

# Psalms 11

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Daily Bible devotional; Daily Rice 2024 October 20

## Psalms 11

YouTube Prayer Link

Our backers; Trust in God's songs

Psalm 11

The poem is set in the time when Saul attempted to kill David.

David was in exile in the wilderness of Ziph and was encouraged by a visit from Jonathan. The two men conversed freely and "made a covenant before the Lord" ( 1 Samuel 23:16~18). At the end of the visit, David sang this hymn. This is not speaking directly to God, and therefore not a call for prayer or prayer, but a "poetry of trust." Verses 1 and 4 describe the psalmist coming to the temple to hide from the wicked, not accepting Jonathan's counsel to flee elsewhere, but trusting in God and committing himself into His hands. God will protect him while he flees. For the God in whom he trusts is a King and a judge, who will punish the wicked and save the righteous. In such a critical situation, David remained steadfast in his trust in Jehovah, knowing that his God was the backer of the upright.

A backer is a mountain that we have on our backs, strong, tall, unshakable, and secure. The Jews also use the word "mountain" to express a place of refuge, a place of refuge. The first verse of the poem uses the phrase "When you fly like a bird to your mountain." It expresses a situation of urgency to escape and find refuge.

This is a two-part poem of David's trust in God, but he was convinced that Jehovah is reliable:

(a) counsel from friends (vv.1~3); exhort them to flee, for the wicked have bent their bows and arrows and have shot men in secret, and have asked what they can do if their foundations are destroyed. (2) David's reply (vv.4~7); Jehovah sits firmly on the throne, and he searches the world, tests the righteous, and judges the wicked.

David's faith contrasted sharply with the fear of his counselors. After Saul tried to kill him again and again, how did David face the enemy's urgent pursuit? At such an important juncture, he did not take Jonathan's advice and fled from danger as quickly as a bird fleeing into the mountains. He chose to walk the path of faith and put himself in God's hands. Thus, we see David's steadfast testimony to those around him who were concerned about his well-being that he would "take refuge in Jehovah." Then he recounted the temptations and doubts he had experienced: "If the foundation is destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Yet, the heavenly foundations remain. So he emphasized that the foundation of his faith was in God, who sat on the throne of heaven, because He was still in control. Satan may do everything possible to destroy the foundation of our faith, but God's strong foundation is established (II Timothy 2:19) In times of crisis, we are not frightened, nor do we flee or compromise, but trust in the eternal ruler of God to overcome all temptations and tribulations.

David begins in verse 4 by telling what he knows about God: "The Lord is in his temple; The throne of the LORD is in heaven; His eyes look over the world. Yahweh tests the righteous; He knew God's throne in heaven and the temple on earth, and He was always looking over the world and knowing what people were doing. Since he looked, He would protect David. So David had faith because he knew that God was watching the world.

David knew that God was righteous and that He would do justice, so he would lay a snare on the wicked. "He shall lay a snare against the wicked; and fire and brimstone and hot wind for their portions." The cup of the "cup of the cup" represents the portion of the person who deserves, the cup of the wicked is the retribution of the wicked, and the cup of the righteous is the cup of salvation. Since David knew that evil would be rewarded for the wicked, he could turn to God. "For the LORD is righteous, and he delights in righteousness; and the upright shall see his face." And because God is righteous, he will see God's face, that is, he will experience God's presence and grace, so he will not be rejected by God if he takes refuge in God.

God is the judge of righteousness, the God of anger against the wicked. If anyone does not look back, God's sharpened sword and arrow are ready to be fired at the wicked, so we must confess our inability before God, and confess our pride and sin. God is a God who is angry with the wicked daily; The wicked harbor poison, and the birth of falsehood. Let us not think that the wicked will have smooth sailing, for the wicked will surely reap the consequences, and that the pit he digs will fall into by itself, for God is a God who judges righteously.

"Righteousness" is in God's nature, so "He loves righteousness" and will not allow sin to get its way. We do not have to "fly like birds to your mountain" on our own, but we should "take refuge in the Lord" and first restore intimate fellowship with God in Christ in the midst of our troubles,

and be a "man of uprightness" so that "we shall see his face" (Hebrews 4:16) "but come boldly to the throne of grace for mercy and grace for help in all times."

Sometimes, well-intentioned counsel can be devastating to our faith. This exhortation takes our eyes off God and makes us think about our own good. Like the serpent in the Garden of Eden, he simply asked Eve to think of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "so that it is good food, pleasing to the eye, and wiser." It is like the devil who tempted Jesus in the wilderness, only to make Jesus hungry and turn the stones in the wilderness into food. It was as if Peter grabbed Jesus and told him how painful it was to go to the cross, and persuaded him: "Lord, this must not be the case!" It will not come to you. Only God is our eternal refuge, our fortress, our rock, our ever-present help in times of trouble. Take God's backing and come to Him. He will not disappoint you.

Affirming that God is looking over "the Lord in his temple, and the throne of the Lord in heaven; His discerning eyes look over the world," David knew God was watching. Let us not forget that we have a God in heaven, and let us not forget that He is watching the world. He understands and sympathizes with the difficulties of our righteous path, so we must not give up.

Let's pray together.

When faced with the trials of circumstance, I will come to You and recognize You as my refuge and my help from You. Sit on high in heaven and glorify the Lord on the throne! We praise your name! You are Lord of lords and king of kings! Nothing in the world can compare with you. You are a God of righteousness, you love righteousness, and you want us to come to you. There is nothing in this world that we can rely on for a long time, but you are our eternal hope. O Lord! I thank you for your grace, you are the backer of the upright, and I pray that we will come to you with a simple heart, see your face, and enjoy the joy of being with you! Pray that the Lord will create a pure heart for us and that I will have a righteous spirit in me again. Let us walk in your light, and in times of danger and persecution, let us remain steadfast in our trust in you, as David did.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray. Amen!

## Psalm 11

Psalm 11 is a psalm of David and focuses on the theme of trusting in the Lord amidst danger and the contrast between the righteous and the wicked. In this psalm, David expresses his unwavering trust in God even when advised to flee from his enemies. He affirms that God is sovereign, seated on His heavenly throne, observing and testing both the righteous and the wicked. The psalm concludes with a strong affirmation of God's love for justice and the eventual reward for the upright, while the wicked will face divine judgment.

The structure of the psalm is simple but profound. It starts with a declaration of trust, followed by a description of the evil plans of the wicked, and ends with a proclamation of God's righteous rule and judgment.

Psalm 11 (NIV)

In the Lord I take refuge.

How then can you say to me:

“Flee like a bird to your mountain.

For look, the wicked bend their bows;  
they set their arrows against the strings  
to shoot from the shadows  
at the upright in heart.

When the foundations are being destroyed,  
what can the righteous do?”

The Lord is in his holy temple;  
the Lord is on his heavenly throne.  
He observes everyone on earth;  
his eyes examine them.

The Lord examines the righteous,  
but the wicked, those who love violence,  
he hates with a passion.

On the wicked he will rain  
fiery coals and burning sulfur;  
a scorching wind will be their lot.

For the Lord is righteous,  
he loves justice;  
the upright will see his face.

### Important Verses and Their Meaning

1. Psalm 11:1 - "In the Lord I take refuge. How then can you say to me: 'Flee like a bird to your mountain.'"

Meaning: This verse sets the tone of the psalm. David is responding to advice that he should flee from his enemies, but instead, he declares his trust in God as his refuge. This shows that David chooses faith over fear. The imagery of a bird fleeing to the mountain signifies escaping danger, but David refuses to abandon his trust in God's protection.

2. Psalm 11:3 - "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Meaning: This is a rhetorical question reflecting the concern that when society's moral and spiritual foundations are crumbling, it may seem that the righteous are powerless. The verse highlights a common experience: when justice and righteousness are threatened, what can those who follow God do? David implies that even in such moments of despair, the righteous should continue to trust in God.

3. Psalm 11:4 - "The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord is on his heavenly throne. He observes everyone on earth; his eyes examine them."

Meaning: This verse affirms God's sovereignty and His role as the ultimate judge. Despite the chaos or injustice on earth, God remains in control. His heavenly throne symbolizes His authority over all creation, and His constant observation of humanity assures that nothing escapes His notice, especially the actions of the wicked and the righteous.

4. Psalm 11:5 - "The Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked, those who love violence, he hates with a passion."

Meaning: This verse reflects God's justice. He tests and purifies the righteous through trials but harbors a deep hatred for the wicked, especially those who engage in violence. The word "examines" implies a process of refining the faith of the righteous, while "hates with a passion" shows God's intense opposition to evil.

5. Psalm 11:6 - "On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur; a scorching wind will be their lot."

Meaning: This is a vivid image of divine judgment. The "fiery coals and burning sulfur" are reminiscent of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, symbolizing the intensity and finality of

God's judgment on the wicked. The "scorching wind" further emphasizes the severe consequences awaiting those who oppose God's will.

6. Psalm 11:7 - "For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face."

Meaning: The psalm ends with a hopeful declaration. God is righteous and loves justice, and as a result, those who are upright—those who live in alignment with God's will—will eventually be rewarded with the privilege of seeing God's face. This suggests intimate fellowship with God, the ultimate blessing for the righteous.

### Key Themes of Psalm 11

**Trust in God's Sovereignty:** David's response to danger is not to run but to trust in the Lord. He affirms that God is in control, reigning from His heavenly throne, and that nothing escapes His notice.

**The Testing of the Righteous:** The psalm emphasizes that the righteous may undergo trials and testing, but this is a refining process. God examines the hearts of those who follow Him.

**God's Hatred of Wickedness:** The psalm also makes clear that God detests violence and evil. Those who commit wicked acts will not go unpunished, as God will eventually bring judgment upon them.

**Final Justice and Vindication:** The wicked will face severe punishment, while the upright will be rewarded by being in God's presence. This highlights the certainty of divine justice, even when the world appears to be filled with injustice.

### Conclusion

Psalm 11 is a powerful expression of trust in God's sovereignty and justice, even when it seems like the moral and social foundations of the world are crumbling. For the believer, it offers assurance that God is watching, that He tests the righteous for their good, and that He will ultimately bring justice by punishing the wicked and blessing the righteous. It encourages believers to hold fast to their faith, knowing that their ultimate reward is the presence of God.

### Theological Thought in Psalm 11

Psalm 11 provides a deep insight into the nature of God's justice, sovereignty, and the believer's response to adversity. Its theological framework emphasizes the following key themes:

**God's Sovereignty:**

In this psalm, David highlights the sovereign reign of God, particularly in verse 4: “The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord is on his heavenly throne.” This verse asserts that God is not distant or uninvolved but seated on His throne, actively ruling over all creation. God's sovereignty assures believers that, despite chaos or threats from wicked forces, He remains in control. This contrasts human advice to flee (verse 1) with the divine assurance that God sees all and governs justly.

#### God as Judge:

God is depicted as the ultimate judge who examines both the righteous and the wicked. Verse 5 emphasizes that God "examines the righteous" while hating the wicked who engage in violence. This portrays God as intimately involved with His people, refining and testing the righteous while expressing righteous indignation toward those who oppose His will. God's justice is central, assuring that evildoers will face judgment (verse 6).

#### The Reality of Evil and God's Hatred for Wickedness:

Psalm 11 presents a stark contrast between the righteous and the wicked. God's passionate hatred for those who "love violence" (verse 5) shows that evil is not tolerated. This aligns with the biblical understanding that God's holiness cannot coexist with evil. The imagery of fiery coals, burning sulfur, and scorching winds (verse 6) symbolizes the ultimate destruction of the wicked, emphasizing the certainty of God's judgment against sin.

#### The Righteous Shall See God's Face:

In verse 7, David concludes with the hopeful promise that “the upright will see His face.” This is one of the most profound theological concepts in the psalm. To "see God's face" suggests the ultimate reward for the righteous—an intimate, direct relationship with God. This notion of seeing God's face is often associated with final vindication, eternal life, and fellowship with God. It points to the ultimate destiny of the righteous, living in God's presence, experiencing His favor, and being restored into communion with Him.

#### Spiritual Influence of Psalm 11

Psalm 11 provides spiritual guidance and comfort, offering a profound influence on how believers should navigate trials, trust God, and live in anticipation of His justice.

#### Trust in God Amidst Adversity:

David's declaration, "In the Lord I take refuge" (verse 1), sets the spiritual tone of the psalm. Despite being advised to flee in the face of danger, David places his trust firmly in God. This reflects a deep spiritual principle for believers: trust in God's protection even when external circumstances are overwhelming. The psalm encourages believers to take refuge in God, who remains their stronghold in times of trouble, rather than succumbing to fear.

#### Faith in God's Justice:

The spiritual influence of the psalm lies in its call to faith in divine justice. Even when it seems like the moral and societal foundations are being destroyed (verse 3), believers are encouraged to trust that God sees all and will eventually act. This belief in God's ultimate judgment allows believers to resist the temptation to take matters into their own hands or be consumed by despair.

#### Endurance Through Testing:

Verse 5, where God "examines the righteous," offers insight into the spiritual life of testing and refining. Trials in the believer's life are not random; they are permitted by God to refine and strengthen their faith. This psalm encourages believers to endure hardship with the understanding that God uses trials to build character and deepen trust in Him.

#### Hope in Future Vindication:

The promise that the "upright will see His face" (verse 7) instills hope. In the midst of injustice and suffering, believers are reminded of their ultimate destiny: to be in God's presence. This future hope inspires perseverance and righteousness, knowing that those who are faithful will one day experience the fullness of God's glory. It offers a vision of eternal communion with God that sustains believers through present difficulties.

#### A Call to Righteousness:

Psalm 11 challenges believers to pursue a life of righteousness, aligning their actions with God's love for justice. It inspires believers to remain upright, despite the wickedness around them, trusting that God's reward for righteousness is far greater than any earthly success or approval. The spiritual influence here is one of moral integrity—living rightly before God, knowing that He sees and will ultimately vindicate the just.

#### Conclusion

Theologically, Psalm 11 emphasizes God's sovereign rule, His righteous judgment, and the contrasting destinies of the righteous and the wicked. Spiritually, it calls believers to trust in God's protection, endure trials with faith, and live with the hope of seeing God's face. This psalm



continues to inspire trust in God's justice, perseverance in the face of evil, and the pursuit of righteousness as believers await God's ultimate vindication and eternal presence.