

## Psalm 36 The Wickedness of Men and Greatness of God

by Pastor Roy Hogan

This chapter is a Psalm of David according to the heading in my Bible. Your Bible likely says the same. This chapter is divided into two parts: verses 1-4 places the spotlight on the *wicked* man and verses 5-12 speak of the *greatness* of God.

36:1

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

In verse 1, we take a look into the *heart* of the wicked person. What is on the inside? What does the *heart* of a wicked person look like? We know the *heart* is seat of emotions and understanding. I believe the heart is the connection, or bridge, that connects the soul, mind, and human spirit of a man. Man is a trinity in the fashion of his creator.

What kind of heart does a wicked man have? This verse places the label *transgression* on the heart of the wicked. The word *transgression* means rebellion. A wicked man's ways are rebellious. His life has no structure. He is happy today, and tomorrow he is in a state of chaos. Today, he abides by the law. Then, tomorrow the rebel spirit arises, and he breaks every law he can find. A wicked person is kind today, and tomorrow he may look for someone to hurt. We sometimes hear of horrible acts of crime. We ask "what made that man or woman do such a horrible thing?" The answer is found in verse 1. It is not possible to predict the behavior of a person with a wicked heart.

In the heart of a wicked person, there is no *fear of God*. The police do not live at my house to make sure I behave in a law-abiding manner. I have God in my heart, and I fear God, that is, I respect God and his laws. Therefore, the police do not have to camp on my doorsteps. On the other hand, a wicked person having no reverence for God in his heart is a crime waiting to happen.

The first tattoos I saw as a small child were plastered on the bodies of a group called hell's angels. It was reported that the hell's angels killed one of their own, cut the heart out, cooked it and ate it. I still cringe when I see a person with tattoos. What made those 29 men scheme and fly airplanes into the World Trade Center and kill thousands? What made that man load a truck with explosives and detonate it while parked beside the federal building in Oklahoma City? The answer is found in God's word. A wicked man has the heart of a rebel and has no fear of God.

36:2

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

What kind of heart does a wicked man have? Not only is his heart *rebellious* as we learn in verse 1, his heart is also *flattering*. Flattery is *pride*. A person God classifies as wicked is filled with pride. He boasts of his *iniquity*. Iniquity mean wrong-doing, that is, sin. Nothing a wicked person does is deemed, by that person, to be out-of-bounds. As a wicked person progresses through life, he gets to the point of confusing good and bad and right and wrong. This is what we call *reprobate*. Reprobate means void of judgment. It is possible for a reprobate person to murder someone and think they have done a good deed. A wicked, reprobate person's sin is hidden from their own eyes. They are blind to the evils of sin. They feel the law will never catch them and neither will God. This is pride-induced blindness. Proverbs 29:23 *A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*

The wicked man's heart is rebellious, verse 1, he is blind, verse 2, and now, his mouth is described in verse 3...

36:3

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

The words of his mouth are *iniquity and deceit*. If a man's heart is wrong, his mouth will be too. A wicked man's mouth spews words

of iniquity and deceitful words. Iniquity is sin, and deceit is lying. Even if he speaks kindly and with great flattery, he is likely lying. Beware. I am amazed at the ease with which people in America lie. Church people lie. So-called Christians lie. If you tell someone you will do something and you don't do it, you lie. Folk who lie are liars. I grew up in a different age. If you said something, you would do it barring death or you would make amends for your failure in some manner.

Wicked people come by our church often asking for financial help. I have caught several of them in lies. Don't believe a word they say. A common excuse for their distress is that a loved one has passed away in Florida. How many uncles can die in Florida?

The last portion of verse 3 reads: "*he left off to be wise and to be good.*" That is, he chose his path. Once the wicked man was a baby made in the image of God, tiny and sinless. God places in every person a moral compass at birth. Read Roman 1 about the moral compass God instills in mankind. That moral compass points out wrong. It takes a conscience effort on the part of a man to overcome that compass. Little kids blush and hide the first time they know they have lied. Some in life have decided to remove the needle from the compass and leave wisdom and good behind.

What God created and brought forth out of the womb of a woman was not designed by God to behead, destroy, rob, maim, and steal. The evil we see manifested in folk today is *learned* evil. It is not God's design for the life of any human being.

36:4

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

We have all been caught in a snare at times. We have all been blind-sided by the world of temptations in which we live. Yet, the wicked man lies on his bed at night and plans out his evil. He studies and meditates and devises ways to manifest the deeds of his wicked heart.

*“He setteth himself in a way that is not good.”* In the evening time, I plan my tomorrow. Never do I plan to steal on the morrow. Yet, the wicked man sets forth a path that is evil because the GPS in his heart is broken. His compass points toward the works of evil, even down to hell. The wicked have maps in the GPS that are downloaded from hell.

Now, in verses 5-9. We turn our attention righteous man.

36:5

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

I love to think of the wondrous works of the creator. I stand in awe of his power. Yet, preeminent in the mind of a saved person is two things- the *mercy* and *faithfulness* of God spoken of in verse 5. These two things should never leave our mind and the thoughts of our heart. How can a person say I am saved and never see the mercy and faithfulness of God?

Let us consider God’s *mercy*. How high is heaven? Where does heaven end? How wide is heaven? How deep is heaven? If anyone can answer these questions, then, they have quantified the mercy of God. No man is able to understand the vastness of God’s mercy. Only heaven could be used as a measuring stick to measure the vast mercy of God. Psalm 86:13 *For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.* Lamentations 3:22 *It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.*

As vast as God’s mercy is, such is his faithfulness. The clouds are often miles above the earth. God’s faithfulness reaches the clouds. Come to think, clouds are a great symbol of faithfulness. I have visited more than 20 countries. I think I saw clouds in all the nations. God is faithful in China, Russia, Tanzania, and over all the land.

36:6

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

Having spoken of his mercy and faithfulness, we turn our attention to his righteousness. His righteousness is compared to great mountains. A mountain symbolizes something that is vast and immoveable. I suppose if every pick, shovel, wheelbarrow, dozer, and truck were engaged, it would be impossible in the time left on this planet to move the Rocky Mountains to the sea. Such is God's righteousness.

A great mountain can be easily seen. In Isaiah 6, the heavenly creatures circled the throne of God crying "Holy, Holy, Holy." God does not lie, cheat, steal, kill, or smoke.

Now, let us consider the *judgment* of God. We know judgment to mean wisdom. As human beings, we often use the excuse when mess up and get caught "Oh, I used poor judgment." No one has, or will ever, hear God say that.

Let us go to the ocean and drop a weighted line overboard the ship. The Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench is the deepest known point in Earth's oceans. In 2010 the United States Center for Coastal & Ocean Mapping measured the depth of the Challenger Deep at 10,994 meters (36,070 feet) below sea level with an estimated vertical accuracy of  $\pm 40$  meters. If Mount Everest, the highest mountain on Earth, were placed at this location, the Challenger Deep, it would be covered by over one mile of water. Such is the vast judgment of Almighty God. He is too wise to make a mistake. He is too wise to make a poor decision, and he has never been to school. What a God we serve!

*"O LORD, thou preservest man and beast."* IT is has life in it, give God credit. Whether it is man of beast, God is the only source of life. Life, and death as well, answer to God. Not a sparrow falls from the heavens without his knowledge.

36:7-8

*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.*

We have thus far seen the mercy, faithfulness, righteousness, judgment. Now we look at his *lovingkindness*. We may simply say of God's lovingkindness that "He has a good heart." In life we meet people who seem to have a gift and talent of being helpful. They seem to love everyone. They are kind. They stand ready to supply the needs of others within their abilities. We say of such a person "He will give you the shirt off his back."

We can trust God. We reside under the shadow of his wings. I may not always feel God or even think he is near. However, I am happy just to reside in his shadow. His wing-span is enormous. I have seen the shadow of his wings 8,000-thousand miles away from my home while preaching in Tanzania and 10,000 miles away while preaching in Mozambique. When all else fails, God cannot and will not fail. Family may let you down. Government leaders may disappoint you. God will not fail. Psalm 18:8 *It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.*

Not only can we find trust in God's *lovingkindness*, we can also be abundantly satisfied in him, verse 8. Men who do not know God may curse him. Those who know him are satisfied. I have no heard one child of God express dissatisfaction with God. I have heard no one say "Take back my salvation. It is no good."

There are rivers of pleasures in God's *lovingkindness*. God is not against pleasure; he is just against sinful pleasure. God wants pleasure, not misery in our life. With God, burdens can be pleasurable. Paul gloried in tribulations. Fear is not his design for your life. Fretting is not his design for your life. Satisfaction and pleasure are legal in the eyes of God for his people.

*A house full of satisfaction and a river full of pleasure. What else can we ask for. Yet, there is more...*

36:9

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

A house of satisfaction, a river of pleasure, and now a fountain of life. Light is life. Two essentials of a relationship with the Lord are life and light. I am glad I have been privy to know both. I have had a full and rich life serving the Lord.

36:10

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

We hear so much in this age about change. Everything needs to be a different color, larger, smaller, easier to understand, etc. What we need to be focused on is continuing, not change. Many have changed. They were once doers, and now they are quitters.

36:11-12

*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 I face the same two enemies David names in verse 11: *pride* and the *wicked*. Pride is the flesh rising up against God. It is up to each individual to deal with personal pride with the help of God. Pride can become an enemy greater than the wicked.