

Psalm 58

Vengeance on the wicked

Leave it to the wrath of God . . .

I. Against the darkness

- A. Complicit Dupes
- B. Driven by What They Are
- C. Judged for What They Do

II. Saint's Petition God

- A. The perfect curse
- B. "Assert Your Judgment"
- C. "Destroy the Foe"

III. And Rejoice in Justice

- A. Humble in grace
- B. Joyful in Vengeance
- C. Rest a Little Longer

... their calamity is at hand.

Children, Listen ...

1. Does David want God to go easy on the bad guys mentioned in this Psalm?
2. Does God ever make mistakes in the way he punishes people?
3. We all deserve punishment from God because we are sinners. But what has God done in His kindness toward us to take away our punishment?
4. Is it a good thing to pray that even the most evil rulers would repent, believe and Jesus and be saved?
5. When evil people who hate God and his people are destroyed ... it is a good thing to rejoice?

Gracious Imprecation

Prayers for justice against evil oppressors can get pretty gnarly and disturbingly graphic at times – such is the case with Psalm 58. But it is important when we enter into the mindset of the psalmist by engaging in such prayers that we also remember grace. It is right and good to pray for the demise of those who hate God and His people, actually calling upon God to exert His wrath according to His own justice. When we see the evil of mankind against the backdrop of the cosmic battle between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness and its earthly minions, imprecations against malicious rulers make a whole lot of sense and should be quite strong. The balance comes with this: God also shows mercy to sinners who repent. So it seems that we can frontload our prayers for enemies with a plea that they would not only stop their violent cruelty, but that they would actually be brought to their knees and surrender to God's mercy before they are thoroughly consumed by His wrath. Verse 3 tells us that they were estranged from the womb – and so were we – we can all say with David "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Psalm 51:5. God has shown us grace and we can pray that for others as well. Yet, at the very same time, because the Lord is always wise and just, we can petition Him for and even rejoice when the wicked face calamity meted out by the hand of the God of vengeance (Psalm 94:1).