

Psalm 64

Title: Protection from Secret Enemies

Author and Date: David

Key Verses: Psalm 64:2, 5

Type: Individual Lament (Complaint)

Outline

- A. Request made: enemies shoot secretly (verses 1-6).
- B. Request granted: God shoots back openly (verses 7-10).

Notes

Title: "For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David." See the notes on the title of Psalm 4.

Summary: Psalm 64 is another individual lament (complaint). The psalmist offers a prayer (complaint) to God for protection and preservation from his enemies (verse 1). These enemies work in secret (verse 2) as they attack the psalmist with their secret words (verses 3-4) and with their secret snares (verse 5). They constantly search out iniquity (verse 6). But, God shoots back in judgment at these enemies (verse 7). When God punishes these secret enemies, some men will flee away (verse 8), others will wisely fear God (9), and the righteous will rejoice and take refuge in God (verse 10).

Verse 1: This psalm is a "complaint" (ASV) psalm like those found in Psalm 54-59. "Fear" in verse 1 means "dread", and "fear" in verses 4 and 9 means "reverence and respect".

Verse 2: The main description of the wicked in this psalm is their secret scheming. Secret plots against David can be found in 1 Samuel 22 and 2 Samuel 15-17.

Verses 3-4: The wicked and slanderous tongue is like a weapon; a sharp sword or an arrow (see James 3). Their speech is sharp and stinging (see Psa. 11:2; 55:21; 57:4; 59:7). Note that the psalmist describes his own innocence (upright and blameless character) when he says "the perfect" (KJV).

Verse 5: The wicked are arrogant and do not believe anyone will see their wickedness and care. But, God sees and punishes them (verse 7).

Verse 6: This verse expresses the inner psyche or deep thinking of the wicked. Their thoughts and heart are deeply set on evil.

Verse 7: God's "arrow" of divine retribution is here set in contrast with the "arrow" of the wicked found earlier in verse 3. The secret wickedness of the evil-doer will be found out by God. Evil does not triumph for long!

Verse 8: Divine retribution is seen when God makes the wicked fall by their own tongue.

Verses 8-10: Three responses to the fall of the wicked are here mentioned: 1) some men will "flee away" (KJV; other versions have "wag the head", an expression of scorn); 2) others will see the fate of the wicked and fear God; and, 3) the righteous will joy over the punishment of the wicked and take refuge in the Lord.

Questions

1. What does the psalmist request of God (verse 1)?
2. What does the psalmist want concerning the wicked and the workers of iniquity (verse 2)?
3. What do the wicked do with their tongue and their words (verse 3)?
4. Who do the wicked shoot at and how do they do it (verse 4)?
5. What do the wicked do and what question do they ask (verse 5)?
6. What do the wicked search out with their thoughts and heart (verse 6)?
7. What does God do to the wicked (verse 7)?
8. What do some men do when they see the wicked stumble (verses 8)?
9. What do others do (verse 9)?

10. What do the righteous do when they see the wicked stumble (verse 10)?

Applications for Today

1. We need to pray for fear to be removed from our lives (verse 1). What does God not give to Christians (2 Tim. 1:7)?
2. The wicked have secret snares of searching sin (verses 2, 5, and 6). What eventually happens to sin done in secret (Num. 32:23)?
3. The wicked tongue is like a sharp sword or arrow (verses 3-4). What does James compare the tongue to in James 3:5-6?
4. God punishes the wicked (verse 7). What does God the righteous judge do to the wicked (Psa. 7:11-13).
5. Some men run away and others turn to God when they see the wicked punished (verses 8-9). What do God's actions in the world cause some to do (Psa. 40:3)?
6. The righteous take refuge in the Lord when they are surrounded by wickedness (verse 10). What do the righteous have (Prov. 14:26, 32)?
7. The righteous are glad and rejoice even in times of persecution by enemies (verse 10). Why do Christians still rejoice in times of persecution (Mt. 5:12; Rom. 5:3; Col. 1:24; 1 Pet. 1:6-8; 4:13)? When do Christians rejoice (Phil. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16)?