

Psalm 58:1-11

Psalm 58 is one of David's five imprecatory psalms.

In these psalms, David prays for God's powerful overthrow and judgment of the wicked; in this particular case, the corrupt rulers of Israel.

Summary

Psalm 58 is a fervent denunciation of the corruption of leaders and rulers as well as an equally emphatic call for their judgment.

1. Corrupt Leaders vv. 1-2

Psalm 58 uses language that makes many in our day and generation very uncomfortable.

A proper, biblically balanced approach to the imprecatory psalms, however, shows that David's prayers against the unrepentant wicked are not opposed to the teaching and ethics of Jesus.

It is very important to see here in Psalm 58 that David was not acting in personal retaliation against the wicked but instead was praying for God's just retribution.

In vs.1, David rebukes the unjust rulers, who do not stand up against evil for what is right.

The corrupt rulers of Israel were also involved in wicked conspiracies (**Ps. 58:2**). Instead of fulfilling their calling to promote and practice righteousness, the Jewish leaders callously used their offices to work evil.

2. Wicked Rulers vv. 3-5

In vv. 3-5, David describes the kinds of people whom he denounces.

In Ps. 58:3, David states in summary form, the doctrine of original sin.

He does not mention original sin to excuse the corrupt rulers, rather he points to the fact that their whole lives had been "one continuous unchecked career of wickedness-[they were] bold, habitual, hardened transgressors."

David also speaks of the fearful danger posed by these sinful rulers by comparing them to deadly snakes (**Ps. 58:4**).

When we think about passages like this that forcefully denounce sin, it is vital to see that we are not looking merely at others but also at ourselves.

3. Imprecatory Prayer vv. 6-9

The heart of Psalm 58 is David's cry for God to act against his wicked enemies.

First, David asks God to destroy the ability of the wicked to harm their victims (**Psalm 58:6**). Secondly, David requests that God would remove the evil effects of the

wicked and eradicate their corrupt legacy, too that that their best efforts are completely frustrated (**Ps. 58:7-9**).

In all the strong imagery and language here, we need to remember that David is not acting in violence against the wicked but praying for God to oppose them.

David's appeal here is ultimately fulfilled in the triumph of Christ over evil. David's prayer to break the teeth of the wicked was answered when Jesus confounded the Pharisees' attempts to trap him with words) and refuted their false accusations in his sham trial. Jesus' death and resurrection caused the curse of sin to vanish like water into dry ground and abolished the kingdom of Satan like a strong breeze blowing against a fire of thorns. Christ's continuous intercessory prayers in heaven for his people include appeals to the Father to thwart the designs of those who oppose the gospel and seek to advance the cause of evil.

David's prayers against the wicked are a great challenge to Christians today. Are we similarly outraged against the corrupt and deadly actions of ungodly powers? The problem today is not that Christians continue to tolerate imprecatory prayers such as Psalm 58 but that we do not pray similarly against the same kinds of evils that surround us.

4. Predicted Rejoicing vv. 10-11

The final verses of Psalm 58 express the joy of the righteous in God's judgment of evil. Not only does David pray for God to cast down the wicked, but he predicts the certainty of the corrupt rulers' overthrow and the blessing of those who have trusted in God.

The rejoicing of the godly is not a gloating that arises from personal vindictiveness. Instead, believers will rejoice to see the proof of God's love in their final salvation from evil and to witness the exaltation of God's kingdom against every rebel banner.

David's imagery will be fulfilled in the return of Christ (**Rev 19**).

Psalm 58 concludes with an assurance that those who trusted and served the Lord did not do so in vain (**Psalm 58:11**).

Many of David's psalms were composed while he hid in caves.

Whether or not these words were inscribed on the walls of the cave of Adullam, let them be inscribed on our hearts. Assure yourself on the basis of God's Word: "Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God who judges on earth."