

## Psalm 36

**Title:** The Iniquity of Men and the Loving-kindness of God

**Author and Date:** David

**Key Verses:** Psalm 36:10-12

**Type:** Didactic (Teaching)

### **Outline**

- A. Godless: the wickedness of man – the sinner (verses 1-4).
- B. God: the graciousness of God – the Savior (verses 5-9).
- C. Godly: the blessedness of David – the saint (verses 10-12).

### **Notes**

Title: “For the Chief Musician”. See the notes on Psalm 4. “A Psalm of David the servant of Jehovah.” This title is found in two psalms only: 18:1 and 36:1. David viewed himself as the Lord’s servant, doing the Lord’s will (Psa. 35:27c; 1 Sam. 23:10-11).

Summary: Psalm 36 is primarily a teaching or wisdom psalm that contrasts the iniquity of a wicked man with the loving-kindness of a righteous God.

Verse 1: The basic problem with the wicked man is this: “There is no fear of God before his eyes” (compare Psa. 10:1-12; 14:1-4; 53:1-4). He is not frightened or alarmed by God. These words are quoted by Paul in Romans 3:18 and applied to the human depravity of his day. It should be noted that there is a translation difficulty concerning the word “heart”. Whose heart is under discussion, is it “my heart” (the Hebrew MT), or “his heart” (the LXX and other ancient versions)? Also, is transgression speaking or is God speaking? There are three possibilities, but they all basically mean the same thing:

- a) “The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, *that there is* no fear of God before his eyes.” (KJV, see also the ASV)
- b) “Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; There is no fear of God before his eyes.” (NASV, see also the ESV)
- c) “I have a message from God in my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before their eyes.” (NIV, see also the NET Bible)

Verse 7: “Under the shadow of thy wings”, a phrase found only in the psalms, is symbolic of divine protection (Psa. 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 63:7).

Verse 8: “Pleasures” is from the Hebrew word for Eden (Gen. 2:10) meaning “luxury” or “delight”. When we take refuge in God (verse 7), it is like being in paradise (verse 8)!

Verse 10: Note the phrase “them that know thee”. To “know” the Lord is to have an intimate, personal relationship with him; to obey him, trust him, etc. (Gal. 4:9; Tit. 1:16; Heb. 8:11).

Verses 11-12: The psalmist comes back to the discussion of the wicked man that he started in verses 1-4. The wicked man who thought he could escape God (verses 1-4) will eventually be “thrust down” by God in the end. His ultimate ruin is certain.

## **Questions**

1. What is the basic problem of the wicked man and what does he believe about himself and his iniquity (verses 1-2)?
2. What are the words of the wicked man and what has he stopped doing (verse 3)?
3. What does the wicked man do with iniquity and evil (verse 4)?
4. How high does the Lord’s loving-kindness and faithfulness reach (verse 5)?
5. What are God’s righteousness and judgments like and who does God preserve (verse 6)?
6. Where do the children of men take refuge and how will they be blessed by God (verses 7-8)?
7. What two things are with God (verse 9)?
8. What does the psalmist pray for concerning the upright in heart (verse 10)?

9. What does the psalmist pray for concerning himself and what does he believe will happen to the wicked (verses 11-12)?

### **Applications for Today**

1. Atheism, whether practical or theoretical, is foolish (verses 1-3). Why do some not know God (1 Cor. 1:21; 1 Thess. 4:5)? What will happen to all who “know not God” (2 Thess. 1:8)?

2. Evil people engage in wicked deceiving and devising (verses 3-4). Where does evil come from (Mt. 12:34-35; Mk. 7:21-23)? What did Paul say about evil men in 2 Timothy 3:13?

3. In contrast to the wicked, the Lord shows loving-kindness, faithfulness, and righteousness (verses 5-7, and 10). Where is the righteousness of God found and how is it obtained or applied (Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-22; 10:3; 1 Cor. 1:20; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9)?

4. The judgments of the Lord are “a great deep” (verse 6). How does Paul describe the judgments of the Lord in Romans 11:33?

5. The Lord is not only our creator, but also our sustainer. He preserves man and beast (verse 6). How is God described in Nehemiah 9:6? What does Paul say about God in Acts 17:28?

6. God’s people drink from the river of his pleasures (verse 8). What do God’s people drink from now (Jn. 4:14; Rev. 21:6; 22:17) and in heaven (Rev. 7:17; 22:1)?

7. The Lord is our (spiritual) life and our (spiritual) light (verse 9). How does John describe Jesus (Jn. 1:4 and 8:12)?

8. All the proud workers of iniquity will ultimately be “thrust down” by God (verses 11-12). What will happen to them in the judgment day (Mt. 7:23; Lk. 13:27)? What does God do with the proud (Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5)?