

Psalm 36

"David's Prayer for Yahweh, in Loyal Love, to Protect the Upright from the Wicked"

(For the choir director. *A Psalm* of David the servant of the LORD.)

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A1 THE EVIL OF THE WICKED 36:1-4

B1 Title -- God's Revelation to David of the Transgression of the Wicked: {1}
Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; ¹ 36:1a

B2 The Enumeration of the Traits of the Wicked 36:1b-4

- C1 No Fear of God: There is no fear of God before his eyes. 36:1b
- C2 His Flattery of Himself to Soothe His Conscience: ² {2} For it flatters him in his *own* eyes Concerning the discovery of his iniquity *and* the hatred of *it*. 36:2
- C3 His Evil, Deceitful Speech: {3} The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; 36:3
- C4 His Departure from Wisdom and Goodness: He has ceased to be wise *and* to do good.
- C5 His Constant Devising of Evil: {4} He plans wickedness upon his bed; 36:4
- C6 His Deliberate Departure from Good: He sets himself on a path that is not good;
- C7 His Embrace of Evil: He does not despise evil.

¹ 36:1 - transgression ... heart: A literal rendering of 36:1: A revelation of revolt concerning the wicked in the inner parts of my heart: "There is no terror of God before their eyes." In this very difficult passage, David is saying that God revealed to him as a prophet, deep within his heart, a revelation of the revolt that characterizes the wicked. This characterization of the wicked begins with the assertion that they have no terror of God before their eyes. In this I follow the general idea, if not the exact wording, of the NIV: "An oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked;" etc.

² 36:2 - Paragraph heading: Following Allen P. Ross, "Psalms," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

A2 THE LOYAL LOVE OF YAHWEH 36:5-9**B1 The Loftiness of Yahweh's Loyal Love 36:5**

C1 {5} Your lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens,

C2 Your faithfulness *reaches* to the skies.

B2 The Enormity of Yahweh's Righteousness: {6} Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; 36:a**B3 The Depth of Yahweh's Justice 36:b**

C1 The Affirmation of His Justice: Your judgments are *like* a great deep. O LORD,

C2 The Illustration of His Justice; You preserve man and beast.

B4 The Lavishness of God's Loyal Love: {7} How precious³ is Your lovingkindness, O God! 37:a**B5 The Benefits of God's Loyal Love to Mankind 36:7b-9**

C1 The Metaphor of a Bird -- Security: And the children of men⁴ take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.

C2 The Metaphor of Water -- Satisfaction

D1 The satisfaction of a quenched thirst (for God): {8} They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house;⁵

³ 36:7 - precious: *yaqar* (Strong's 3368) is often used to describe precious stones. The idea is that God is not miserly in His loyal love. He does not go to the Thrift Store to economize in dispensing His loyal love (*chesed* - Strong's 2617). Ultimately, as my wife suggested, God's loyal love cost Him dearly -- it cost Him the life of His unique Son (John 3:16)! As a result, His loyal love is of inestimable value. (As an aside, I suspect Bruce Waltke, former professor of Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary, chose the word loyal to accompany love because it is used in reference to the covenant community of Israel, and God is loyal in His love toward those whom He has chosen. Indeed His loyal love applies equally to those whom He has chosen, whether in the OT or NT sense. God graciously chooses to dispense His invaluable loyal love to whomever He wishes; but we must choose Him back (in faith).

⁴ 36:7 - children of men: lit. "and sons of man," a generic reference to humanity in general, for it is not "sons of Jacob," for example. The whole of v. 7 (in literal English) reads, "How valuable is your loyal love, O God; and sons of man in shadow of your wings take refuge."

⁵ 36:8 - drink their fill: Literally, the text reads, "They drink their fill on the fat of your house," meaning, humans are able to come to God's house of worship (the Tabernacle or the provisional tent for the ark) and quench their thirst for God by entering into fellowship with Him there. To the Hebrew mind, the fat of the animal was the choicest, tastiest morsel, that which gives the leaner part of the animal its flavor. So the worshiper was able to imbibe the choicest part of the house of worship -- the very essence of God Himself -- through worship.

D2 The abundance of satisfaction from and with God: And You give them to drink of the river of Your delights.⁶

D3 The origin and unceasing supply of life -- God: {9} For with You is the fountain of life;

C3 The Metaphor of Light -- Perspective: In Your light we see light.⁷

A3 THE PRAYER OF DAVID 36:10-12

B1 For God to Continue His Favorable Treatment of His Followers 36:10

C1 His Loyal Love: {10} O continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You,

C2 His Just Treatment: And Your righteousness to the upright in heart.

B2 For God to Protect Him, Personally 36:11

C1 From the Foot of the Arrogant: {11} Let not the foot of pride come upon me,

C2 From the Hand of the Wicked: And let not the hand of the wicked drive me away.

B3 For God to Judge Evil-Doers 36:12

C1 The Fall of Evil-Doers: {12} There the doers of iniquity have fallen;

C2 The Permanence of Their Demise: They have been thrust down and cannot rise.

Expanded Analysis of Psalm 36

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⁶ 36:8 - river ... delights: Lit., "...and with a torrent of delights in You, You continually water them." The word which I have, in this note, translated "delights in You" is a specialized use of the word "Eden" found in Gen. 2:8, 10. Man's most idealized existence with God was found in the Garden of Eden before the fall. Man had all the physical benefits he could ever want, but the ultimate delight was fellowship with God. The Loyal Love of God described in Psalm 36:7-9 is so great that, even now, in man's fallen condition, God will still water those who wish with a torrent of delights from Him and in Him, just as He watered Eden with a river that broke into four rivers (Gen. 2:10).

⁷ 36:9 - light: The idea seems to be that God's light illumines our pathway so that we can see things as they really are, not as Satan, the world, or our flesh might delude us.