

SBC – Jan. 7, 2024

Psalm 11 (NKJV)

“Refuge in the LORD”

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

The Chief Musician may have been a leader of choirs or musicians during the time of David.

This is another Psalm of David. The occasion is uncertain but the contents of the Psalm indicate it was at a time when his life was being threatened by the wicked. There are mixed voices – some saying he should flee for his life and David responding with trust in the LORD. Some suggest that the occasion may have been when Absalom was seeking his life; but others think it may have been when Saul was trying to kill him.

One reason some lean towards Saul trying to kill him is because the language of fleeing like a bird is similar to what David said to Saul in 1 Sam. 26:20.

Slide # 1

1 Samuel 26:20 (NKJV)

20 So now, do not let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD. For the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, **as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains.**

Still, this is inconclusive.

Slide # 2

Outline of Psalm 11

Refuge in the LORD

Psalm 11:1a David's Affirmation of Faith

11:1b – 3 Voice Urging David to Flee

11:4-7 David's Response of Faith

1 In the LORD I put my trust; How can you say to my soul, “Flee as a bird to your mountain”?

David begins by affirming his TRUST in the LORD! More literally it reads, “I take refuge in the LORD”.

In the OT a description of TRUST is taking refuge in the LORD. It is the idea of seeking shelter or protection in God. It is depending on Him and committing oneself into His care.

Slide # 3

Ruth 2:12 (NKJV)

12 The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the **LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.**

This was Boaz's way of describing Ruth (the Moabitess) coming to put her TRUST in the God of Israel. In other words he was recognizing her faith. Taking refuge in the LORD is an OT statement of faith. This was David's affirmation. His refuge – His trust was in the LORD.

The word "LORD" here is the name "YHWH" – God's most sacred name – often referred to as God's covenant Name. It emphasizes His covenant faithfulness as the God Who keeps His promises to His people. It is the idea of God being UNCHANGING in terms of His character. God doesn't change and therefore He can be counted on to carry through on His Word.

David's affirmation of faith is a response to the voice that is telling him to flee in fear. Some think this may have been the voice of a well meaning but misguided friend who is concerned for David. Others think David is reflecting conflicting voices within himself in the sense that he feels pressure and the temptation to flee – and yet is resolved to trust in the Lord. Again, the specifics are not given.

It maybe the suggestion was for David to flee from the land of Israel – which when David did flee to the land of the Philistines it was nothing but trouble (cf. 1 Sam. 27-30). God intended for David to remain the land and trust Him to in His own time put him on the throne.

But that involved a 10 year process in which David did spend much of his time on the run as a fugitive. He was not wrong for evading Saul, which is why I think a specific situation (unnamed) such as fleeing to another country may be in view here. But again we are not told specifics.

We do know that David found the suggestion to flee at this point repulsive.

How can you say to my soul, "Flee as a bird to your mountain"?

This advice is born out of FEAR! There are always the fear-mongers who advocate acting out of fear instead of standing firm in faith. Some times these voices are well -intended.

This is a great challenge in life – to not let FEAR dominate and dictate your actions. Now there is a place for wisdom. As I say, David himself did flee for the better part of ten years – so it seems this was a specialized situation that called for faith and not fleeing in fear.

There are often dangers facing the people of God and we often need to be reminded – like Paul reminded Timothy that...

Slide # 4

2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

And here is the fear warning...

2 For look! The wicked bend their bow, They make ready their arrow on the string, That they may shoot secretly at the upright in heart.

The enemy here is wicked and they are intent on KILLING David! The threat was real! Behind the scenes they are scheming to secretly take out David. They are clearly said to be “wicked” and their target is “the upright in heart”. This is definitely a scary situation – naturally speaking.

It’s good to know the facts, but it’s better to look at those facts in the light of the presence and promises of God. – **Warren Wiersbe**

There is great irony in comparing Psalm 7:12 where God is the One ready to shoot the wicked if he doesn’t repent and here in Ps. 11:2 where the wicked are ready to shoot the upright. Which shooter will prevail?

Slide # 5

Psalm 7:12 (NKJV)

12 If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready.

Psalm 11:2 (NKJV)

2 For look! The wicked bend their bow, They make ready their arrow on the string, That they may shoot secretly at the upright in heart.

3 If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?

Not only is the voice of fear afraid but it also feels helpless.

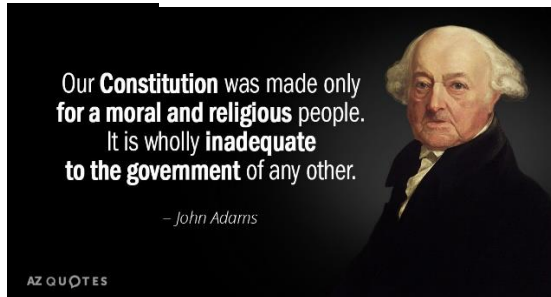
The foundations are the pillars of society related to law and order based on the just principles of God's Word. This relates to the stable established values a civil society is built upon. When there is the crumbling of a God-centered society; when lawful authority operates in a perverted manner; when the authorities that be have no regard for God's law or His authority – then the foundations are destroyed.

In that type of context there is great danger for the “upright in heart”. When the very pillars of government are collapsing and the wicked are plotting to take down the righteous – what can they do?

Humanly speaking they are very vulnerable. Humanly speaking the best you can hope for is to flee for your life and try to find a place of safety – at least that is what the voice of fear was saying.

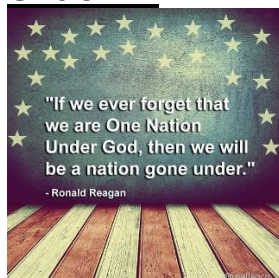
Lots of God's people are asking this very question right now. In our country long established on Judeo-Christian principles that regulate a lawful society are now eroding and going by the wayside.

Slide # 6



America was not founded as Christian nation, but its underpinning is that of Judeo-Christian ethics through and through.

Slide # 7



Well we are getting there in a hurry! We have legalized murder in the womb. We have legalized sexual perversion. Not much that is biblical is sacred anymore in our society!

“If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?” The fear-monger says “run” – “Flee like a bird”. Become a “prepper” and isolate yourself in self-sufficiency. Stock up on guns and ammunition. Stock up on food and water – because you are going to need it. There is nothing else to do! The foundations are destroyed – run for your life! But really the “What can the righteous do?” is the wrong question. The issue is what can God do?

But David had another answer. His extended response is seen in verses 4-7. Connect Verse 1a “In the LORD I put my trust” to what he now says in verses 4-7.

4 The LORD is in His holy temple, The LORD’s throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.

Twice David uses the name “YHWH” in this verse. David’s reply is that God is still in His holy temple – He is still on His throne in heaven. What a great response.

The foundations are destroyed – okay – God is still on His throne. That is has not changed. God is still God. He is still in control! He is still sovereign. His holy temple here probably has heaven in view corresponding to His throne in heaven.

Slide # 8

Habakkuk 2:20 (NKJV)

20 “But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”

And the LORD sees what is going on. The wicked have lost sight of God thinking He is not aware of what is happening. But they are so very wrong. He is watching.

And in His watching He tests the sons of men. God allows things to happen to see how people will respond. He allows TESTS to come!

When the bottom falls out and the very foundations of society are coming apart – this is a TESTING time! Where we will we go for refuge?

Slide # 9**Proverbs 18:10 (NKJV)**

10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.

Psalm 91:1–2 (NKJV)

1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the LORD, **“He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.”**

Sometimes God allows all other sources of trust to collapse to TEST us to see if we will find our refuge in Him. It is good in those times to remember “God is still on His throne!” He hasn’t moved and He is not going anywhere.

5 The LORD tests the righteous, But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates.

Yes, God tests the righteous! He allows these things to happen to prove and refine them. But He always has a good end purpose.

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

In contrast the wicked who love violence are HATED by the LORD. This is not an emotional statement but a judicial one. God is aligned against them to bring them down. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33:11). He in love calls them to repentance, but if they are steeled in their rebellion He has determined perfect retribution against them. “Hates” is used in the sense of “intense rejection”. When God hates the rebel wicked it means He regards them as His enemy who have offended His holiness and are worthy of His holy judgment!

Those that reject God will be rejected by Him.

Slide # 10**Deuteronomy 7:10 (NKJV)**

10 and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face.

If you want to hate God just make sure you know what you are up against! God will repay you in kind to your face. And just remember He is A LOT BIGGER than you are!

David in effect was saying, “God is still on the throne and He sees all that is going on with me. I am in His sovereign care. This is where I find my refuge.”

6 Upon the wicked He will rain coals; Fire and brimstone and a burning wind Shall be the portion of their cup.

God tests the righteous but fiery judgment is reserved for the wicked.

Slide # 11

1 Corinthians 5:12–13 (NKJV)

12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.”

1 Corinthians 11:32 (NKJV)

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Although God is infinite love, His soul hates men who practice violence. He will rain down a storm of judgment on them; the rain will be coals of fire and brimstone and the wind will be scorching heat.

– *William MacDonald*

Firey judgment is coming to the wicked. It is their lot! It's just a matter of time if they don't repent!

7 For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright.

The LORD is righteous. He is the standard of all that is RIGHT! And He loves righteousness and by implication His people who are called “righteous” in verse 5.

His countenance beholds the upright. He sees what they are going through. We should note that most newer translations translate the last part of verse 7 as “***The upright beholds His countenance***”.

So the question is this: Are the upright beholding God’s countenance or does God behold the upright. Both are true of course so perhaps it doesn’t really matter which way you take it.

Certainly, verse 4 emphasizes God’s watching eye, but in turn God’s people are looking to Him for refuge which is the emphasis David began with in verse 1.

To see God’s face is to experience His presence and His blessing.

Slide # 12

Numbers 6:24–26 (NKJV)

24 “The LORD bless you and keep you;

25 The LORD **make His face shine upon you**, And be gracious to you;

26 The LORD **lift up His countenance upon you**, And give you peace.” ’

When the foundations are falling apart what should the righteous do? David would say “Trust in the LORD”. He is still in control. He is on His throne. He is still sovereign. He knows what is going on with you and He cares.

Yes, these times are testing times, but never lose sight of the fact that God loves the righteous and that in due time His fiery judgment is reserved for the wicked! We can rest in God’s sovereign care! That is a great place to be – it is a safe place to be.

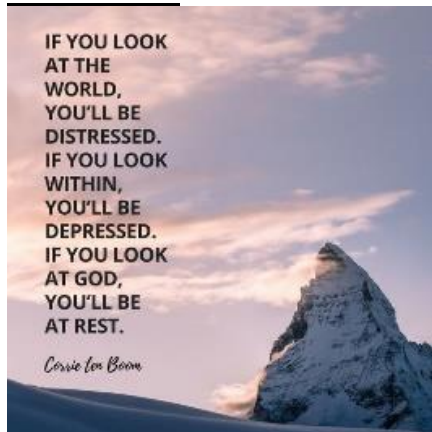
When Nehemiah was intent on rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem the enemies of God’s people tried to frighten him into stopping the work. They threatened to report to the king of Persia that he was leading a revolt and trying to set himself up as king. And then they threatened to kill him.

Nehemiah did two things: 1) In Nehemiah 6:9 he prayed, “**O God, strengthen my hands.**” That is good! Ask God for strength. And then 2) in Nehemiah 6:11 he said, “**Should such a man as I flee?**” It would be unbecoming and out of character for a man of God -sold out to God and trust in God to forsake the work and flee. Instead, Nehemiah resolved to trust in God and then act on conviction and not fear. Faith not fear is to govern the people of God.

Psalm 11 reminds us that when the foundations of society around us are crumbling...

God sees all.
 God is still on His throne.
 God tests the righteous.
 God will judge the wicked.

Slide # 13



When the foundations crumble and perilous times reign – what should we do? David said, “**In the LORD I put my trust**”. We can’t improve on this!

That is proper thing to do! Come what may – may our TRUST be in the LORD. Never forget “He is still on the throne!” And we can rest in His sovereign care!

Let us end where David began Psalm 11. “In the LORD I put my trust”.

God help us to rest in Him!