

PSALM 36

A SONG OF HAPPY SERVICE

This Psalm contains a very necessary doctrine, showing the marks whereby heretics and false teachers may be discovered. The Psalmist begs God, with wonderful fervency, to be guarded against all these pestilences. And after he had described these characters in their true colors with very great detail, he then takes courage and comfort – for himself and all who fear God – in the fact that although Satan and his instruments roar and rage against the Church, yet the Word of God shall remain and the Kingdom of God shall stand unmoved! It cannot be shaken by the violence of the devil, nor by the tyrannical power of all the kingdoms of this world. “Thy righteousness,” says David, “is like the great mountains: and thy judgments are a great deep” – that is, they are like the rocks and mountains which God has established and which no power can overthrow. Just as the great depths of the sea are inexhaustible, so also, the Lord’s Word stands firm and no human power can overthrow or subvert the truth. Even though all the gates of hell and all the attempts of men and devils set themselves against His Word and will, yet the fountain of life is with Him – that is, in His house. And this fountain and river of life will never dry up, for it is there that afflicted consciences are raised up, refreshed, and revived.

In the first four verses of this Psalm, our hearts should be properly affected with a hatred of sin, and we must seek satisfaction in the Lord’s lovingkindness. The root of bitterness is in the heart (verse 1); it is from there that all the wickedness of wicked people comes. It is born from a contempt of God, a lack of due regard to Him, and an absence of that holy fear of Him which ought to govern the heart. And when that holy fear is nonexistent, the result is that these evil people deceive their own souls (verse 2). Let us daily beg God to preserve us from such self-flattery! Sin is very hurtful to the sinner himself, and so it ought to be hateful to him; but sadly, that is not often the case. It is no marvel, then, when those who deceive themselves proceed to also deceive all mankind. To whom will they be true when they are false to their own souls? If we willingly banish holy meditations in our solitary hours, Satan will soon occupy our minds with sinful imaginations (verse 4).

Overview of the Psalm, adapted from Charles Spurgeon:

“A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord.” This would seem to indicate that the Psalm peculiarly befits one who esteems it an honor to be called Jehovah’s servant. It is the song of happy service, which may be joined in by all who bear the easy yoke of Jesus. Here the wicked are contrasted with the righteous, and the great Lord of devout men is heartily extolled; and thus obedience to such a good Master is indirectly insisted on, and rebellion against Him is plainly condemned.

In verses 1-4, David describes the rebellious; in verses 5-9, he extols the various attributes of the Lord; in verses 10 and 11, he addresses the Lord in prayer; and in the last verse, his faith sees – in vision – the overthrow of all workers of iniquity.



Although hardened sinners stand firm in their rebellion against God, and shut up their compassions toward their fellow human beings; yet with God, we shall find mercy! (verses 5-12) This is great comfort to all believers! Jehovah does all things wisely and well, even though we may not always understand. His lovingkindness is precious to the saints. They put themselves under His protection, and then they are safe and at ease (verse 7). These gracious souls desire more and more of the Lord, but they never desire more than Him. The benefit of His holy ordinances is sweet to sanctified souls and strengthening to their spiritual and Divine life (verses 8-9). And their joys shall be constant (verse 10). The Lord not only works in His children a gracious desire for these pleasures; but by His Spirit, He also fills their souls with joy and peace in believing. Whoever wishes to do so may come to Jesus; and

from Him, they may freely take the waters from the river and fountain of life! (verses 8-9) O that we may know, love, and serve the Lord! No proud enemy (verse 11) – either on earth or from hell – shall ever be able to separate us from His love. And by faith, we may catch a glimpse of what shall transpire at the end of time; verse 12 shows us a prophetic picture of the Lord sitting on His holy throne on the Day of Judgment, with all the empires of sin fallen and crumbled at His feet – unable to rise again forever, just like Pharaoh and his drowned army in the Red Sea!

Lord Jesus, we give You thanks that although Satan and his instruments roar and rage against the Church, yet Your Word shall remain and Your Kingdom shall stand unmoved! Thank You for the assurance that we cannot be shaken by the violence of the devil, nor by the tyrannical power of all the kingdoms of this world. We pray that You would fulfill Your sweet promises to us, and cause us to be abundantly satisfied during our pilgrimage-state here in this dry and barren wilderness, until You shall bring us to the Fountain-head of everlasting enjoyment with the Church above in heaven! Amen.