

## Psalm 36

To the chief Musician, [A Psalm] of David the servant of the LORD.

Psalm 36: The theme of this psalm is certainly the loving-kindness of God (verses 5, 7, 10). David first describes the rebellious sinner (verses 1-4), then the blessedness of the righteous man (verses 5-9) and concludes with a prayer that the righteous man may be protected from the wicked (verses 10-12).

Verses 1-12: At least 3 themes may be detected in this psalm:

- (1) Wisdom (verses 1-4);
- (2) Praise (verses 5-9); and
- (3) Prayer (verses 10-12).

Psalm 36 resembles Psalm 14 in its description of human depravity; it also brings to mind David's personal confession found in Psalm 32. Paul used (Psalm 36:1), to summarize his list of 14 indictments against the whole race in (Rom. 3:10-18). As to its overall structure, David's two different moods in Psalm 36 exemplify his continuing quest for balance concerning the realities of human wickedness and divine benevolence.

- I. Mood of Deliberation (36:1-9).
  - A. His Deliberations on Human Infidelity (36:1-4);
  - B. His Deliberations on Divine Fidelity (36:5-9).
- II. Mood of Dependence (36:10-12).
  - A. Implemented through Prayer (36:10-11);
  - B. Intimated through Perspective (36:12).

Title: The term "servant", found in (Psalm 35:27), appears in this title. It carries an association with covenant relationship emphasizing submission to and service for God. For its application to David within the texts of Psalms (compare 78:70; 89:3).

Verses 1-4: The Lord had given His prophet a special message, an "oracle", concerning how the wicked look at life and how they live. God has access to a person's thoughts and why they pursue evil. The oracle explains that wicked people so flatter themselves that they are apathetic to ("does not abhor"), their evil behavior. The righteous person who knows God and patterns his or her life after biblical teaching will not have such apathy but will hate sin (Prov. 8:13).

**Psalm 36:1 "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, [that there is] no fear of God before his eyes."**

“No fear”: This is the opposite of the attitude which characterizes true disciples. The word here is actually “dread” or “terror” (compare Deut. 2:25; Psalm 119:120; Isa. 2:10, 19, 21).

We know from a previous lesson that; the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. The wicked are very foolish, because they do not fear God. Notice that it is to David's heart the sins of these wicked are speaking. He knows in his heart that there is no fear of God within them, or they would not be committing these sins (transgressions). Notice also, that David says he is the servant of the Lord. We should also, realize our position with God. We are servants of the Most High God. Each one of us preach a sermon to the world, each day of our lives, by the way we conduct our lives. These transgressors have sent a very bad message out to those who look on. Those who love and fear God try to live as near like Jesus as they can. Just the way we conduct our lives should win others to Christ.

**Psalm 36:2 "For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful."**

I.e., he flatters himself so much that he is unable to understand enough to hate his own iniquity.

We see a man full of conceit. He is great in his own sight. The world sees him with totally different eyes. His sin will find him out. Those who he sinned against will hate him. All of the smooth talking in the world will not fool God. Look at the fate of the proud man in the next verse.

Proverbs 16:5 "Every one [that is] proud in heart [is] an abomination to the LORD: [though] hand [join] in hand, he shall not be unpunished."

Verses 3-4: Although Paul cites only (Psalm 36:1b in Romans chapter 3), the same categories of characteristic sinfulness also show up in that context; compare character: (Psalm 36:2), with (Rom. 3:10-12); communications: (Psalm 36:3a), with (Rom. 3:13-14); and conduct: (Psalm 36:3b-4), with (Rom. 3:15-17).

**Psalm 36:3 "The words of his mouth [are] iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, [and] to do good."**

Not only sinful, but sin itself. His mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, of filthy and unchaste words. Of corrupt communication, lying, deceit, and flattery. Out of the abundance of the wickedness of his heart his mouth speaketh. And which shows the badness of it, and proves all that is said before of him.

"He hath left off to be wise, and to do good": By which the psalmist seems to intend one that had been a professor of religion. Who, besides the light of nature he had acted contrary to, then had the advantage of a divine revelation, and had been enlightened into the knowledge of divine things. And had done many things externally good, particularly acts of beneficence. But now had dropped his profession of religion, denied the truths he had been enlightened into, and ceased

from doing good. Otherwise a natural man understandeth not. And, though he is wise to do evil, to do good he has no knowledge.

We saw in the verses above that, this man was conceited and proud in his heart. the words that come from our mouth will match the thoughts we have in our heart. this man uses his evil tongue to cheat and deceive. His every thought is how to get the best of someone else. It really doesn't matter to him, what is right to do. He does only the things that will benefit him. He will lie or cheat to get the best of all the deals he is in.

**Psalm 36:4 "He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way [that is] not good; he abhorreth not evil."**

He deviseth mischief upon his bed": Rather, he deviseth iniquity, the same word as in the preceding verse. In the night, when he should be in innocent slumber, he lies awake, devising wicked schemes against others (compare Prov. 4:16; Micah 2:1).

"He setteth himself in a way that is not good": In an evil way, which he chooses and delights in, and determines to continue in. He left the paths of righteousness to walk in the ways of darkness.

"He abhorreth not evil": Which is to be abhorred both because of its nature and effects (see Rom. 12:9). But on the contrary, he loves it and takes pleasure in doing it, and in them that commit it. Thus, by his thoughts, words, and actions, he appears to be devoid of the fear of God.

Even when he is supposedly resting in bed, his evil mind and heart are plotting his moves for the next day. This man does not hate evil, in fact nothing is too bad for him to do, if he thinks it will benefit him. This reminds me of the man who had the leprosy down under the skin of his head in Leviticus. The evil had penetrated his mind. This man certainly has an evil mind, stayed upon evil constantly.

Verses 5-6: These attributes of God are immeasurable.

**Psalm 36:5 "Thy mercy, O LORD, [is] in the heavens; [and] thy faithfulness [reacheth] unto the clouds."**

Meaning either the general mercy of God the earth is full of, and extends to all creatures; to which it is owing that wicked men before described are not consumed. And which reaches "up to the heavens", as the words are by some rendered, as their sins do (see Psalm 57:10). Or the special mercy of God, and regards not the objects of it.

"And thy faithfulness": Thy "truthfulness;" thy fidelity to thy promises and to thy friends.

"Reacheth "unto the clouds." The clouds are among the highest objects. They rise above the loftiest trees, and ascend above the mountains, and seem to lie or roll along the sky. The idea here, therefore, as in the first part of the verse, is, that it is elevated or exalted.

Thank goodness, this verse is a drastic change from the evil man. We now see David expressing the mercy and faithfulness of the LORD. The true mercy seat, that the one in the tabernacle was patterned from, is in heaven where God dwells. We have no mercy to bestow on God. Mercy belongs to God. As you will see in the next few Scriptures, He can bestow mercy on whomever He chooses to.

Romans 9:15-16 "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." "So then [it is] not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

Romans 9:18 "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will [have mercy], and whom he will he hardeneth."

Let us look at one Scripture on the faithfulness of God.

Isaiah 25:1 "O LORD, thou [art] my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful [things; thy] counsels of old [are] faithfulness [and] truth."

God is faithful, and He is absolute Truth. He will do everything He has promised to do.

**Psalm 36:6 "Thy righteousness [is] like the great mountains; thy judgments [are] a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast."**

Thy justice; that is, the justice of God considered as residing in his own nature. His justice in his laws. In his providential dealings; in his plan of delivering man from sin; and to the universe in administering the rewards and penalties of the law.

"Is like the great mountains": The name "God" is thus in the Scriptures, often given to that which is great or exalted. As God is the greatest Being that the mind can form any conception of, so in (Psalm 80:10), "The boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars," in the Hebrew, "cedars of God." Connecting his name with "mountains" or "cedars," we have the idea of "strength" or "greatness," as being especially the work of the Almighty. The idea here is, that as the mountains are the most stable of all the objects with which we are acquainted, so it is with the justice of God. It is as fixed as the everlasting hills.

"Thy judgments are a great deep": I.e. such as man cannot fathom, unsearchable, past finding out.

"O Lord, thou preservest man and beast": The providential care of God for his creatures is another of his leading characteristics, and one especially deserving man's attention and gratitude. It is a form of his loving-kindness.

The righteousness of god is unshakeable. It is higher than we can imagine. It is not possible for mortal man to fathom the judgements of God. Life itself, whether life of man or life of beast is in the hands of God. Man and beast are creations of God. The Creator has control of His creation. We live or die at the command of God.

**Psalm 36:7 "How excellent [is] thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."**

“The shadow of thy wings”: Although some would take this as referring to wings of the cherubim over the Ark, it is probably more generally a reference to the protective care of a parent bird for its young (Deut. 32:11; Psalms 17:8; 91:4; Ruth 2:12; compare Jesus’ allusion to the word picture in Matt. 23:37).

The comforting image of God as a mother bird sheltering her young beneath her wings is found throughout the Psalms (17:8; 57:1; 61:4; 68:13; 91:4).

The lovingkindness of God is what sent His only son Jesus Christ to the earth and eventually to the cross to save each one of us.

John 15:13 "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The love of God for sinful man has always been a mystery to me. The wings of God are not literal, but are real. It is as if we are under a great canopy that shades us from the terrible heat of the sun. Christians put their trust in God. That trust is the protection through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Psalm 36:8 "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures."**

By his "house" is meant the church of God, of his building, and where he dwells. By the fatness of it the provisions there, the word and ordinances, and the blessings of grace which they hold forth. And especially Christ, the fatted calf, the bread of life, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed, and which make a feast of fat things. And these they that trust in the Lord are welcome to eat and drink of abundantly. And to abundant satisfaction (see Matt. 5:6; Psalm 22:26).

And thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures": The love of God, whose streams make glad the city of God. Or the fullness of grace, which is in Christ, out of which believers draw with joy, and drink with pleasure. Or eternal glory and happiness, enjoyed in the presence of God, in which is fullness of joy. And at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore; a never ceasing torrent of them.

The fatness of the house of God is the tree of life which bears twelve fruit. This river also, that we are to drink from, is the river that flows from the throne of God. Jesus told the woman at the well that if she drank of this water, she would never thirst again. This tree and river are both in heaven, as we read in the next 2 verses.

Revelation 22:1-2 "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, [was there] the tree of life, which bare twelve [manner of] fruits, [and] yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree [were] for the healing of the nations."

**Psalm 36:9 "For with thee [is] the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."**

“In thy light shall we see light”: It is likely that this phraseology bears both literal and figurative significance, i.e., God is the source of physical life and also of spiritual life. The Lord is the Source and Sustainer of all light and life.

Look at these 2 following Scriptures about the light in the above verse.

Revelation 21:23 "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb [is] the light thereof."

Revelation 22:5 "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

The fountain of life is the same as the river. If we look at all the elements mentioned in the last few verses in this lesson from Psalms, we will see that all of them are symbolic of Jesus. The tree spoken of here, is the same as the food that Jesus called Himself, the Bread. Jesus is the tree of life. The river that flows is the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Jesus is also, the light of the world. If we have Jesus in us, we have life and Light.

**Psalm 36:10 "O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart."**

That is, spiritually and experimentally. And such are they that trust in him and love him. And these are the objects of the love of God. Not that their knowledge, faith, or love, are the cause of his love to them; but these things describe and point at manifestly the objects of it. And this request regards the open discovery of it unto them. For the love of God itself always continues, though the manifestations of it are not always the same. And it is for the enlargement and continuance of them the psalmist here prays. For it may be rendered, "draw out thy lovingkindness"; that is, to a greater length. Make a larger and clearer discovery of it, that the height and depth, and length and breadth of it, may be more discerned.

"And thy righteousness to the upright in heart": Who are sincere and without guile. Who have new hearts created and right spirits renewed in them, and have truth in the inward parts. And unto and upon such is the righteousness of Christ, and where it always continues, for it is an everlasting one. But here it means a clearer and constant revelation of it from faith to faith. Unless it should rather intend the righteousness of God in protecting his people from the insults of their enemies, and the continual exertion of it for that purpose.

We see in this, a plea from David that God will continue on in the same way He has been in the past. This recognizes again the lovingkindness God shows to those in right standing with Him.

**Psalm 36:11 "Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me."**

Meaning some proud enemy, such a one as Ahithophel, of whom R. Obadiah expounds it. Who lifted up his heel against him; and is applicable to any haughty enemy of Christ and his people. And particularly to antichrist, the man of sin, that exalts himself above all that is called God.

"And let not the hand of the wicked remove me": Either from the house of God; or from his throne. That high station and dignity in which he was placed.

David's sons had not been exempt from the very pride that David is asking God not to allow to come against him. David knows for sure that he is where he is, because God has preserved him. We see one more plea that God will keep him safe from the wicked who desire to kill David.

**Psalm 36:12 "There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise."**

It is as if the psalmist suddenly saw a vision. Either in the pit they dug for others; or into hell. Where they shall be turned at last (see Psalms 5:5; 6:8). "There", on a spot that presents itself to his eyes, are the wicked actually "fallen." They lie prostrate in the dust.

They are cast down, and shall not be able to rise": Or, to rise up again (compare Psalms 14:5a; 18:38; Prov. 24:16). Whereas the righteous may fall into misfortune repeatedly, and recover themselves (Prov. 24:16). The workers of iniquity, when their time comes to fail, usually perish. At any rate, this would be the result of the overthrow which the psalmist sees in a sort of vision.

This Psalm ends with a positive note of confidence from David. He says, my enemies who were workers of iniquity have fallen, and they will not be able to come against me again. This is David's way of thanking God for the defeat of the evil ones.

### Psalm 36 Questions

1. Who does David call himself in this Psalm?
2. The fear of God is the beginning of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The wicked are speaking to \_\_\_\_\_ heart in verse 1?
4. What are transgressions?
5. What kind of a man is verse 2 describing?
6. In verse 3, the words of the evil man are what 2 things?
7. What do the words of a persons mouth match?
8. What is meant by (he deviseth mischief upon his bed)?

9. The man in verse 4 reminds the author of whom?
10. Thy mercy, O LORD is in the\_\_\_\_\_.
11. Where is the true mercy seat?
12. Who does mercy belong to?
13. What does the 9th chapter of Romans tell us about God and His mercy?
14. Who preserves man and beast?
15. It is not possible for mortal man to fathom the \_\_\_\_\_of God.
16. We live or die at the command of \_\_\_\_\_.
17. What actually sent the Son of God to the cross?
18. What does verse 8 mean by the fatness of thy house?
19. What is the river that is spoken of here?
20. Who is Life?
21. Who is the Light?
22. Who is the Tree of Life?
23. Who is the River of Life?
24. What is the confident statement David ends this Psalm with?