

PSALMS 58

Prayer for the Punishment of the Wicked.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. From Roy H. Enoch (10-19-94).
- B. To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy." A Michtam of David.
- C. "Prayer: For the Punishment of the Wicked"
- D. This is another of the so-called imprecatory psalms which pray for God's righteous judgment on the wicked. Some seem to think that it is "more righteous" to not want the wicked punished, but that is an ungodly attitude that does not accept the seriousness of deciding to sin, nor does it consider the ingratitude of rejecting the offer of salvation as a free gift through the blood of Christ.
- E. We do not know the occasion for David writing this psalm, but Delitzsch suggests that it would fit the rebellion of Absalom. It is similar to several psalms of David, for example Psa. 65.
- F. Coffman uses the paragraphing suggested by Kidner:
 - I. Tyrants Addressed (1,2).
 - II. Tyrants Described (3-5).
 - III. Tyrants Prayed Against (6-9).
 - IV. Tyrants Rejoiced Over (10,11).

THE TEXT.

- 58:1** Do you indeed speak righteousness, O gods?
Do you judge uprightly, O sons of men?
- 2** No, in heart you work unrighteousness;
On earth you weigh out the violence of your hands.
- 3** The wicked are estranged from the womb;
These who speak lies go astray from birth.
- 4** They have venom like the venom of a serpent;
Like a deaf cobra that stops up its ear,
- 5** So that it does not hear the voice of charmers,
Or a skillful caster of spells.
- 6** O God, shatter their teeth in their mouth;
Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD.
- 7** Let them flow away like water that runs off;
When he aims his arrows, let them be as headless shafts.
- 8** Let them be as a snail which melts away as it goes along,
Like the miscarriages of a woman which never see the sun.
- 9** Before your pots can feel *the fire of thorns*
He will sweep them away with a whirlwind, the green and the burning alike.
- 10** The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance;
He will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.
- 11** And men will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous;
Surely there is a God who judges on earth!"

COMMENTS.

- A. Tyrants Addressed.
[v1] "...you silent ones" can be translated "rams," "leaders," "mighty lords," "judges," etc. These were men who were arrogant and wicked.
[v2] "No, in heart you work wickedness..." describes the one he is referring to.
- B. Tyrants Described.
[v3] "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." This passage is often used to teach "total hereditary depravity" but not one of these three words is found in the Bible, much less all three in one verse. We first notice that they were not born in sin,

but “go astray.” Their lives are so given to wickedness, that their earliest activities indicate the directions of their lives. They cannot be changed, because they will not listen to anything different. [v4,5] “...they are like the deaf cobra that stops its ear, which will not heed the voice of charmers...” This is a very graphic picture of one given completely to sin.

C. Tyrants Prayed Against.

In seven metaphors, he prays for God’s righteous judgment on the wicked.

1. “Break their teeth...” (of cobras?) (58:6).
2. “...break out the fangs of the young lions...” (58:6).
3. “Let them flow away as waters...” (58:7).
4. “...let his arrows be as if cut in pieces” (58:7).
5. “Let them be like a snail which melts away as it goes...” (58:8).
6. “...like a stillborn child...may not see the sun” (58:8).
7. “...your pots...He shall take them away as in a whirlwind...” (58:9).

[v9] This verse has the most difficult figure due in part to the translations as the “pot” seems to be the means of the wicked devising their plans. Coffman suggests as the meaning, “They cooked up all kinds of schemes which God frustrated.”

D. Tyrants Rejoiced Over.

[v10] “The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance...” The inspired psalmist assures us by the Spirit of God that those who are righteous will rejoice when God’s vengeance is brought upon the wicked. Those who do not accept this are not as righteous as they think they are.

[v11] God’s punishment of the wicked is His assurance to the righteous: “Verily there is a God that judges the earth.”