

Psalm 12

Title: Jehovah Helps the Needy

Author and Date: David

Key Verse: Psalm 12:1, 5

Outline

- A. The words of the lawless: perverse and proud (verses 1-4).
- B. The words of the Lord: pure and preserved (verses 5-8).

Notes

Title: See the notes on Psalm 6.

Verse 1: The psalmist believes that his society is morally bankrupt; the godly are disappearing from the land. These are dark days. In Psalm 11 the foundations are falling and in Psalm 12 the faithful are falling.

Verse 2: The emphasis in this psalm is on wicked words (falsehood, flattery, boasting) more than on wicked deeds. A “double heart” (KJV, NASV, etc) is literally, “a heart and a heart”. This is a reference to hypocrisy and “deception” (NIV). They say one thing, but think another. These people are not interested in communication, but rather manipulation.

Verse 4: People who speak falsehood, flattery, and boasting believe that they are so powerful that there is no lord over them; they are their own master.

Verse 5: Note that these words are a direct quotation from the Lord. This is the first time in the psalms that we are reading what “saith Jehovah”. The words, “Now will I arise”, is a reference to the Lord rising up in judgment and justice (see Psa. 3:7; 7:6; 9:19; 10:12; 17:13; 44:16; 59:4; 68:1; 74:22; 76:9; 94:1).

Verse 6: “As silver tried in a furnace” is a reference to the refining process of metals in a heated furnace or crucible. Metals like gold and silver were “tried” and “purified” (NIV) by the heat of fire in order to separate the good metal from the dross (see also Psa. 18:30; 19:8; 119:140; Prov. 30:5). “Purified seven times” means the Lord’s words are “thoroughly refined” (NET Bible) to perfection. The Lord’s words are flawless.

Verse 7: The Lord’s word is pure, proved, and preserved. “This generation” is a reference back to the wicked society of the psalmist in verse 1.

Verse 8: When you compare other versions you find that the walk of the wicked here is one of pride. They “prowl” (ESV) and they parade themselves without shame as they “strut about” (NIV, NLT, NASV, etc).

Questions

1. Why does the psalmist ask the Lord for help (verse 1)?
2. How do the ungodly use their tongues (verse 2)?
3. What will the Lord do to the ungodly tongue (verse 3)?
4. What does the ungodly one say about his tongue (verse 4)?
5. Who does the Lord rise up to help (verse 5)?
6. What are the words of the Lord compared to (verse 6)?
7. What will the Lord do with his words (verse 7)?
8. What do the wicked do and when do they do it (verse 8)?

Applications for Today

1. There are times when the righteous feel lonely because the number of the faithful is few. The righteous cry, “Help, Lord” (verse 1). How did Elijah feel in his day (1 Kings 19:9-18)? What did Jeremiah (Jer. 5:1) and Micah say about the godly of their day (Mic. 7:2)?

2. Falsehood and flattery are common sins of the tongue (verses 2). What do false teachers do with their flattering lips (Rom. 16:17-18)? What did Paul refuse to do (1 Thess. 2:5)?
3. Boasting is another sin of the tongue (verse 3). What do false teachers say (2 Pet. 2:18; Jude 16)? What does the beast of Revelation say (Rev. 13:5-6)?
4. We must never think that we can use our lips to say what we want (verse 4). What does the psalmist say about controlling the tongue (Psa. 141:3)? What does James say about controlling the tongue (Jas. 3:1-12)?
5. Some people act as if they are God (verse 4). How did Paul describe the man of sin and the son of perdition (2 Thess. 2:3-4)?
6. The Lord hears the sighing of the oppressed and he will rescue them (verse 5). What warning does James give to those who oppress the poor (James 5:1-6)?
7. Unlike the words of men (verses 2-4), the Lord's words are wholly trustworthy (verse 6). The words of the Lord are pure, proved, and preserved (verses 6-7). What did Peter write concerning the Lord's words (1 Pet. 1:23-25)?
8. Wicked people often proudly parade their sin before others (verse 8). What did Isaiah say about the Jews of his day (Isa. 3:9)? How did Paul speak of the Gentile world of his day (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; Eph. 4:19)? How did Peter speak of the Gentile world of his day (1 Pet. 4:3-4)?