

STUDIES
THROUGH
THE PSALMS

PSALMS 10-12

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-LIVING IN THE WORD MINISTRIES-

STUDIES THROUGH THE PSALMS

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

Text: Psalms 10-13

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever wondered exactly how Satan has devised his plan to perpetrate evil on mankind? Well, Psalm 10 does a pretty good job of describing how Satan uses the wicked to hurt, deprive and if possible destroy the righteous.

Contrary to how the psalmist may feel at the time of his writing God does not stand, "...afar off." The Lord does not, "...hide in times of trouble." Matter of fact the Psalmist answers his own questions in verses 16-18. He is King forever and for every situation. He has heard the desire of the humble, and He will do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed.

So, if we wanted to break these three Psalms down into topics it might look something like this:

1. PSALM 10 - CONCERNED ABOUT TRIUMPHING OVER EVIL.
2. PSALM 11 - COUNTING ON GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS TO PREVAIL.
3. PSALM 12 - CONSTANCY OF GOD IN DEALING WITH MAN'S TREACHERY.

It should have become evident to us in this first Book of the Psalms that there is this ongoing contrast between right and wrong, good and evil. David, already on a number of occasions has called for the justice of God to prevail. He has also called for the wrath of God to be brought against the wicked, evil and unrighteousness of man.

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I like what the commentator Albert Barnes had to say about the wrath of God. I think it will help to stabilize our theology when we think of the Character and nature of God.

It is clear that when we think of the word "wrath" as applicable to God, it must be divested of everything that is like human passion, and especially the passion of revenge. It is one of the most obvious rules of interpretation that we are not to apply to God passions and feelings which, among us, have their origin in evil. [God's wrath] is the opposition of the divine character against sin; and the determination of the divine mind to express that opposition in a proper way, by excluding the offender from the favors, which He bestows on the righteous. We admire the character of a father who is opposed to disorder, vice, and disobedience in his family, and who expresses his opposition in a proper way. We admire the character of a ruler who is opposed to all crime in the community, and who expresses those feelings in the law. Why shall we not be equally pleased with God, who is opposed to all crime in all parts of the universe, and who determines to express His opposition in the proper way for the sake of preserving order and promoting peace?

Albert Barnes.

For the Psalmist, there is a lot of human emotion and passion for the justice of God to prevail. The unfortunate thing is that we often times want that to transpire according to our time-table and more from a vengeance perspective rather from a divine purpose. Here are some passages that speak about the justice of God from a biblical and balanced perspective.

De 32:4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.

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Ps 103:6 The LORD executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed.

Pr 16:11 Honest weights and scales are the LORD'S; All the weights in the bag are His work.

Isa 45:21 Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me.

Zep 3:5 The LORD is righteous in her midst, He will do no unrighteousness. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails, But the unjust knows no shame.

Joh 5:30 "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.*

Ro 2:2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.*

Re 15:3 They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!*

1. **PSALM 10** - CONCERNED ABOUT TRIUMPHING OVER EVIL.

A. Description of the wicked (10:1-11)

10:1. The first part of the psalm is a forceful description of the wicked's vicious power. But at the beginning the writer turned his complaint to the Lord, who seemed to be uninterested in the plight of the oppressed. The fact that the wicked may triumph caused the psalmist to ask why the Lord was hiding Himself from the trouble (cf. "why" twice in v. 13).

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The question is a bold expression of the true feelings of oppressed people who cry out for help.

10:2-7. In these verses David delineated the character of the oppressor. Full of pride (arrogance, v. 2, and boasts, v. 3) the wicked man afflicts the weak and speaks abusively of the Lord (cf. v. 13). The wicked person is confident (pride, v. 4, haughty, v. 5), and has no room for God or God's laws. Such a person is convinced that he cannot be moved from his wicked ways. He thinks he can continue undisturbed in his prosperity (v. 5) and happiness (v. 6; cf. 73:3). His words are deceitful and destructive (10:7). The clause trouble and evil are under his tongue means that the words he speaks will cause calamity.

10:8-11. Here the psalmist described the wicked as lurking (lies in wait occurs three times in vv. 8-9) in secret places like a lion (cf. [comments](#) on 7:2) to attack his helpless (cf. 10:12) victims, and to drag them off as a fisherman does with his net. This imagery of a lion and a fisherman suggests cunning men waiting to attack. The afflicted (i.e., the righteous) are crushed by the wicked. Since God may not immediately rescue them, the wicked person is convinced that God does not care for or see the righteous.

10:12-15. Making an earnest cry for vengeance, the psalmist called on **God to arise** (cf. 9:19) and help **the helpless** (cf. 10:9). One reason for this request is that **the wicked** should not be allowed to despise **God** (cf. v. 3) and to think he can get away with his actions (cf. **why** in v. 1). The Lord should be motivated to respond because the afflicted trust **God** who sees **trouble and grief** and is their **Helper** (v. 14). The psalmist's specific request was that God would punish **the wicked** (v. 15). Here the imagery is again graphic: to **break** one's **arm** means to destroy his power.

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If God so judges the wicked by such a destruction, then they would be called **to account for** their deeds. The psalmist would then no longer be able to say that God does not see his deeds (cf. v. 13) or care for the afflicted.

10:16-18. The psalm closes with an expression of confidence that the writer's prayer has been heard. Here as well as in [Psalm_9](#) the psalmist declared that **the Lord is sovereign** (cf. 9:7) **and that those in the nations** (cf. 9:5, 15, 17, 19-20) who oppose Him **will perish** (cf. 9:3, 5, 15). The psalmist was sure that the **Lord hears the cry of the afflicted** and defends their cause, so that the wicked—who are mere mortals ('ēnōs ; cf. 9:20 and [comments_on](#) 8:4) will not **terrify** them anymore.

Faith that God defends the afflicted and the needy against the tyranny of the wicked was a comfort to the psalmist and the basis for his prayer.

1. PSALM 10 - CONCERNED ABOUT TRIUMPHING OVER EVIL.

2. [PSALM 11](#) - COUNTING ON GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS TO PREVAIL.

The historical setting of this psalm is unknown; apparently David was in desperate straits with his life in danger. The temptation to run from danger challenged his confidence in God. The psalm's message is as follows: faced with the temptation to flee at a time when lawful authority was being destroyed, the psalmist held fast to his faith in the Lord, who will ultimately destroy the wicked whom He hates and deliver the righteous whom He loves.

11:1. The psalm begins with the psalmist's repudiation of the temptation to flee from danger. David marveled at this suggestion from the fainthearted because it defied his faith in the Lord.

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His initial declaration, In the Lord I take (or have taken) refuge, counteracts their suggestion.

The fainthearted advised David to flee like a bird to a mountain where he would be safe. But instead he fled to the Lord for safety.

11:2. This temptation came because the wicked were out to destroy the righteous, including David. The wicked bend their bows to fasten the strings on them, and then place their arrows on the strings to shoot in secrecy (cf. 10:8-9) at the upright. It may be that a literal attack is in view, but more likely the bows and arrows denote slanderous words that destroy, as is often true in the Psalms.

11:3. If the foundations of society are overthrown, what can the righteous do? These foundations refer to the Law and the order of society based on the Lord's rule. The temptation from the fainthearted, then, was based on a fear that the nation might crumble. Their view was experiential and earthward. David's view was higher.

11:4. David contrasted the problem on earth with the exalted position of the Lord in heaven. "What can the righteous do?" the fainthearted had asked (v. 3). David responded that the righteous can trust in the real Source of secure government—the Lord, whose throne is exalted in the heavens, His holy temple, far from the dissimulation of the wicked. Because the Lord is sovereignly ruling over the earth, He sees and thoroughly investigates the activities of the sons of men (cf. 33:13-14). He observes is literally, "His eyes see," and His eyes is literally, "His eyelids." Eyelids normally contract when examining closely. This bold anthropomorphism stresses the precise omniscience of God.

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11:5. God examines (tests, refines) the righteous, but He hates the wicked and people who love violence. God is opposed to all who choose wickedness and violence in opposition to His will.

11:6. The psalmist then looked to a sudden and swift judgment on the wicked. He will rain could also be translated, "May He rain." Burning sulfur is reminiscent of God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah ([Gen. 19:24](#)). Fiery coals may possibly be translated "snares." If so, the psalmist was anticipating a fitting judgment for the wicked—they would be trapped. At any rate scorching judgment is their destiny.

11:7. In contrast with God's judgment on the wicked (v. 6), the Lord, who is righteous... loves justice (lit., "righteousness"). The upright—those who by faith trust Him and seek to follow His ways—will see His face. This means that the righteous are admitted to His presence and enjoy His blessings.

1. PSALM 10 - CONCERNED ABOUT TRIUMPHING OVER EVIL.
2. PSALM 11 - COUNTING ON GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS TO PREVAIL.

3. **PSALM 12** - CONSTANCY OF GOD IN DEALING WITH MAN'S TREACHERY.

This psalm expresses David's confidence in the untarnished words of God that assure him He will deliver those who seek His salvation. This expression of confidence comes in the midst of a culture that oppressed the weak with deception. The setting of the psalm is unknown, but many incidents in the life of David could have prompted such a psalm (cf. [1_Sam. 23:11](#) , [19](#) ; [26:19](#)). But the language of the psalm is general enough to fit several situations.

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A. Prayer for deliverance (12:1-4)

The psalmist cried out to God (vv. 1-4) for deliverance from the midst of a lying and arrogant people.

12:1-2. His introductory cry laments the fact that the godly were apparently extinct. People who showed faithful covenant loyalty had disappeared from the land. (The word for “faithful” is **ḥasi**, related to **ḥesed**, “loyal love or covenant loyalty.”) In their place were those who lied and deceived. Their words were dishonest and therefore untrustworthy. The society had become altogether corrupt. There seemed to be no trustworthy, honest people on whom the psalmist could depend.

12:3-4. So the psalmist prayed that the Lord would cut off... flattering, lying lips. These people were filled with pride (they were boastful), assuming that through propaganda, flattery, and deception they could achieve their goals. Saying, we will triumph with our tongues, they assumed they could do as they pleased: Who is our master? David wanted God to destroy them and end their arrogant boasting.

B. Assurance of deliverance (12:5)

12:5. The psalmist received assurance that the Lord would arise and free the weak and... the needy from oppression. God promised to deliver those who trusted in Him from those who were maligning them.

C. Confidence in God's Word (12:6-8)

12:6. Because of assurance from God that the afflicted would be delivered (v. 5) the psalmist expressed confidence in the untarnished words of God, even though he knew the wicked were all around him.

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In contrast with the wicked's words, the Lord's words are pure (purified) and true. Their untarnished nature is compared to the process of refining silver; it is as if the words of the Lord had been refined... seven times, the number of completeness and perfection. What God says is true (flawless; cf. 18:30) and reliable. His words are not tainted with deceit and false flattery (in contrast with the wicked's words, 12:2-3) but are fully dependable.

12:7-8. Therefore the psalmist trusted in God's word that He would keep them safe in the midst of proud people who strut about in smug self-confidence, placing a premium on things that are vile (zūllūt , a word used only here in the OT, means something squandered or worthless). Verse 8 pictures worthless and ruthless men who exercise authority and power through deceptive words. Yet God's words, which are true, affirm that such people will be destroyed.