

May 10

Scriptures: Read Psalms 57, 58 & 59

Key Verse: “God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.” (Psalm 57:3b)

Overview

Psalm 57 and the preceding psalm are quite similar in style as well as content (both express utmost confidence in God); therefore, it is probably a continuation and the occasion of the psalm, as mentioned in the title, is when David had fled to hide from Saul in the cave of Adullam after leaving Gath (1 Samuel 22:1). Psalm 57 begins with the same words as Psalm 56, but here David’s cry for mercy is because Saul and his men are seeking to kill him, and yet he had done no wrong (see 59:3-4).

Although David is hiding in a cave, he knows his real refuge is under the shadow of God’s wings. Those lions who seek to swallow him up will first have to fight and defeat God to get at him, but that is impossible! David is also aware that God is not finished with him yet, for God had chosen and anointed him to be king; therefore no fatal harm could possibly come to him. David had the faith to call upon his Lord, saying, “God Most High...who fulfils his purpose for me” (57:2, N.I.V). God is sovereign and providentially works all things out for the good of his children who trust in Him. How would God save David? “God shall send forth His mercy and His truth” (57:3b). Sending Jesus into the world was the greatest evidence of God’s mercy, and Jesus was the embodiment of God’s truth, through whom He brought the ultimate salvation to mankind: the salvation of souls.

Even though David was amid great danger, he could still sing forth beautiful words of praise to God. The God who was the Creator of the heavens and earth is exalted far above these wonderful manifestations of His glory (57:5-7). After considering God’s greatness, David feels secure and his heart is steadfastly fixed upon God. Like a firmly rooted tree, even though a storm rages around him, he cannot be moved, since God has planted him (cf. 55:22). These thoughts make David want to praise God with his whole being and sing out God’s mercy and truth to all people. He wants to “awaken the dawn” by shouting joyfully about the salvation of God.

Psalm 58 is a lament of David over the prevalence of injustice in the judicial system of the land. With sarcastic words, David strongly condemns the corrupt judges who have made a mockery of the Law, perverted justice, and hurt the spread of godliness in the land. Their words are like poison that slowly kills. Like all mankind, they were born with original sin, but they have not committed themselves to the redemptive work of God; so their tendency to sin has continued on unchecked since their childhood. Therefore they have become wicked, having hardened their hearts to the voice of conviction within their consciences (58:3-5).

With righteous indignation, David repeatedly curses the perverted judges who do not deserve to live. He proclaims that God’s wrath will come upon them quickly and unexpectedly. They might be cooking food and preparing to eat, but before they taste of their labour, God’s burning wrath will come upon them like a whirlwind, and they will no longer be in the land of the living (58:9). With this fierce judgment of the wicked, the righteous will be glad to see the will of God

accomplished. By this, all the world will know that there is indeed a God who stands in judgment of the earth and that wickedness will not prevail, but the righteous will prevail and be rewarded.

In Psalm 59, David urgently cries out to the Lord to deliver, defend, and save him from the bloodthirsty men whom Saul had sent to assassinate him. David, however, protests of his innocence, for he had done no wrong. The wrong was with Saul, who was jealous of David and his popularity (59:3-4). Saul's violent, unscrupulous men were likened to despised scavenger dogs. In those days, the pagans (Gentiles) were commonly referred to as dogs; therefore, these men might have been foreign mercenaries. They stalked David's house, waiting for their prey to come out, but David had been forewarned and, with the help of his wife Michal, the daughter of Saul, they devised a plan for him to escape (1 Samuel 19:11-17). These immoral men of Saul did not fear God, so they behaved without restraint. God, however, laughed at their folly and futility, for one day they would be judged and see His wrath (59:7-8). David believed he would be delivered and live to see them consumed (59:10b). Yet David asked that they not perish too quickly; he wanted their lies to be exposed and for them to serve as examples, that all might see their misery and know that God reigns supremely and will indeed judge wickedness (59:11-13),

The evil men growled and howled, wanting to satisfy their thirst for blood, but David joyously continued to sing praises to God and thank Him for His "mercy in the morning" (59:16). On that particular morning, Saul had planned to have David killed (1 Samuel 19:11a), but God intervened and delivered David. The words that David worshipfully expressed about God are true for all God's children: He is our defense, refuge, strength, and mercy (59:16-17).

Prayer

Thank You, dear Lord for the security we have in You. There is no place safer than in Your everlasting arms. May we learn to rest there despite our circumstances.