

GOD AND THE WICKED

BIBLE TEXT : Psalm 10:1-18; 14:1-7; 36:1-12

LESSON 240 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The fool hath said in his heart, There Is no God" (Psalm 14:1).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Psalm 10:1-18 (KJV)

¹ Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? *why* hidest thou *thyself* in times of trouble?

² The wicked in *his* pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

³ For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, *whom* the LORD abhorreth.

⁴ The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after God*: God *is* not in all his thoughts.

⁵ His ways are always grievous; thy judgments *are* far above out of his sight: *as for* all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

⁶ He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for *I shall* never *be* in adversity.

⁷ His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue *is* mischief and vanity.

⁸ He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.

⁹ He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.

¹⁰ He croucheth, *and* humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

¹¹ He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see *it*.

¹² Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.

¹³ Wherefore doth the wicked condemn God? he hath said in his

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Separated from God

God inspired David to write these Psalms. They show us the vileness of sin. If Satan would try to persuade us that sin is not so bad, let us remember that Satan does not tell the truth. One sin in a person's life makes him wicked. To be included among the wicked, one does not need to have many sins or so-called big sins. Neither does one need to be an adult. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right" (Proverbs 20:11). To neglect salvation, to disobey God, and to fail to make our heart right in God's sight will keep us from God.

Those who are separated from God are the wicked. One sin separates a person from God. The Prophet Isaiah said to the people, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you" (Isaiah 59:2). Solomon said, "The LORD is far from the wicked" (Proverbs 15:29).

Praying

Because people are not punished immediately after they sin does not mean that God does not see and does not know about their sins. To David it appeared that God was not observing the great wickedness in the lives of people. As ^{*}f he were giving a report, David talked to God about the wicked. As one who had a burden for lost souls, and who would have liked to see people turn from their wicked ways, David prayed. These Psalms are like prayers directed to God.

David talked to God about the sinful things that he saw in the lives of people. Some go to others to talk about the sin they have seen. Some spread gossip. David prayed. In following David's example, let us, when we speak of sin in the lives of others, tell it to Jesus in prayer.

A Wicked Heart

These Psalms show how a person acts when his heart is not right with God. Most sinners would not like to be included with the wicked. They may say that their lives are not very bad. But if the heart is not changed and is not filled with the love of God, it is wicked. The Prophet Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9).

There may be some sinners who speak little evil and who control their actions, but they are guilty and condemned before God because there is sin in their hearts. God looks on the heart (I Samuel 16:7). There are others who do not mean to speak and act evil, and they do not want to do so, but they cannot help themselves because there is sin in the heart. The Apostle Paul testified that he was so helpless before he was saved that he could not do the good that he wanted to do, but did do the evil things that he did not want to do (Romans 7:19). When Paul was saved, there was a great change in his life. Paul continued his testimony by saying that he was delivered by Jesus Christ, that there was power for the one who serves God; and he could say

heart, Thou wilt not require *it*.

¹⁴ Thou hast seen *it*; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite *it* with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.

¹⁵ Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil *man*: seek out his wickedness *till* thou find none.

¹⁶ The LORD *is* King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.

¹⁷ LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

¹⁸ To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.

Psalm 14:1-7 (KJV)

¹ The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good.

² The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God.

³ They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.

⁴ Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people *as* they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD.

⁵ There were they in great fear: for God *is* in the generation of the righteous.

⁶ Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD *is* his refuge.

⁷ Oh that the salvation of Israel *were come* out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

Psalm 36:1-12 (KJV)

that nothing would separate him from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35-39). Paul said, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Paul gave thanks to God "which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57). After Paul was saved his life was different. No longer was he defeated by sin; he had victory over sin.

Pride

Many of the Psalms tell us about the wicked, how they treat God and how God feels about them. Sin is a hideous thing in the eyes of God. The Lord has no pleasure in the wicked (Psalm 5:4). The Lord hates those who do wickedly (Psalm 11:5; 5:5). "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5).

David charged the wicked with pride. Let us consider what pride will do for a person. Pride causes one to think about himself rather than to think about God and to seek God (Psalm 10:4). It causes one to be selfish, even to the extent of taking advantage of others and mistreating them (Psalm 10:2). Pride causes a person to boast in the things that his heart desires rather than in the will of God (Psalm 10:3). David was an example of a Christian. He said, "My soul shall make her boast in the LORD" (Psalm 34:2).

Pride causes the wicked to do all these things which are not pleasing to God. The wicked think they are sufficient in themselves, and defy trouble (Psalm 10:6). They are self-confident, and proud of their own ways. They flatter themselves in their own eyes (Psalm 36:2). They have a false hope that they will "never be in adversity." The wicked have no desire for God and do not think of Him (Psalm 10:4). They have no fear of God (Psalm 36:1). The wicked contradict God's judgment and bless those whom God abhors (Psalm 10:3). They plan mischief and love sin (Psalm 36:4). The wicked put off judgment and think that God has forgotten or that He does not see their sins (Psalm 10:11). Pride is sin because it is the opposite of humility, meekness, and lowliness, which Jesus taught, and which He showed in His life as an example for believers. Jesus said: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29).

Persecution

David mentioned another thing that is often seen in the lives of the wicked — the desire to persecute the righteous, God's people. There are those of the wicked who do not want God and who do not want anyone else to follow God and to have His blessings. The wicked are like beasts **of** prey — like a lion which waits its chance to pounce upon its victim. Their eyes are "set against" the righteous; they wait secretly to catch the godly.

Jesus endured just such persecution. "They sought to lay hands on him" (Matthew 21:46). They "took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk" (Matthew 22:15). They watched Jesus and sent forth spies to "catch him in his words" that they might deliver him to the authorities (**Mark 12:13** ¹³ And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words. **Luke 20:20** ²⁰ And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor).

Jesus told His disciples that they would have persecution (**Matthew 5:11** ¹¹ Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. **Matthew 5:44** ⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate

¹ The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, *that there is* no fear of God before his eyes.

² For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

³ The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, *and* to do good.

⁴ He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way *that is* not good; he abhorreth not evil.

⁵ Thy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens; *and* thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.

⁶ Thy righteousness *is* like the great mountains; thy judgments *are* a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

⁷ How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

⁸ They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

⁹ For with thee *is* the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

¹⁰ O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

¹¹ Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

¹² There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;). The disciples were falsely accused and thrown into jail (**Acts 5:17-20** ¹⁷ Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, ¹⁸ And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. ¹⁹ But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, ²⁰ Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. **Acts 12:3-5** ³ And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) ⁴ And when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. ⁵ Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. **Acts 16:19-24** ¹⁹ And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the marketplace unto the rulers, ²⁰ And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, ²¹ And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. ²² And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*. ²³ And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: ²⁴ Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.). Many of Christ's followers were the martyrs who gave their lives for the cause of Christ and His Gospel. These people felt that it was a privilege to give their lives for the sake of Christ, and their deaths were wonderful in showing Jesus' love and the grace and power of God in their hearts. Although these Christians lost their lives, they kept their faith; which is much more important, because their soul will live in bliss throughout the countless ages of eternity. Jesus told His people not to fear those who can destroy the body but cannot kill the soul. One should fear God, because sin and disobedience to His laws will condemn the soul to suffer in hell forever (**Matthew 10:28** ²⁸ And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell).

The Poor in Spirit

A heart filled with sin causes the mouth to speak deceit and mischief, especially against God's people. The poor that David mentioned are those who are humble and "poor in spirit." Jesus said these are among the blessed ones (**Matthew 5:3** ³ Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.). Sin in the heart causes one to ridicule those who depend upon God (Psalm 14:6). He speaks in a deceitful and cunning manner, covering his hatred (**Proverbs 26:26** ²⁶ Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the *whole* congregation.). With pretense and deceit he tries to overcome God's people. The desire of the wicked is to deceive and to destroy (Psalm 14:4; 10:8).

The wicked plan evil against the righteous. Sometimes, at night, they lie awake to plot against God's people (Psalm 36:4). They are caught in their own evil plans (Psalm 10:2; **Psalms 9:16** ¹⁶ The LORD is known *by* the judgment *which* he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgsaion. Selah.). David said, "In the net which they hid is their own foot taken" (Psalm 9:15). In the Proverbs we read, "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him" (Proverbs 26:27).

In the Book of Esther there is an example of a man who

was "taken in the devices" he had planned. A wicked man by the name **of** Haman hated the Jewish people because Mordecai was loyal to God and would not bow down to Haman (**Esther 3:2** ² And all the king's servants, that *were* in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did *him* reverence). A scheme was arranged by Haman whereby he thought Mordecai would be hanged. Haman even had the gallows built and prepared for Mordecai's death. But everything worked out differently than he had thought. Ahasuerus the king heard of Haman's hatred for Mordecai, the man who had "spoken good for the king" (Esther 7:9). Ahasuerus rewarded the faithful Mordecai with the honor and wealth that Haman had hoped to receive. The king gave orders to destroy Haman, who was full of selfishness and conceit, and whose heart was wicked toward God's people. "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai" (Esther 7:10).

Without Reasoning

David points out the foolishness of the sinner's acts. He is very unwise to doubt the dominion of God and His power over all, because some day every knee shall bow to the name of the Lord and every tongue shall confess that Christ is Lord (**Isaiah 45:23** ²³ I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. **Philippians 2:9-11** ⁹ Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; ¹¹ And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father).

The wicked say they do not fear God (Psalm 36:1). Even more than that, the wicked say there is no God. Those who doubt and deny God do so because they wish there were no God, for their deeds are evil. "Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?" They act unwisely and without right reasoning, because a person can prove to his own satisfaction that there is a God. There is no way to prove that it is not true, but the wicked are willing to think so and to deceive and cheat themselves. The wicked are a disgrace, living corrupt and filthy lives (Psalm 14:1, 3), doing no service or honor to God and no real kindness to themselves.

Danger

Besides living wickedly and foolishly, the sinner is in great danger. Though sinners may say that they are fearless, that does not lessen the punishment and suffering that will come upon those who fail to make their peace with God. They deny themselves the best things in life — the good things that God has in store for those who trust Him — and they bring doom upon themselves. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17).

David contrasts the lot of the wicked with the blessing of those who trust in God. There is no compassion for those who do not repent, but "the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him" and "he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about" (Psalm 103:17; 32:10). There is wickedness and mischief in sin; but there is purity and goodness in God for His people. A sinner's life is provoking and full of disappointments, but a Christian has patience and satisfaction.

God cares for His people. They are satisfied with spiritual

richness and an abundance — "fatness of thy house" and a "river of thy pleasures" (Psalm 36:8). They trust God to provide for them and to protect them. They "put their trust under the shadow of thy wings" (Psalm 36:7 **Psalm 91:1** ¹ He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. **Deuteronomy 32:11-12** ¹¹ As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: ¹² So the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was no strange god with him*).

Only by serving the Lord and trusting in Him and His law can we have spiritual life with an abundance of His blessings here and eternal bliss hereafter. "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." Read what Jesus said about light and life in **John 8:12** ¹² Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. **John 10:10** ¹⁰ The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Who are the wicked?
- 2 How does God feel about the wicked?
- 3 What separates the wicked from God?
- 4 Name some things that are caused by pride in the heart.
- 5 Who persecutes God's people?
- 6 What is persecution?
- 7 How do we know that there is a God?
- 8 Why do some people say that there is no God?
- 9 Compare the life of a sinner with the life of a Christian.
- 10 In what way will eternity be different for the believer than for the wicked?