

I. Introduction

- A. Psalm 129 is the tenth of the “ascent Psalms.” It is admittedly difficult to see the “ascent” from the previous Psalm which described the blessings of family. Spurgeon believed that the “ascent” is the patience gained for the nation of Israel as they worshipped God and reflected upon His faithfulness to the covenant, His provision through the troubles, His protection in the captivities! It has a wondrous application to us, the church today, as we also ponder the immutable truths of God’s word!
- B. The theme of this Psalm is, as the title indicates, victory over Israel’s enemies. It is a remembrance of the affliction they have suffered throughout their whole history! It is a picture for the church today how God trains us, teaches us, grows us, to be steadfast in affliction. It fits in very well with the theme of our church this year, which is being steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the LORD! (I Cor 15:58; Rom 5:3-5; 2 Thess 1:3-12)
- C. The hinge of this Psalm is found in verse 4a! Namely, that the reason for the Psalm, for the affliction of God’s people, and the certain vindication from God for His people, is because God is righteous! He is upright, just, innocent of all moral wrong, He is completely lawful, He only does good, He cannot do anything that is not righteous! His character is immutable, unchangeable, it never can be improved upon. We, His people, can trust Him in all things!
- D. We will outline this Psalm like this: The affliction of His people, (v1-3) the intervention of God, (v4) and the vindication of His people. (v5-8)

II. The Affliction of His people (v1-3)

- A. Affliction defined. When we studied Psalm 119 topically, we spent a week on the conditions that the Psalmist faced as He was afflicted, persecuted, oppressed, and reproached. Afflicted, was the Hebrew word *ana*, which meant to be humbled by force with an implication toward being dishonored. He was mistreated and subdued. Similarly, the writer of this Psalm in describing the history of the nation of Israel, describes it as affliction! (Ps 119:50,67,71,75,92,107,153)
- B. Many a time. This phrase indicates an innumerable, uncountable number of times the nation has been afflicted. It is in the emphatic tense and suggests that what has happened in the past will continue in the future! There does not seem to be any end in sight.
- C. They. This is a pronoun for all the enemies. The Psalmist does not specify the enemy, nor limit them, which is indicative of how many there really were. They had local enemies, (Dt 7:1-5) national enemies, (Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medo-Persians, Greeks, Romans) regional enemies, (Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites) personal enemies! (Haman, Antiochus Epiphanes etc....)
- D. From my youth. The Psalmist uses this phrase to express that he never remembers a time when there was not conflict, struggle, tension, war between the nation of Israel and its enemies. From the conception of the nation in the patriarchs, the captivity in Egypt, the wanderings in the wilderness, the entry into the promised land, the divided nation, the captivities of Assyria and Babylon, they always were afflicted.
- E. The metaphor from agriculture, the plowed field! (v3)
 1. Plowers-These were the enemies of Israel, which included not only the aforementioned enemies, but also Satan and his evil angels! God is the husbandman and the owner of the field, Israel. The Jews would have understood this imagery, that the field must be cultivated, tilled, soil had to be prepared, to insure a successful crop! The plowers were sent and allowed by God to “cut furrows” in the field. God, in His infinite wisdom, knows what His people need to be brought to humility, and total dependence upon Him. His judgements are faithful, never too harsh, never too long, always accomplishing His purposes.
 2. Furrows were long. Calvin said, “the furrows were made long, so that no corner was exempted from being cut up by the ploughshare.” While this is not the primary, historical, literal context on the Psalm, the old reformers taught that this pointed to the suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross! Calvin again said, “these words vividly express the fact, that the cross has always been planted on the back of the Church, to make long and wide furrows.” This, they point out, is predictive, and most expressly realized during the scourging of Christ. (Is 50:6, 52:14, 53:4-5; Matt 27:26)

III. The Intervention of God (v4)

- A. The LORD is righteous. This is the hinge we spoke of earlier in the introduction. God is the cause and effect of this Psalm! Because God is faithful to His covenant promises, the enemies cannot win. He intervenes with His people! He is the just one and the justifier. (Rom 3:21-26) He defeats our enemies: Satan, his fellow fallen angels, sin and its power and control over us, the world system, and finally death itself! (2 Cor 4:7-12; I Cor 15:50-57)
- B. Enemy will not prevail (v2b)
- C. The cords have been cut in pieces. This refers to the “harness” by which the yoke of the oxen was fastened to the plow. This signifies the power, dominion, tyranny, wickedness, violence of evil that God has freed us from. We have been released from the dominion of Satan, adopted into the family of God!

IV. The Vindication of His people-An imprecatory Prayer! (v5-8)

- A. Predictive of the enemy’s plight! It is in future tense.
 1. They will be put to shame and turned back.
 2. They will wither, be short lived.
 3. They will be without God’s blessing!
- B. Mediatorial-The prayer is not revengeful, for vengeance belongs to the Lord, but is out of zeal for God’s glory! God will be vindicated against all those who rise up against Him, or His people.