

SBC – Jan. 21, 2024

Psalm 12 (NKJV)

“Ungodly Speech versus God’s Word”

Psalm 12 (NKJV)

To the Chief Musician. On An Eight-Stringed Harp. A Psalm of David.

Psalm 12, like many other Psalms written by David does not provide the occasion. Generally it has the setting of oppression by the wicked who have the prevailing upper hand. The concern is not so much direct physical affliction as it is the damage they are doing with their lying and deceitful mouths.

David notes that this Psalm is addressed to the Chief Musician – evidently intending it be used for the purpose of corporate worship. Perhaps this is why he keeps it general and does not mention a specific setting – allowing it to be applied generally.

I always find it interesting that there are churches who are noninstrumental – thinking it is more spiritual not to use any musical instruments in the worship service at all. I always wonder what they do with the Psalm that specifically call for the use of musical instruments of one type or another. This mentality just strikes me as very legalistic and not spiritual at all.

David writes “To the Chief Musician” – first clue that this has “music” in view and then “On an Eight-Stringed Harp” – second clue that this has “music” in view. My advice to the non-instrumental folks: READ THE HEADING OF THE PSALM. You don’t even have to get to the Psalm to realize how misguided is the idea of “non instrumental”.

Frankly, most of the “non instrumental” churches have much greater doctrinal problems that their non-use of musical instruments. Most of them are totally off on the gospel. So when I read headlines such as “*Noninstrumental Churches Facing Uncertain Future*” – I am very good with that.

Psalm 12 is another Psalm of David. We know that David wrote at least half of the 150 Psalms in the book of Psalms.

Slide # 1

Psalm 12

Theme: “Ungodly Speech versus God’s Word”

OUTLINE:

vv. 1-2 - The Language of the Wicked
 vv. 3-4 - Prayer for God's Intervention
 v. 5 - God's Promise to Intervene
 vv. 6-7 - The Pure Word's of the LORD
 v. 8 - Prevailing Wickedness

1 Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.

Often this is the driving thrust of prayer: "**Help, LORD**". It is a good prayer. We constantly need help and the godly look to the One who can help – namely the LORD.

The word LORD here is YHWH – the unchanging faithful God.

The concern that precipitates this cry for help is that the godly are disappearing from the scene. The godly are also called the faithful here. There are becoming fewer and fewer of those in society that are truly loyal to God. Perhaps they are going underground because of wicked oppression or perhaps they were being seduced by the wicked in the sense of apostasy. Whatever the case they were becoming fewer and fewer.

Boy can we relate to this. We used to have in the United States what was called "The Moral Majority".

No one claims that anymore. Forget the idea of a Christian Majority – other than perhaps in name only. Every time in recent years when they take a poll there are fewer and fewer that even claim to be Christian.

"Help, LORD!"

They say that "nature abhors a vacuum". Certainly, when there is a void in godliness you can be sure that Satan will fill it with wickedness. This was David's concern and hence his cry for HELP.

When the wicked are in control – what can the righteous do? That was the cry in Psalm 11. Well, they can pray to the One Who is sovereign Who can do something about it. That is what David did.

Here specifically was the complaint of David...

2 They speak idly everyone with his neighbor; With flattering lips and a double heart they speak.

In general David has LIARS all around him. He lived in a society full of liars! Perhaps David wrote this when he was on the run from king Saul. He had the official government after him and all were talking about him – and very probably much of it was of the nature described here – but again we don't know the specific occasion for the writing of this Psalm.

“They speak idly” is also translated as “They speak falsehood” (NASB).

Slide # 2

Deuteronomy 5:20 (NKJV)

20 ‘You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

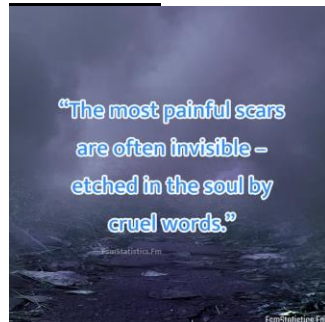
Flattery is false praise for the purpose of manipulating someone. It insincerely tells people what they want to hear. But it is totally MANIPULATIVE. I don't know about you but I don't like to be manipulated. That is a pet peeve of mine. People do this in all sorts of ways, but one way is through flattery. They butter you up with words to manipulate you.

And David says with “a double heart they speak”. They are two faced. They say one thing to your face and another behind your back. They are totally untrustworthy – totally disloyal. There is no genuine transparency – no honesty from these folks. These people are “two-faced liars”.

One of the great things that hurt David, perhaps more than any other was the wicked speech that people used against him.

The old saying, “Stick and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” is a total myth. Some of the most damaging things in the world are words. They cut deep – they can do great damage.

Slide # 3



3 May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, And the tongue that speaks proud things,

David here has a very specific prayer. He asks that God may intervene and CUT OFF all flattering lips and the tongue that speaks proud things. The idea of “cut off” is to destroy. The sense is a call for God to wipe them out.

They are flattering manipulators and arrogant. They talk big and have an attitude to go with it.

4 Who have said, “With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; Who is lord over us?”

These arrogant braggarts think that through deceptive lying and manipulative flattering they will prevail. They really believe that they are going to have their way over David.

Remember David was God’s anointed – which was generally well known long before he actually became king. So, in effect to try and take out David was really to take on God.

They don’t think anyone can stop them from their evil propagandist speech. They arrogantly say, “Who is lord over us?” Wow! This clearly is a “Lordship” issue. They don’t recognize any authority over them including that of God. They don’t think they are accountable to anyone! In doing so they really were defying the sovereign authority of God Himself.

Slide # 4

Matthew 12:34 (NKJV)

34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? **For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**

Matthew 12:36–37 (NKJV)

36 But I say to you that for **every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.**

37 For **by your words you will be justified,** and **by your words you will be condemned.”**

What comes out of the mouth tells on the heart! Pride talks big now but come judgment day these people will be as silent as a stone when the record of their words will be made the basis of their judgment!

For us as true believers we answer the question: “***Who is lord over us?***” with the Lord Jesus Christ. He bought us with His blood. We belong to Him (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We are His slaves. True believers are those who call on the name of the LORD (Rom. 10:13).

But these wicked liars don’t recognize the Lordship of God over them and it shows in their words!

In verse 5 we have the answer to David’s prayer...

5 “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, Now I will arise,” says the LORD; “I will set him in the safety for which he yearns.”

God’s people (true believers) are often described in the Psalms as the poor and needy. So often they are those whom the wicked take advantage of. David has already spoken of those being oppressed as the “godly” and the “faithful” in verse 1.

God in effect, interjects at this point that He will arise and rescue His people. When God says, “I will arise” it means that He is going to move into action on behalf of His people.

Slide # 5

Isaiah 33:10 (NKJV)

10 “Now I will rise,” says the LORD; “Now I will be exalted, Now I will lift Myself up.

God doesn’t say exactly when or how He will do this – only that He will do it. Because of this some commentators think this ultimately looks forward to the kingdom when God’s people will finally know the consistent safety for which they long.

These destructive talkers spoke as they pleased, but they could not stop the LORD God from speaking as *He* pleased. In a wonderful and dramatic way, the LORD announced that He would act on behalf of the **poor** and **needy** victimized by these proud, unstoppable talkers.

-David Guzik

At some point the LORD will intervene! The “Help, LORD” of verse 1 will be answered.

Verse 5 is reminiscent of Exodus 2:24.

Slide # 6

Exodus 2:24 (NKJV)

24 So God **heard their groaning**, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

What is interesting is that the Hebrew people had been in Egypt for hundreds of years and for many years had been in slavery. What I am saying is that God's deliverance didn't come immediately – but it did come in accordance with His timetable that served His purposes for His glory.

In contrast to the lying deceptive words of so many around him, David focused on the pure trustworthy words of the LORD. People often cannot be trusted but God can be! God has just spoken words of promise and coming deliverance in verse 5. And now verses 6 and 7 are commentary on those words.

6 The words of the LORD are pure words, Like silver tried in a furnace of earth, Purified seven times.

What a contrast: The words of the liars around him are described in terms of falsehoods, flattery, doublespeak, and arrogant speech. In contrast God's words are totally wholesome, true, and pure.

What a wonderful verse is Psalm 12:6. David is describing the words of the LORD in superlative terms. He saw them as PURE without any error or untruthfulness.

The description of "Purified seven times" emphasizes perfect purity and absolute trustworthiness to the highest degree possible!

Seven in the Bible is consistently the number of completeness or perfection. The words of the LORD are perfect! They can't be any more pure, accurate, or trustworthy.

Slide # 7

To say that God's words are pure, refined, and purified is to insist that they have no "dross" of lies, flattery or insincerity; God means what He says; His words are completely pure. – ***ESV Study Bible***

This means that the Word of the LORD can be TRUSTED in every sense.

Slide # 8

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NKJV)

20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

Psalm 18:30 (NKJV)

30 As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.

7 You shall keep them, O LORD, You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

There is a lot of debate among Bible scholars whether the “them” in verse refers back to the “words of the LORD” in verse 6 or to the poor and needy (representing God’s people back in verse 5; or perhaps to BOTH. The truth is there is no consensus here and people make technical arguments for various views.

However, from the whole of Scripture we can see that BOTH are true. God will preserve His Word and God will also preserve His people.

Consider the people of God. Whether speaking of a godly remnant of the Jews or believers who make up the Church, or any other era; God has always had a remnant of true believers. And that will always be the case. Hard as Satan tries through the instrumentality of lost people he cannot stamp out God’s people.

This may well be what is in view here in Psalm 12:7 because the whole Psalm essentially has the concern about the wicked and what they are overwhelmingly doing to God’s people. And the Psalm also ends this way in verse 8 saying, “The wicked prowl on every side.”

Yet, God’s promise abides – His Word is sure – His people will be preserved. In every generation they are in place representing the truth of God.

On the other hand, the view that says Psalm 12:7 is a promise that God will preserve His Word forever is consistent with many other Scriptures.

In interacting with last days prophecy as found in the OT and also giving new prophetic revelation Jesus said...

Slide # 9

Matthew 24:35 (NKJV)

35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but **My words will by no means pass away.**

Earlier in Matthew 24 Jesus referenced the book of Daniel in the OT saying...

Slide # 10

Matthew 24:15–16 (NKJV)

15 “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ **spoken of by Daniel the prophet**, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),

16 “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Note Jesus assumes that the Bible (represented by Daniel’s prophetic word) will still be preserved at this time. And then building on this says His Word will not pass away.

There are many such correlations in the Scriptures. The Bible is an inspired book completely given without error. And not only that God has sovereignly preserved the truth of the Word in the transmission of the text. There is absolutely NO doctrine in question regarding the approximate 6000 manuscripts we have in the original languages. There is occasionally a question about whether a copyist misspelled a word, but there is no teaching or doctrine that is in question.

History tells the story of the renowned atheist, Voltaire (1694-1778), one of the most aggressive antagonists of Christianity. He wrote many things to undermine the church, and once said of Jesus Christ, “Curse the wretch. In 20 years, Christianity will be no more. My single hand will destroy the edifice it took 12 apostles to rear.”

However, Voltaire was less than successful. On his deathbed, a nurse who attended him was reported to have said, “For all the wealth in Europe, I would not see another atheist die.”

The physician, waiting up with Voltaire at his death, said that he cried out with utter desperation, "I am abandoned by God and man. I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months of life. Then I shall go to hell and you will go with me, oh, Christ, oh, Jesus Christ!"

And then irony of ironies - within fifty years of his death, the very house in which he once lived and wrote was used by the Evangelical Society of Geneva as a storehouse for the printing of Bibles and Gospel tracts.

Slide # 11

Isaiah 40:8 (NKJV)

8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

The Bible shows both the preservation of His Word and His people to both be true. So no matter how you take Psalm 12:7 – the greater counsel of God would show it to be true.

And then Psalm 12:8 ends on this note:

8 The wicked prowl on every side, When vileness is exalted among the sons of men.

The NASB translates this as, "The wicked strut about on every side..."

Oh, for now they are strutting their stuff. Their mouths are wide open and full of lies and deception as they believe their own lordship.

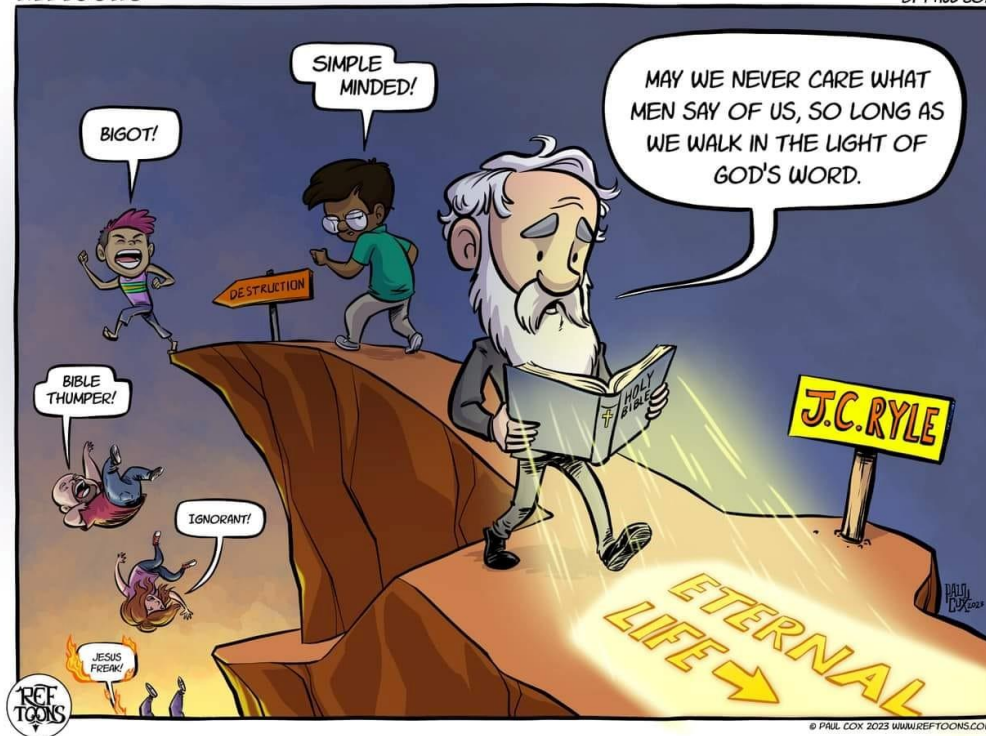
But Psalm 12:5 remains: At some point God will arise in judgment and will set His people in the permanent realm of safety. They will indeed be preserved forever in the kingdom!

This life is just a little snap shot. The full story will be told in eternity. We have God's Word on it. His Word is as PURE as PURE can be. God's people will be preserved as will be His Word.

Slide # 12

REFTOONS

BY PAUL COX



The words of wicked people do hurt, but the Words of God trump all other words. God's Words are true and they give us hope and healing. Come what may...

Psalms 12:6–7 (NKJV)

6 The words of the LORD are pure words, Like silver tried in a furnace of earth, Purified seven times.

7 You shall keep them, O LORD, You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

Amen!