the cross as my Saviour. Help me to trust in Your Word and promises, especially when life is hard and troubles are many, knowing that You act for me, provide for me, and will see me safely to that life that has no end. Amen.