

SBC – Feb 2, 2025

Psalm 58 (NKJV)

“God’s Vengeance on the Wicked”

Psalm 58 is an imprecatory Psalm. An imprecatory calls on God to bring judgment, calamity, or curses upon either the enemies of God or the psalmist. The word "imprecate" means "to invoke disaster upon" or "to pray against".

This Psalm in particular targets imprecations against wicked Judges.

The heading of Psalm 58 reads...

Psalm 58 (NKJV)

To the Chief Musician. Set to “Do Not Destroy.” A Michtam of David.

Once again David designates this as being “To the Chief Musician” which would indicate it was intended to be used in corporate worship.

“Set to ‘***Do Not Destroy***,’” is thought to probably have been a well-known tune. Four of the Psalm is designated in this way as seen in Psalm 57, 58, 59, and 75.

The meaning of “***Michtam***” is uncertain. Possible interpretations include "writing," "golden," or "engraving”. It could simply mean “*A writing of David*” which makes good sense.

Slide # 1

Psalm 58

“God’s Vengeance on the Wicked”

vv. 1-2 - Indictment of Wicked Judges

vv. 3-5 – Description of the Wicked

vv. 6-9 – Prayer for Divine Vengeance

vv. 10-11 – Promise of Vindication for the Righteous

1 Do you indeed speak righteousness, you silent ones? Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men?

There is some discrepancy in the manuscripts at this point. Instead of “silent one” the more reliable manuscripts say “gods”.

Slide # 2**Psalm 58:1 (LSB)**

1 Do you indeed speak righteousness, O **gods**? Do you judge with equity, O sons of men?

Because there are few places in the psalms where human JUDGES are called “gods” the cultists have tried to say people can become gods. But that completely misses the point. To start with the Bible is emphatic that there is only ONE God.

Slide # 3**Deuteronomy 6:4 (NKJV)**

4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, **the LORD is one!**”

Isaiah 45:22 (NKJV)

22 “Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! **For I am God, and there is no other.**”

Many times the Bible asserts the reality that there is only ONE true God. No one honest with the Scriptures could take any other position.

However, as I said there are a few times where JUDGES are said to be “gods” with a small “g”. The word “gods” is literally “Elohim” meaning “mighty ones”. This is a title used for God (cf. Gen. 1:1) but in a secondary sense is sometimes used of human judges who serve as “intermediaries” for God (Ex. 21:6; 22:8-9; Deut. 1:17; 2 Chron. 19:6; Ps. 82:6)

God in His supreme role is JUDGE of all! This is a major attribute of what it means to be GOD. God is JUDGE! However, as those made in God’s image people serving in the role of “judge” represent God in that role in a secondary sense. A very “God-like” role is to serve as a judge. Therefore, they are sometimes called “gods” in this lesser sense with a small “g”.

Slide # 4**Psalm 82:1–2 (NKJV)**

1 God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the **gods** [judges].

2 How long will you **judge** unjustly, And show partiality to the wicked?
Selah

Slide # 5**Psalm 82:6–7 (NKJV)**

6 I said, “You are gods, And all of you are children of the Most High.

7 But you shall die like men, And fall like one of the princes.”

Those who would argue for the translation to be “silent ones” would still agree that we are talking about judges with the charge being that they were silent when they should have stood up for the oppressed.

Clearly the issue is one with judgment as the text plainly goes on to say, ***“Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men?”***

This is biting sarcasm – “Do you speak righteous – you so called “gods”? Do you judge uprightly? The expected answer is an emphatic NO and is so stated in the next verse!

David directed this psalm against those who were rulers or judges in some sense. Some think they were leaders aligned with Saul who passed judgment on the fugitive David, condemning him to a death sentence as a traitor. David challenged these rulers and the uprightness of their decisions. We picture David as a fugitive, perhaps at Adullam Cave. He hears from a messenger that some assembled court of leaders close to King Saul have met and judicially condemned him as a traitor, worthy of death. David is outraged at the injustice of it and proclaims this psalm. – **David Guzik**

It seems that some type of scenario similar to this is probably in view.

David was outraged at corruption, perhaps because he now felt the sting of it. It’s human nature to not care much about government and legal corruption until it personally hurts us. – **David Guzik**

2 No, in heart you work wickedness; You weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth.

They are definitely not properly representing God as His judicial representatives! In their heart they work wickedness in their perverted decisions and in their actions they dispense violence in the earth!

“As righteous judges ponder the law, balance the evidence, and weigh the case, so the malicious dispense injustice with malice aforethought in cold blood.” -**Charles Spurgeon**

When Judges are wicked the results are tragic!

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.

David provides commentary on how these wicked judges got to where they are. They were BORN wicked! We are all born sinners so by way of application this implicates us all.

Slide # 6

Psalm 51:5 (NKJV)

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

Romans 3:10 (NKJV)

10 As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one;

Someone has said that doctrine of original sin has been totally vindicated throughout history! Want proof of the Bible. One is the universality of sin! All sinned – all have a conscience – all die. This lines up exactly with what the Bible says.

Born sinners go astray from the beginning. These people were born LIARS.

You don’t have to teach a child to lie – it comes naturally! We do have to teach them to tell the truth. Unless God invades their life it puts them on a perverse course of depravity such as is here described by David.

We are born depraved, estranged from God from the womb, going astray from beginning – speaking lies. This is a commentary on humanity apart from God! Apart from the GRACE of God there go I!

4 Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; They are like the deaf cobra that stops its ear,

5 Which will not heed the voice of charmers, Charming ever so skillfully.

Wickedness is toxic or in David's word it is "poisonous".

In context, he is thinking about the words and actions of these wicked judges. They were deadly dangerous people.

They won't listen to truth! Their ears are deaf to truth like a deaf cobra that will not listen to a charmer no matter how skillfully he might play. You can't talk or reason with them. They are deaf to the claims of truth!

They have a depraved bent that refuses to listen to what is right! This is steeled rebellion.

This calls for one of the strongest imprecatory prayers in the Bible.

6 Break their teeth in their mouth, O God! Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD!

David is asking for God to drastically and violently intervene. David is asking for God to abruptly halt their sinful behavior.

This verse is a metaphorical prayer that God would so work that these evildoers would no longer have the power to viciously hurt people.

He compares them to snakes and lions – both which are figures for the devil elsewhere in the Scriptures (cf. Gen. 3:2; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Pet. 5:8).

David here expresses a righteous anger that is appropriate whenever God's people are wickedly abused. Yet, the Bible says, "Be angry, and do not sin." (Ps. 4:4; 37:8; Eph. 4:26). There is the challenge!

But savage injustice should bother us!

David didn't do any of the things he mentioned but instead asked the Lord to do them. He knew that vengeance belongs to the Lord (Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30). – **Warren Wiersbe**

7 Let them flow away as waters which run continually; When he bends his bow, Let his arrows be as if cut in pieces.

The picture of free flowing run off water is asking that that be dealt with suddenly and swiftly!

The request that their arrows be as if cut in pieces means may their attacks be rendered useless and harmless.

8 Let them be like a snail which melts away as it goes, Like a stillborn child of a woman, that they may not see the sun.

The snail appears to melt away as it goes along. David just wants them to disappear.

Like a stillborn child he request that these evil doers might die prematurely. That's clear and graphic!

As is generally the case with such prayers this prayer assumes that the wicked will not repent and seek justice. – ***ESV Study Bible***

Slide # 7

Break them...
 Take them away...
 Make them ineffective...
 Dissolve them...
 Snuff out their lives...

That is some serious imprecatory praying! And David asks that God do it suddenly!

9 Before your pots can feel the burning thorns, He shall take them away as with a whirlwind, As in His living and burning wrath.

Using picturesque language David calls for their sudden removal.

The picture is that of a camp preparing their meal. They heap brushwood under the pot, but even before the pot is warmed suddenly without warning along comes a great whirlwind and blows everything in its path away.

This is a picture of sudden and violent removal. David here envisions the swiftness of God's judgment!

Having concluded his imprecatory prayers David runs to the end of the matter believing that in the end the righteous will be vindicated in the judgment of the wicked.

10 The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance; He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked,

Clearly David anticipated the righteous vengeance of God coming upon his enemies. And when this happens he says the righteous will rejoice.

We are not to take matters into our own hands. Indeed, we are to pray for the repentance of the wicked. We are to love our enemies. But at the same time if people refuse to repent their will come a day when God will avenge the righteous. And it will be a day of celebration.

In the book of Revelation the martyrs are pictured in heaven and what are they doing?

Slide # 8

Revelation 6:10 (NKJV)

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, **until You judge and avenge our blood** on those who dwell on the earth?"

Finally, when all the judgments have fallen HARD on the earth as recorded in the book of Revelation and Jesus is ready to come to the earth – what is the response of heaven. Are they feeling sorry for what has transpired to the wicked under the holy judgment of God? No!

Slide # 9

Revelation 19:1–3 (NKJV)

1 After these things I heard a **loud voice of a great multitude** in heaven, saying, "**Alleluia!** Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!

2 For **true and righteous are His judgments**, because He has **judged** the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has **avenged** on her the blood of His servants shed by her."

3 Again they said, "**Alleluia!** Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"

All of heaven at this point is celebrating the HOLY judgments of God! That is the spirit of what David is saying here in Ps. 58:10.

Note the last phrase: "He [the righteous] shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked". This is the language of triumphant victory!

Again, this is a graphic way of describing the ultimate and total victory the righteous will ultimately have over the wicked.

When victorious soldiers walked around the field and picked up the spoils of battle, their feet were stained by the blood of their enemies. [Thus] walking in blood was a picture of great victory (see Ps. 68:23; Isa. 63:1-6; Rev. 14:17-20). – **Warren Wiersbe**

Washing their feet in the blood of the wicked suggests a military victory. When Christ comes at the Second Coming we will be accompanying Him and will share in His victory. That victory is described in military terms in the Bible.

Slide # 10

Isaiah 63:1–3 (NKJV)

1 Who is this who comes from Edom, With **dyed garments** from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?— “I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

2 Why is Your **apparel red**, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

3 “I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; **Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments**, And I have **stained all My robes**.”

Slide # 11

Revelation 19:15 (NKJV)

15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. **He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**

God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked and neither should we (cf. Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11). However, the holy vengeance of God and vindication of His saints is something to celebrate.

Slide # 12

2 Thessalonians 1:6–8 (NKJV)

6 since it is a **righteous thing** with God to **repay** with tribulation those who trouble you,
7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
8 in flaming fire **taking vengeance** on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We don't want people to experience the vengeance of God! How much better that they experience His grace. However, if they reject His grace we must celebrate His holiness which acts decisively in favor of His people.

It is a sickly sentimentality and a wicked weakness that has more sympathy with the corrupt oppressors than with the anger of God.

– **G. Campbell Morgan**

The point here in Psalm 58:10 is that the righteous will see God's righteous vengeance on the wicked! God is one day going to turn the tables and they will be turned forever!

David was praying for vindication in his day to the end...

11 So that men will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth."

As God intervenes in judgment on the wicked because of their mistreatment of the righteous it becomes a lesson for all people.

It shows that indeed the living God is not distant – but rather very involved in the lives of His people. He sees what is happening with them and He cares. Ultimately there is a REWARD for the righteous and there is JUDGMENT for the wicked (cf. Gen. 18:25; Ps. 82:8; 94:2).

At the end of the day God's people will not be left to the abusive treatment of judges or those who rule over them. Ultimately, God will intervene. Ultimately He will turn the tables – its just a matter of time.

David desired the world to see there was a moral order under God where righteousness is rewarded and wickedness is judged. He longed for the justice that these wicked rulers denied. – **David Guzik**

“All men shall be forced by the sight of the final judgment to see that there is a God, and that he is the righteous ruler of the universe. Two things will come out clearly after all – there is a God [Who judges the wicked] and there is a reward for the righteous.”

- **Charles Spurgeon**

The so called “Supreme Court” should ever realize there is a JUDGE over them. Wicked Judges in their perversion of justice will not get away with it forever.

Slide # 13

Psalm 2:1–3 (NKJV)

- 1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,
- 3 **“Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.”**

The bonds and the cords of the LORD are His moral laws that the world detests. Many of those in authority and who serve as Judges rebel against these realities even legalizing abortion (which is murder) and the most vile types of moral perversion.

If I had all the kings and judges as an audience my text would be...

Slide # 14

Psalm 2:10–12 (NKJV)

- 10 Now therefore, **be wise**, O **kings**; Be **instructed**, you **judges** of the earth.
- 11 Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling.
- 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

Those who are intermediate judges for God and dignified with the title “gods” (small “g”) must never forget that God alone is GOD and He alone is the final judge of all.

In the end all will be made to see, ***“there is a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth.”***

Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him!