

引言 INTRODUCTION

Rhapsody is a type of music characterized by highly contrasting dynamics. There are sections of softer tones, then the volume and speed suddenly increase. Composers express changing emotions from sorrow to happiness. Better known examples are the Hungarian Rhapsodies composed by Franz Liszt in the 1800s, and the Bohemian Rhapsody sung by the rock band Queen in 1975. The huge mood swing in a rhapsody is comparable to the rapid changes of our feelings. You may be having a good day. Then your heart quickly sinks when you hear a tragic news. The writer of Psalm 109 was wrestling with some troubling thoughts too. He was mistreated by enemies. Anger was boiling inside. In the end, sadness and pain turned into joy and praise. It takes some effort to interpret this psalm. That reminds me of an expression I heard when I first became a Christian: “Reading the Bible is like eating a fish.” There are some straightforward passages like fish filets that do not have bone. For example, children can recite stories about Jericho, David and Daniel they learn in Sunday school. Then there are other Scriptures that even Bible scholars debate for years about their meanings. You must carefully dissect the details like chewing a fish head. Those passages are not just hard to understand. They are hard to apply too. Psalm 109 is an example. It is categorized as an imprecatory psalm. The writer cried out for God’s justice in response to unfair treatments. He even wished bad fortune to come to his enemies. We should not jump to a conclusion too soon when studying these psalms. Remember psalms are basically poems. They express the feelings of the authors. Some ideas or wordings should not be understood literally. Psalm 109 gives us insights on how to pray when we are afflicted by enemies. Through prayer, we lay out our authentic emotions to the authoritative God.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 稱罪為罪 Call Sins as Sins

The psalmist did not deny his experience. He calls sins as sins. Let us read **verses 2-5**. David, the author, tells us that he was surrounded by enemies. They attacked him with words. Verse 2 says they told **lies**. They made up things that were not true. Verse 3 adds that they uttered words of **hatred**. Their speech was full of anger like blazing fire. Moreover, verse 4 states that they **accused** with words. Their intention was to take people down. Other than hurtful words, the enemies took harmful actions too. In verse 5, the writer says they **returned good with evil**. It implies that those enemies were not strangers. They betrayed friendship and planned to do damage. But the psalmist was not the only victim. He says in verse 16: **For he did not remember to show kindness, but pursued the poor and needy and the brokenhearted, to put them to death**. Not only did those bad guys fail to do good, they even plotted evil schemes to take innocent people’s lives. All the verbal abuse, rejection and threats took their toils on the psalmist. Look at **verses 22-25**. The writer was physically and emotionally

weakened when shouldering all the stress. He had constant fear about what the enemies would do next. You may have experienced a similar turmoil. Perhaps someone turns against you and sees you as an enemy. It will affect your work, appetite, emotion and sleep. It proves that our mind and our body are closely connected. David surely knew how it felt. He faced many enemies in his life. At one time, king Saul hunted after him. A teenager and the youngest son in the family became a national hero when David defeated Goliath the giant. Immediately, Saul recruited David as his personal assistant. He even made David his son-in-law. Saul's appreciation of David's bravery and wisdom quickly turned into jealousy and hatred when people compared the two of them. They sang: "Saul killed thousands but David killed tens of thousands." Since then, Saul tried to kill David. David had no choice but to run away. He did all the right things but he suffered injustice. You may face different unfair situations. For instance, a relative or a colleague spread rumors about you. Those lies ruin your reputation and even cost your job. What will you do? You should prove your innocence with evidence. Besides, you can pray like David did. You ask God to be your defense attorney and judge. Even when people do not believe in you or your friends cannot fully understand your grievances, God does. He knows all that happens to you and in you. No negative emotion will surprise Him. Tell God how you feel, may it be agony or anger, confusion or a sense of betrayal, deception or being taken advantage of. Say to Him: "Lord, it's not fair!" He welcomes us to dump it all to Him. It makes us feel better to have a listening ear. We can react the same way to the injustice around us. We see powerful people prey on powerless people. Innocent people are found guilty in court. They must pay heavy fines and are even sent to prison. There are more serious crimes around the world. Leaders oppress their citizens. Some victims become refugees in wars. They lose their home, properties and even lives. Many Christians suffer from religious persecution too. Those injustice should stir up our emotions. We should call sins as sins. We pray to God: "Lord, it doesn't make sense." Other than prayer, we ask God for a solution. That is what the psalmist did.

2. 自作自受 Reap What They Sow

The psalmist was honest with his pain. He calls sins as sins. As part of his prayer, he asks God to intervene. He hopes that his enemies will reap what they sow. We will look at **verses 6-15**. Wow! Are you sweating when you hear those words? This could be the hardest Bible text you have ever come across. How should we understand it? Remember, this is a prayer. The writer is not saying: "I will pay back to my adversaries. They hurt me and I'm going to hurt them more badly!" Rather, he is asking God to punish the wrongdoers. If that is a correct understanding, then another problem arises. Critics may say: "Doesn't the Bible teach us to love others? How can you believe in such a cruel God?" We will address those issues later. Let us first summarize the actions the psalmist asks God to take. First, the writer hopes that his enemies will be found guilty in court (v. 6-7). Second, he prays that their lifespan will be shortened (v. 8-10). As a result, their wives and children will suffer when the man in the house is gone. Third, he wishes that no one will show mercy to those needy families (v. 11-12). Fourth, he hopes the enemies' names will disappear in history. Fifth, he asks God not to forgive their sins. In essence, the psalmist is inciting a curse on his enemy. He is not done

yet. Continue to read **verses 17-20**. The psalmist hopes that those who plan to hurt others will hurt themselves. It is like a person sets a fire to burn his neighbor's house, but the wind blows the opposite direction and consumes his own home instead. He becomes the victim of his curse! In a secular thinking, to curse people is to wish that bad luck may come to them. For example, people want their enemies to be hit by a car when crossing the street, to declare bankruptcy or to contract a terminal disease. But their words have no magic power. Only God has the power to bless and to curse. The Biblical concept of cursing is not only about hoping enemies to suffer. Cursing is simply the reverse of blessing. For example, there will be drought and famine when God stops the rain, there will be sickness when God allows germs to infect us, and foreign enemies will invade when God lifts His protection. We enjoy a lot of blessings from God without knowing it! We should always put our hope in Him. We trust that He will exercise a fair judgment. We mentioned earlier that Saul tried to kill David. Once, Saul was alone in a cave doing his business. David and his followers were hiding in the dark. They urged David to take care of Saul because he was in a vulnerable situation. Saul had to decide whether to pull his pants or draw his sword if David attacked him! Instead, David cut off a corner of Saul's robe to prove that he was in a striking distance. Afterward, David called out to Saul in 1 Samuel 24:12 – **“May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you.”** David let God be God. He respected Saul because God assigned him as the king. God would remove Saul in His way and timing if necessary. David refused to play God. We should let God act on our behalf too. He is our Heavenly Father. It hurts Him too when we suffer. He is on our side. Besides, He is the righteous Lord. Our enemies are God's enemies when we suffer for doing good. He will not let sin go unpunished. Therefore, we should wait for His vindication. It is wrong for us to retaliate. Surely, we should guard ourselves and our family from harm. We call the police when we are in danger. We let the justice system do its job. But ultimately, we look to God for justice.

3. 化悲為喜 From Sad to Glad

The writer does not hesitate to call sins as sins. He hopes that enemies will reap what they sow. However, he refuses to take matters into his own hands. Instead, he lets God be the judge. After he recommits himself to God, his heart changes from sad to glad. Read from **verses 26-28**. The psalmist prays for a few things. First, he hopes that the enemies will see God's hand when He demonstrates justice. He does not only ask God to deal with his enemies. But he also expects to witness God's glory in the process. Second, the psalmist desires to have joy when God turns curses into blessings. His faith is rekindled when he realizes what God is doing through his suffering. The life of Joseph in Genesis is a good illustration of such faith. Joseph was a victim of sibling rivalry. His older brothers were jealous that he was the apple in their father Jacob's eyes. Envy soon turned into hatred. They plotted an evil scheme and sold Joseph to Egypt as a slave. Bad became worse as Joseph was falsely accused by the wife of his boss. A slave thus ended up in jail. Joseph could have turned bitter. But he put his trust in God and waited on Him. By God's miraculous plan, Joseph was elevated to become the prime minister of Egypt. After many years, the family was reunited. Joseph got permission from Pharaoh and relocated the family to Egypt. That

saved them from the impact of a massive famine. After their father passed away, the brothers were afraid that Joseph would seek revenge on them. Joseph reassured them in Genesis 50:20 – “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” Joseph did not ignore the wrong his brothers did to him. He did not concentrate on his wounds either. Rather, Joseph recognized what God had accomplished through a tragic experience. He changed a curse into a blessing. Being the second man in the country, Joseph could guarantee the well-being of his family. However, God had a bigger plan than what Joseph could foresee. If Joseph was not sold to Egypt, then Jacob’s family would not have immigrated to the country. If their descendants were not in Egypt, Moses might not exist. No Moses, there would be no exodus, no judgment on Egypt, no wilderness wandering and no Promised Land. Joseph and all those characters were part of God’s bigger story. Just like Joseph did, the psalmist shifted his focus from his circumstances to God. He knew that God would not abandon His children. That is why he closes the psalm with words of praise. Look at **verses 30-31**. The psalmist had joy not because he witnessed the punishment his enemies deserved. He rejoiced because God proved to be a righteous Lord. God will repay sinners for their wrong, and He will reward the righteous for their faith. We will fall into the ditch of self-pity if we just concentrate on our suffering. We will get mad when we only look at our enemies. We wonder why God has not punished them. However, we will have faith when we turn to God. We know that He is always there watching over us, He is leading us the way and He is beside us giving us strength. We can change from sad to glad when we step out from our little world and look at the bigger picture. Each of us plays a role in God’s grand scheme. When our perspective is changed, we will not only question why God puts us in a challenging situation. We will also ask what He wants to accomplish in and through our lives.

結論 CONCLUSION

Psalm 109 is not a complaint report. It is not a proposal for God to take care of enemies either. But it is a heart-felt petition. The psalmist expresses his true feelings to God. Through prayer, we lay out our authentic emotions to the authoritative God. What can we learn from this psalm? Should we ask God to get rid of our enemies? Perhaps your supervisor or a colleague often picks on you. It may be a neighbor who is not quite friendly because of your skin color. It can be a competitor who uses dirty tricks to steal your customers. On a bigger scale, there are other possible enemies such as crooked politicians, people who are hostile to the Christian faith and overseas adversaries who try to eliminate us. No matter who they are, the root cause for wicked behaviors is sin. People harbor evil thoughts, speak nasty words, and engage in ungodly actions because they disobey God. Here is the fact: we were like that before we became a Christian. We just sin in different ways! The Bible calls us enemies of God. He could have wiped us out. But He showed us grace. He opened our hearts so that we could respond to His calling of salvation. That is the best-case-scenario for our enemies too. Someone put it this way: “Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?” Thank God for His mercy. Jesus became the friend of sinners. He reacts with love toward people’s hatred. Only God can change people’s heart and invite enemies into His family. His name be praised!

狂想曲的特徵是強烈的比動。一段柔和的曲調過後，音量和速度突然增加。作曲家表達從悲傷到快樂的情感變化。比較著名的例子是李斯特的匈牙利狂想曲。這些音樂的旋律變化可以表達我們的情緒波動。你可能一整天都很順利。當你聽到一個壞消息時，你的心情就馬上沉下去。詩篇 109 篇的作者的內心交戰。他受到敵人的攻擊。他感到憤怒。但是最終，悲傷和痛苦變成了喜樂和讚美。要理解這篇詩需要花一些功夫。這讓我想起我剛信主時聽到的一句話：「讀聖經就像吃魚。」有一些意思直接的經文，好像沒有骨頭的魚片。例如，小孩子都能記住有關耶利哥、大衛和但以理的故事。但是另外有些經文，就連聖經學者也有不同的解釋。你必須像吃魚頭一樣仔細分解細節。有些經文不僅難以理解，它們也難以應用。詩篇 109 篇就是一個例子。它屬於咒詛詩。作者呼求神伸張正義。他甚至希望敵人會得到報應。在讀這些詩的時候，我們不應該太早下結論。我們要記住，詩篇都是詩歌。它們表達了作者的感受。有些想法或措辭不應該從字面上理解。詩篇 109 篇讓我們了解當受到敵人欺負時該如何禱告。藉著禱告，我們向有權柄的神傾訴真實的情感。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 稱罪為罪 Call Sins as Sins

詩人並沒有否定他的經歷。他稱罪為罪。讓我們讀第 2-5 節。作者大衛告訴我們，他受敵人圍困。他們用言語攻擊他。第 2 節說他們撒謊。他們編造不真實的事。第 3 節補充說，他們講怨恨的話。他們的言語充滿憤怒，如熊熊烈火一般。此外，第 4 節說，他們也用言語控告。他們的目的是要打倒別人。除了傷人的言語之外，敵人還採取了傷人的行動。在第 5 節中，作者說他們以惡報善。這意味著那些敵人不是陌生人。他們背叛朋友並計劃進行破壞。但詩人並不是唯一的受害者。他在第 16 節說：因為他不想施恩，卻逼迫困苦窮乏的和傷心的人，要把他們治死。那些惡人不只做壞事，他們還想要害死無辜的人。所有的辱罵、否定和威脅都加在詩人的身上。請繼續看 22-25 節。作者承受所有的壓力，因此身體和心靈都變得脆弱。他一直擔心敵人下一步會做什麼。你可能也經歷過類似的打擊。也許有人反對你並視你為敵人。這些壓力會影響你的工作、食慾、情緒和睡眠。這證明我們的身體和心靈是緊密相連的。大衛當然體會那種感覺。他一生遇到過很多敵人。有一次，掃羅王追捕他。當大衛打敗巨人歌利亞時，一個少年人成為了民族英雄。掃羅立即聘請大衛成為他的私人

助理。他後來使大衛成為他的女婿。當人們將他們兩人進行比較時，掃羅對大衛的欣賞很快就變成了嫉妒和仇恨。他們唱歌：「掃羅殺死千千，大衛殺死萬萬。」從那時起，掃羅就試圖殺死大衛。大衛別無選擇，只能逃跑。他做了正確的事，卻遭受了不公正的對待。你可能也會面對不公平的情況。例如，親戚或同事散佈謠言，損毀你的聲譽，甚至使你失去工作。你會怎麼做？你應該以事實證明你的清白。此外，你可以像大衛一樣禱告。你請求神成為你的辯護律師和法官。縱使人們不相信你或你的朋友不能完全理解你的委屈，神知道。祂明白發生在你身上和你內心的一切。沒有任何負面情緒會讓祂感到驚訝。告訴神你的感受，可能是痛苦或憤怒、困惑或被背叛、欺騙或被利用的感覺。對他說：「主啊，這不公平！」祂歡迎我們把一切都交給祂。有傾聽的耳朵讓我們感覺更好。我們可以以同樣的方式來回應周遭的不公平的事。我們看到有權勢的人欺負老百姓。無辜的人在法庭上被判有罪。他們必須交巨額罰款，甚至被送進監獄。世界各地還有更嚴重的犯罪行為。領袖壓迫人民。一些受害者在戰爭中成為難民。他們失去了家園、財產，甚至生命。許多基督徒也遭受宗教迫害。那些不公正的事情應該激起我們的情緒。我們應該稱罪為罪。我們向神禱告：「主啊，這沒有道理。」除了禱告之外，我們也可以求神解決。這就是詩人接下來所做的。

2. 自作自受 Reap What They Sow

詩人誠實地面對自己的痛苦。他稱罪為罪。在他的禱告中，他請求神干預。他希望敵人自作自受。我們看第 6-15 節。嘩！聽到這些話你會不會流汗？這可能是你遇到過最難理解的經文。我們該如何明白呢？請記住，這是一個禱告。作者並不是說：「我會報復我的對頭。他們傷害我，我會害他們更慘！」他乃是祈求神懲罰那些惡人。如果這是正確的理解，那麼另一個問題就會出現。非信徒可能會說：「聖經不是教導我們要愛別人嗎？你怎麼能相信如此殘忍的神呢？」我們稍後將解答這些問題。讓我們先總結作者要求神採取的行動。首先，他希望敵人在法庭上被判有罪（6-7 節）。其次，他祈求神縮短他們的壽命（8-10 節）。結果，當家裡的男人不在時，妻子和孩子就會受苦。第三，他希望沒有人憐憫那些有需要的家人（11-12 節）。第四，他希望敵人的名字從歷史中消失。第五，他請求神不要饒恕他們的罪。實質上，詩人是在咒詛敵人。他還沒有講完。繼續讀 17-20 節。詩人希望那些想要傷害別人的人反而害到自己。就像一個人放火燒鄰居的房子，但風卻從相反的方向吹來，結果他燒毀自己的房子。他成為咒詛的受害者！從世俗的角度來看，咒詛人就是希望壞事臨到別人身上。例如，希望敵人在過馬路時被車撞，宣告破產或患上絕症。但人的話沒有魔力，唯有神有能力祝福和咒詛。聖經中咒詛的概念不只是希望敵人遭殃。咒詛是祝福的相反。例如，當神停止下雨時，就會有乾旱和飢荒；當神允許病菌

感染我們時，就會生病；當神解除保護時，就會有敵人侵入。其實我們在不知不覺中享受了許多神的祝福！因此我們應該把盼望寄託在祂身上。我們相信神會做出公正的判斷。我們之前提到掃羅追殺大衛。有一次，掃羅在山洞裡上廁所。大衛和他的跟隨者躲在黑暗中。他們催促大衛把掃羅殺死，因為他的處境脆弱。如果大衛攻擊掃羅，掃羅必須決定要拉他的褲子還是拔刀！結果，大衛只割下掃羅袍子的一角，以證明他有能力把他幹掉。後來，大衛在撒母耳記上 24:12 節中向掃羅呼喊：「願耶和華在你我中間判斷是非，在你身上為我伸冤，我卻不親手加害於你。」大衛讓神成為神。他尊重掃羅，因為是神立掃羅為王。如果神認為有必要，祂會以適合的方式和時間除掉掃羅。大衛拒絕扮演神。我們也應該讓神為我們主持公道。祂是我們的天父。當我們受苦時，祂也會難過。祂站在我們這邊。祂也是公義的主。當我們因行善而受苦時，我們的敵人就是神的敵人。祂不會對罪置之不理。因此，我們應該等候神的公義。我們不應該親自報仇。當然，我們必須保護自己和家人免受傷害。當我們遇到危險時，我們需要報警。我們讓司法制度發揮其作用。但最終，我們仰望神的公義。

3. 化悲為喜 From Sad to Glad

作者毫不猶豫地稱罪為罪。他希望敵人自作自受。然而，他拒絕將事情掌握在自己手中。相反，他讓神來審判。當他再次將自己交託給神之後，他的心情就由悲傷轉為喜樂。請讀第 26-28 節。詩人為幾件事情禱告。首先，他希望當神彰顯公義時，敵人會看到神的作為。他不只請求神對付敵人，他也希望在過程中見證神的榮耀。其次，詩人渴望當神將咒詛變為祝福時他能有喜樂。當他注意到神透過他的苦難所成就的工作時，他的信心被重新點燃。我們從創世記中約瑟的一生看到這種信心。約瑟與哥哥們不和。他的哥哥們嫉妒他是父親雅各最愛的兒子。不久嫉妒變成了仇恨。他們計劃將約瑟賣到埃及為奴。後來約瑟被埃及人的老闆娘誣告。於是奴隸成為了囚犯。約瑟的心中沒有苦毒，他繼續信靠並等候神。因著神奇妙的安排，約瑟被提升為埃及的宰相。多年後，一家人終於團聚。約瑟得到了法老的許可，把家人接到埃及，免得他們受饑荒的影響。父親過世後，哥哥們害怕約瑟向他們報仇。約瑟在創世記 50:20 中向他們保證：「從前你們的意思是要害我，但神的意思原是好的，要保全許多人的性命，成就今日的光景。」約瑟並沒有否認哥哥們對他所做的錯事。但是他也沒有把注意力集中在自己的傷痕。約瑟從慘痛的經歷中看到神所成就的事。祂把咒詛變成了祝福。約瑟現在是在一人之下，萬人之上，他能夠保證家人的幸福。然而，神有一個更大的計劃。如果約瑟沒有被賣到埃及，那麼雅各的一家就不會遷移到那裡。如果他們的後裔不在埃及，摩西可能就不存在。沒有摩西，就不會有出埃及，神就不會審判埃及，不會有曠野漂流，也不會有應許之

地。約瑟和所有人物都是神的故事的一部分。就像約瑟一樣，詩人將他的注意力從自己的處境轉到神身上。他知道神不會離棄祂的兒女。因此他能夠以讚美來結束這首詩。請看第 30-31 節。詩人之所以有喜樂，並不是因為親眼看到敵人受到懲罰。他很高興，因為結果證明神是一位公義的主。神會因罪人的罪而審判他們，也會因義人的信心而獎賞他們。如果我們只專注於自己的痛苦，我們就會陷入自憐的深淵。當我們只看到敵人時，我們會生氣。我們懷疑神為何沒有懲罰他們。然而，當我們轉向神時，我們就會有信心。我們知道祂一直在看顧我們，祂在前面引導我們，祂在我們身邊加添我們力量。當我們走出自己的小圈圈，放眼大局時，我們就能化悲為喜。我們每個人都是神的計劃中的角色。當我們的觀點改變時，我們不只會尋問神為何把我們放在困難中，我們也會問祂希望透過我們的遭遇來達成什麼結果。

結論 CONCLUSION

詩篇 109 篇不是一份埋怨的報告，也不是要求神處置敵人的計劃書。它是一個發自內心的祈求。詩人向神表達了他的感受。藉著禱告，我們向有權柄的神傾訴真實的情感。我們從這首詩學到什麼？我們可以祈求神除掉我們的敵人嗎？也許你的主管或同事常常挑你的毛病。你的鄰居可能因為你的膚色而不太友善。又可能是生意的競爭對手使用骯髒的手段搶走你的顧客。如果我們把範圍擴大，還有其他可能的敵人，例如狡猾的政客、敵視基督信仰的人以及打算消滅我們的海外敵人。無論是誰，邪惡行為的根源都是罪。人因為悖逆神而懷有惡念、說難聽的話、做出不義的事情。事實是：在我們成為基督徒之前，我們就是那個樣子。我們只是以不同的方式犯罪而已！聖經稱我們為神的敵人。神本來可以消滅我們的，但祂選擇向我們施恩。神打開我們的心，使我們能回應祂救恩的呼召。對我們的敵人來說，得救也是最好的結局。有人這樣說：「當我把敵人變成朋友時，我不就消滅了敵人嗎？」感謝神的憐憫。耶穌成為罪人的朋友。祂以愛回應人們的仇恨。唯有神才能改變人們的心，並邀請敵人成為祂的家人。神的名配得讚美！