

Psalm 11

Title: Jehovah is a Refuge and Judge

Author and Date: David

Key Verse: Psalm 11:1, 5

Outline

- A. The psalmist trusts the Lord in wicked times (verses 1-3).
- B. The Lord tries (tests) the children of men in wicked times (verses 4-7).

Notes

Title: See the notes on Psalm 3 and 4.

Verse 1: The psalmist had people telling him, “Flee as a bird to your mountain”. Who are the “you” of “How say you...”? The “you” may have been misguided friends hoping to give the psalmist advice. More likely, the “you” are the wicked who hope to taunt and discourage him. To flee, would be an act of unbelief and cowardice. The occasion for this psalm may be when David was fleeing from Saul or Absalom (see 1 Sam. 18-19; 23:7-18; and 26:20). The song “Flee As a Bird” is based on this verse.

Verse 3: These words may be a continuation of the taunt of the wicked begun in verse 1b (see the quotation marks found in some versions like the RSV).

Verse 4: The Lord sits on his throne in heaven to judge righteously the wicked on earth (see Psa. 9:4, 7). Note the words “eyes” and “eyelids” (KJV, NASV, ESV, etc). This is an example of anthropomorphism which attributes human qualities to God so that man can understand what the Lord is like. The Lord sees all.

Verse 5: When the Lord “tries” (KJV, ASV), he tests (NASV) and examines (NIV) all mankind. Note that the Lord hates the wicked and the violent (see also Prov. 6:16-19).

Verse 6: The “cup” (KJV, ASV, NASV, etc) is a reference to the Lord’s wrathful judgment upon the wicked (see Psa. 75:8). He will give the wicked their “lot” (NIV) and what they “deserve” (NET Bible).

Verse 7: The upright “behold” the Lord’s face as they have fellowship with him (see Psalm 15).

Questions

1. What does the psalmist do with the Lord (verse 1)?

2. What were people saying to the psalmist (verse 1)?
3. What were the wicked doing to the upright (verse 2)?
4. What question does the psalmist ask concerning the righteous (verse 3)?
5. Where is the Lord in times of trouble and what is he doing there (verse 4)?
6. What is the Lord's disposition toward the righteous and the wicked (verse 5)?
7. What will the Lord do to the wicked (verse 6)?
8. How is the Lord described and what does he love (verse 7)?
9. Who will see the Lord's face (verse 7)?

Applications for Today

1. Faith, not flight, is the psalmist's approach to troubled times (verse 1). The Lord was his refuge. The psalmist had faith in the face of threat. He had confidence in the midst of crisis. What will come to the righteous who take a stand and put their trust in the Lord (Isa. 26:1-7)?
2. The psalmist was being told to "Flee as a bird..." (verse 1). When is it time to flee (Gen. 39:11-13; 2 Tim. 2:22)? When is it time not to flee (Neh. 6:10-11)?

3. The wicked often attack the “upright in heart” (verse 2). What determines a life that is “upright” (Gal. 2:14)?

4. When things around us in our wicked world appear to be crumbling and falling apart, the righteous should trust in the Lord who still rules from his throne in heaven (verses 3-4)? Where are God and Jesus now and what are they doing there (Rev. 4:11; 5:12-13)?

5. You cannot hide from the Lord. He sees all and examines all (verses 4-5). What are we like in the eyes of God (Heb. 4:13)?

6. Fire and brimstone are the punishment of the wicked (verse 6). What did the Lord rain down on the wicked of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24; Lk. 17:29)? What place of fire and brimstone will be the final punishment of the wicked (Rev. 14:10; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8)?

7. The Lord of all right, loves right and will always do right. The upright will behold the Lord’s face (verse 7). What will the upright do on earth (Psa. 15:1-2) and in heaven (Rev. 22:4)?