

“A PLACE OF REFUGE”

Psalm 5

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INTRODUCTION

As Kidner notes, “the presence of enemies” in this psalm is “a shadow seldom absent from David’s psalms” (p. 57). The main problem with which David is concerned here is the “propaganda” of his enemies (vv. 6, 9). But before the Psalm concludes, David is reassured that He is safe and protected because of his relationship with the Lord. *He has a refuge.*

So do you! YOU HAVE A REFUGE IN THE LORD THAT WILL GIVE YOU JOY AND BLESSEDNESS.

Once again (Psalm 3), this is a morning psalm (v. 3). There seem to be **5 divisions of this psalm:**

I. Prayer [or “Plea”] of the Godly (1-3); II. Persecutors [or Problem] of the Godly (4-6); III. Pilgrim Spirit of the Godly (7-8); IV. Pollution of the Wicked (9-10); V. Privileges of the Godly (11-12).

I. PRAYER OF THE GODLY (vv. 1-3)

These verses have a three-fold expression of the matter of his prayers in a crescendo:

- A. His “Musing” (1)
- B. His Crying Out (v. 2)—Literally “the voice of my cry for help.”
- C. His prayer (2b; 3b—His prayer is:
 1. Articulate: “You will hear my voice” (v. 3)
 2. Disciplined: (v. 3—literally it reads: “I will prepare to You.”) **Sacrifice** is the most likely, for elsewhere it commonly is used for the priests “laying the altar fire and arranging the pieces of the burnt offering (Lev. 1:6f). Note the *2-fold emphasis in the context on “in the morning—the time of the early sacrifice.*
 3. Expectant: (v. 3b—“I will eagerly watch.”

II. PERSECUTORS OF THE GODLY (vv.4-6)

Here we see the Manifestation of Persecution and the Manifest Opposition of God to the Persecutors.

- A. The Manifestation of Persecution
 1. Wickedness (v. 4)
 2. Evil (4b)
 3. Boastful (5a)—a perversion of the basic meaning of the word for “praise.”
 4. Doers of Iniquity (v. 5b—the vanity of sin)
 5. Speakers of Falsehood (6a)
 6. Men “of Bloodshed and deceit”

B. The Manifest Opposition of God to the Persecutors

Kidner points out how the verses “crescendo from the mild negatives of verse 4 . . . to the expression of divine wrath in 5b, 6.”

1. He “takes **no pleasure**” in wickedness.
2. No evil “**sojourns**” with Him—even temporarily! [From the Hebrew *gur.*]
3. Boasters “**may not stand before**” His eyes
4. He **hates** “all who do iniquity.” (5) Notice—**all** such doers.
5. He **destroys** those who speak falsehood (v. 6—slanderers).
6. He absolutely **abhors—detests, loathes**—men who shed blood and practice deceit.

**As long as God is the way He is, and David is the way he is toward God, David’s situation is secure!

III. **PILGRIM SPIRIT OF THE GODLY (vv. 7-8):** Here we see two sub-points: The Godly Man’s Relation to God’s Place of Worship, and The Godly Man’s Relation to God’s Plan.

A. The Godly Man’s Relation to God’s Place of Worship (7)

1. The Names of the Place of God’s Presence
 - a. God’s “house”
 - b. God’s “Holy Temple”

Since the Ark and other items were in a mere tent at this time, some question the appropriateness of these terms for the place of worship. Kidner gives a good position: these were the traditional names used for god’s dwelling place that had been used for a long time—at least from the “days of Shiloh (1 Sa. 1:7, 9)” (p. 59).

- Note the **contrast** of David entering God’s house when 4b had stated that “evil can be no guest of Thine” (NEB).
2. The qualifications for entering the Place of God’s Presence
 - a. God’s Loyal Love. It is only possible for David to dwell in God’s house because of “**Thine abundant loving-kindness.**” David is able to enter His house. God’s loyal love is **abundant!**
 - b. David’s Reverential Awe of God: “I will worship [*bow down, prostrate oneself*] in the fear of you.”

B. The Godly Man’s Relation to God’s Plan (8)

David is still quite conscious of his “enemies”—the term here could convey their “vigilance”, or as NASB renders in the margin, “those who lie in wait for me.” But the answer to David’s dire **peril** is found in his relation to the Lord’s sovereign plan:

1. “Lead me in your righteousness”:

- God’s higher standard.
- Implied here also is that God, due to His own righteousness, will do what is right on behalf of David.
- Of course, David desires to live according to God’s righteous standards.
- 2. “Make my way straight before me.”
 - God’s *purer direction of life* than what the wicked or any humans travel.
 - God will also *straighten out the kinks*—problems and issues—in David’s life.
 - David will *live according to God’s directions*.
 - The result of all this is seen in passages like Proverbs 3:5-6; 4:25; Is. 42:16.

IV. POLLUTION OF THE WICKED (vv. 9-10) Again there are two sub-points in this section: A corrupt heart results in wicked Speech (9); and A righteous God gives them what they deserve (10).

A. A Corrupt Heart Results in Wicked Speech (9)

1. Their heart (“inward part”) is destruction (personified).
2. Their speech is totally wicked.
 - Their Mouth—nothing “reliable”
 - Their Throat is “an opened grave.” **Paul quotes this expression in Romans 3:13 with reference to the depravity of all human beings.**
 - They make smooth [Flatter with] their Tongue.
 - Note that all these methods are those of **the serpent** in the garden, and are still the methods used by the serpents “minor brood the flatterer and the scandalmonger.” (Kidner, p. 60).

B. A Righteous God Gives Them What They Deserve (10).

They are not really David’s enemies; **they are God’s enemies**—“They are rebellious against YOU.”

1. **Exposure:** God “Holds them Guilty”, for “evil is vulnerable to truth”—this is **the opposite of justification!**
2. **Collapse:** God makes them fall because of their own counsels [schemes], for evil is “vulnerable to its own instability.”
3. **Expulsion:** God scatters them in the multitude of their transgressions, for evil is “vulnerable to direct divine action.” (Kidner, p. 60)

V. PRIVILEGES OF THE GODLY (vv. 11-12): Here we see **Their Security, Their Joy, Their Blessing, and Their Favor.**

- A. The Security of the Godly—here called “those who love Thy name” (v. 11) and the righteous man (v. 12).

1. They “Take Refuge in Thee.” (11)
 2. God “Shelters them” (11). The verb has the basic idea of “cover, block off, make unapproachable.” It is used in Ps. 91:4 for God’s covering the believer as a mother bird. The word also occurs for the veil before the ark (Ex. 40:21). it is used for the Cherubim who cover the Ark of the Covenant. **So here, God covers His own in the shelter of His sacred presence!**
 3. God “covers them with favor as with a shield.” (12)
- B. The Joy of the Godly—**three expressions of joy in verse 11:**
1. “Let them rejoice”—be glad, those who take refuge **“in Thee.”**
 2. “Let them ever sing for joy.” [“**forever** shout for joy”]
 3. “That those who love thy name may exalt **in Thee**”.
- C. The Blessing of the Godly (12): “For **YOU, O YAHWEH**, bless the righteous. No one else can do so, only Yahweh.
- D. The Favor of the Godly (12): “Thou dost surround them with favor as with a shield.”
- Note that danger here is not altogether forgotten—see the reference to “refuge” and “shield”—defensive terms.
 - Note that David “breaks free of his loneliness”—no longer is he simply a man praying “on his own, hemmed in by his foes, but he is conscious of a **whole company who can join him in praise.**” (Kidner, p. 60)

CONCLUSION

YOU HAVE A REFUGE IN THE LORD THAT WILL GIVE YOU JOY AND BLESSEDNESS.

Walk in the same **Pilgrim Spirit** that David did, making His place of worship your priority, and His plan your purpose in life!

The n enjoy **the Security** He gives you, **the Joy** that is yours in Him, **the Blessing** that is yours in the Lord, **and the Favor** God bestows upon you.