

From Fear to Praise

God's people respond with praise and commitment when He judges the wicked.

Are You Hungry?

How would you feel if a powerful army was advancing against you?

There are many wars and rumors of war happening around the world today. Powerful oppressors prey upon the weak, and at times, we may feel overwhelmed and afraid of the evil that seems to be prospering around us. But God is greater. In this psalm, we see Asaph praising God as the only One to be feared. The LORD brings judgment for every evil act, and He saves the afflicted. The wrath of an enemy army does not even begin with compare with the wrath and power of God. As a result, His people can have great confidence and assurance in Him.

Taste and See

Why is God alone the One to be feared (vv. 1-8)?

Our God is awesome, unrelenting, and victorious.

There is no one more powerful than God, and He rises up to protect His people against their enemies. He destroys flashing arrows, shields, and swords, and He renders them useless. He is more majestic than the mountains, and no enemy can stand against Him. Warriors cannot lift their hands, and horses and chariots lie still at His rebuke. God is infinitely powerful and unrelenting against His adversaries, and therefore, He alone is to be feared. All are subject to His judgment, and those who are against God and His people will face the terrifying consequences of their actions.

Do you fear the Lord? How is this fear evident in your life?

Some evangelists only like to preach about hell and the wrath of God, and while the content of their message may be true, a healthy fear of the Lord is not about being afraid of a mean and angry God. Fear of God is a reverence and respect for the all-powerful and all-knowing Lord. Those who are against Him should fear His wrath and judgment, but those who have received His love and grace know that they can have confidence in the Almighty God who is greater and stronger than any enemy. When we look to the cross, we can see that God's wrath for our sins was satisfied by Jesus' death, and we can fear and respect the Lord who has the power to destroy us but chooses to love us and show us mercy.

How do God's people respond to His wrath and judgment (vv. 9-11)?

God's people respond with praise and commitment.

When God rises up to pronounce judgment against the wicked and save the afflicted, He receives praise and greater commitment from His people. God brings about judgment because He cannot leave the wickedness of humanity unpunished. Those who experience oppression and injustice, therefore, do not have to lose hope. They can make vows to God and fulfill them because they know that He is for the oppressed and will lead them to victory. Even those from neighboring lands will bring Him gifts, and He will be feared by the kings of the earth as His people glorify Him with great joy and confidence.

What drives you to praise God and commit your life to Him?

When we experience rebuke or judgment from others, we may first respond with shame and guilt, but today's psalm reminds us that judgment from God should actually cause us to hate our sins and run from them. We should respond to God's judgment of sin with praise and live even more committed lives for Him because we realize how much His grace and goodness has transformed our lives. Whenever God convicts you of a certain sin, turn away from it in repentance, and turn toward God in praise, recommitting yourself to following Him and His ways.

What are some practical ways that you can praise God and recommit your life to Him this week?

There is an endless variety of ways that you can praise God and grow in your commitment to Him. You can shout or sing, write songs or poems, or even share testimonies with friends and family. As you remember that you have been saved from God's wrath because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, you will grow in confidence that God will never abandon you, and your natural response will be praise and thanksgiving. As you turn to God to receive His grace and forgiveness, you can recommit your life in service to Him and His people.