

Psalm 58 The Judgment of God

By Pastor Roy Hogan

One facet of God that we seldom think about is his judgment. God is a God of love, promise, protection, provisions and much more. He is also, however, a God of judgment. Many were David's enemies, the chief of which was King Saul. He had political enemies, family enemies, and religious enemies. David spent much of his life fighting.

It is human nature, seemingly, to avenge the wrong done to one's self. There are, no doubt, many souls behind bars because of their effort to "get back" at someone who wronged them. Has anyone ever wronged you? If the answer is no, you are both fortunate and blessed. I do predict that you will be wronged at some point in your life if you remain on this planet a few more days. The best men in the Bible were wronged. One example is Joseph. He was a precious man who was virtuous. Yet, his brothers sold him into slavery. Unlike myself, and perhaps you as well, Joseph refused to fight back. In the end, he won for God went to war for him.

In this Psalm 58, David calls on God to take vengeance on those evil folks who have wronged him. Let us take a look.

58:1-2

Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men? 2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.

Some believe this Psalm was written soon after David came to the throne. He discovered was corruption in the courts. It appears that he addresses the corrupt judges in the first two verses of the chapter.

I believe we have a good justice system in America. It has certainly withstood the test of time. It operates today much the same as it did 200 years ago. Yet, there are flaws in our justice system. It is not so

much the manner in which offences are addressed as it is the men and women who sit in the seat of the judge. A young man steals a candy bar and two packs of cigarettes from the country store and gets sentenced to several years of hard labor in the state penitentiary. In the next case that is tried, the same judge sentences a politician who embezzled 2 million dollars to 5-years of probation.

It is not the system of justice that is sometimes flawed; it is the men who preside over the court. Our local jail is filled with young, country boys with little or no money who could not afford a fancy lawyer to “get them off the hook.” I have a problem with this, and certainly King David would have a problem with it.

The first verse contains two questions: do you speak righteousness, and do you judge uprightly, that is, fairly? Any offender deserves a fair trial. It is guaranteed by our constitution. However, how can a fair trial occur when the presiding judge is ungodly? How can a fair trial occur when the judge is corrupt and has no morals and sees no need to be fair and honest? David found, in verse 2, that some of the judges worked *wickedness* in their heart. A man wicked in his heart cannot be fair. If I ever have a day in court, I trust I will not be standing before a wicked-hearted judge.

One well-known symbol of our justice system is the scale, or, the balance, as it is sometimes called. In verse 2, David saw the judges as weighing violence in the scales and not justice and fairness.

58:3

The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

It has been said that we all come into the world lying. A baby screams as if it were dying. Someone picks it up and shakes it, and it is perfectly fine. I do not remember my first lie. It was too far back. I do remember some lies at an early age. My mother remembered some for me. She often reminded me of them. I will

share one with you. I have a younger sister. She is now in Heaven. When she was brought home from the hospital, she was to me, an intruder. She violated my space. I was 18-months old. I took one look at her in the baby basket. I did not like what I saw. I ran to my mother and told her to “take the baby back. It shook its fist at me.” My mother often reminded me of what may have been, but probably wasn’t, my first lie.

Mark Twain said he did not remember his first lie, but that he remembered his first lie that he remembered. As he said, when a small chill was pricked by a briar or needle and cried, the child was coddled and given a treat to help it get over the stick. One day, he lied. He remembered that he falsely told his mother he had been stuck by a needle. She coddled him and gave him a treat. He realized he had lied. However, it worked that time. As he grew older, he came to know lying would not achieve a good result. Truth works best.

Isaiah 53:6 tells us *all we like sheep have gone astray*. No one has to teach a sheep to stray. Sheep are born and bred to wander. Therefore, a sheep needs a shepherd to keep the wandering under control. Children at a young age need to have the lying corrected. Else, the child will develop a wicked heart. Their adult life will be shambles. From this verse alone, I learn that lying is the root of wicked. At a young age, my parents whipped the lying out of me. We all still lie some, but we are not liars. One who cannot speak the truth is a liar. One who enjoys lying and practices lying is a liar. There is a place in the lake of fire for liars. It better be a big place for this society is filled will liars. Watch where you step or you will step on one. If you find someone who will tell you something and then do it, have them sign your Bible.

58:4-5

Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear;

5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.

Has anyone ever called you a snake? I trust not. A lie is compared to the poison from the fangs of a poisonous snake. Any person in their right mind would flee from a snake. Consider the snakebite Eve received. The snake, the Devil, told her a lie. She believed the lie. Immediately, she had been snake-bit. I get snake-bit every week. Folk promise to do something and do not do it. It is simply a lie.

The *adder* mentioned in verse 4 is the cobra. In parts of the world, snake-charming is prevalent. It was common in Egypt, and was evidently practiced by the magicians in the days of Moses. Serpents and adders, that is, snakes and cobras cannot hear. The charmer does not get the attention of the cobra with the music, but with the pipe the charmer is holding. Some believe the music does contribute believing the cobra can sense the music through vibration. The cobra watches the pipe in the hand of the charmer. Though he is deaf, he is interested in seeing things. If I snake could hear, perhaps the snake could be told to behave and no bite anyone. The liar cannot hear. Wickedness has hardened his heart and brought deafness to his hearing. There are many on planet on earth who have, by virtue of perpetual lying, hardened their heart and sealed their fate to eternal destruction.

We now, in verses 6-9, turn our attention to the justice of a holy God.

58:6-9

Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD. 7 Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. 8 As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. 9 Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.

David knows that, in time, God will administer revenge. Romans 12:19 says *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.* Human nature is to take the offender out. However, no one can take the teeth out of the mouth of the lion as can God. He is the first dentist. I believe God pulled the teeth of the lion that David killed as a lad when he was watching his father's sheep. If you or I stick our hand in a lion's mouth in a moment of angry revenge, we will draw back a nub.

Verse 7 likens God's vengeance to waters melted away. During a time of heavy rain, puddles and small ponds form. As the rain stops, the waters continue to run. Then one day, there is no water in the drainage ditch. At this writing, heavy rain has filled the ditches around my neighborhood. There are pools of water throughout the neighborhood. From history, I know the day will come when the ditch is dry, and there is no more standing water. The water has melted away. Forever, it has vanished. Unjust, lying judges will one day melt away. The lake of fire can melt dirt.

We are also told in verse 7, God will break the lying judges like a broken arrow. A broken arrow can pierce no more. The Bible states in Hebrews 10:31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Verse 8 paint the picture of the fragile life of the snail. One look at the trail of a snail leads me to believe the snail is doomed. The slimy path left behind must take away from the snail's substance. How long can the snail survive departing with a portion of its substance as it travels along? Place a snail in the heat of the bright sun, and the snail cannot survive. Snails live in shady, damp places.

Verse 8 paints a very tragic picture. This verse seems to point to the miscarriage of a baby form the mother's womb. A life of promise never materialized. A potential rose never bloomed. A

future king never reigned. A liar is a miscarriage. A liar will never have prominence in life. God will see to it!

Verse 9 paints a sad picture. A group of travelers have trudged along in the heat of the day. Evening has come. The travelers are tired. It is time to stop for the night. It is time to eat. Wood is gathered for a fire. The pots are filled with water. Soon, the water is boiling. The peeled vegetables are placed in the pot. The travelers savor the wonderful smell of the food cooking. Suddenly, as a thief in the night, a whirlwind takes the fire, the pots, the food away. All is lost. God can strike the unjust in swift fashion.

58:10-11

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. 11 So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

We end the discussion of this chapter reminded that it is God that gets even. Vengeance is his. He will repay. The righteous rejoice, and rightfully so, when God brings destruction on the lying wicked. One writer wrote “If it is right for god to destroy, it cannot be wrong for His servants to rejoice in what he does.”