

Psalm 119

week 11, v. 118-120

Let's think about fictional superheroes! They are distinguished by exceptional courage and strength. They fight for a specific cause. Most superheroes have extraordinary or superhuman powers. They fight crime and combat threats from supervillains. Think Iron Man, Captain America, Superman, Wonder Woman, Batman and Spider Man. They don't like the bad guys and we find ourselves cheering when good overcomes evil.

Now let's come back to reality. **Does evil exist in the world?** Of course it does! It is all around us, threatening every aspect of our lives even when we are unaware. **In what ways does evil creep in to our lives? Is it powerful? Can evil overtake those who are weak or ignorant of its power?** So often, Satan is portrayed as a cartoonish character with a pointed tail and ears. Before I was saved and truly understood evil I would think nothing of saying something like "you cute little devil" to a child who was misbehaving. I even, unfortunately dressed one of my own children up in a red costume complete with tail, ears and a long handled pick for Halloween. I look back at that now and realize how deceived I was about the power of evil in the world. It is nothing to fool around with or make light of.

How does God respond to evil?

Ps 119:118-119 Thou hast rejected all those who wander from Thy statutes, For their deceitfulness is useless. ¹¹⁹ Thou hast removed all the wicked of the earth [like] dross; Therefore I love Thy testimonies.

God rejects those who are evil. He has trodden them down. He looks at evil with disdain. The phrase 'wander from God's statutes' is a description of people who transgress morally, who cause others to go astray, who deceive, who are ravished or enthralled by sin. They are fraudulent, deceitful, and fallacious and their message has no purpose other than evil. They are villains. Their desire for evil to take over is as strong as the superheroes' quest for good.

Talk about a great action movie! **Whose side are you on? Are you following a sham or the Truth? How do you know?**

The word 'sham' is used in the Hebrew explanation of useless in verse 118 (KJV). A sham is a pretense of good; it is built on deceit and will eventually end in ruin.

What does God's rejection or judgement look like?

“...Moab will be trodden down in his place as straw is trodden down in the water of a manure pile” Isa 25:10

“...I also trod them in My anger, and trampled them in My wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments...” Isa 63:3

“...they [the wicked] shall be ashes under the soles of your feet” Mal 4:3

“...they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive...” Luke 24:21

Psalms 119:119 is a continuation of God’s judgement upon the wicked and David’s response to it.

Ps 119:119 Thou hast removed all the wicked of the earth [like] dross; Therefore I love Thy testimonies.

No part of the fleeting happiness, power or satisfaction of evil is worth the judgement of God. God’s plan is not fiction, it is fact. What He says will happen, has happened in the past and will come about in the future.

In **Ezekiel 22** God declares his judgement upon the Jewish nation as he goes down a list of their sins. In verse 18-22 of this chapter He declares Israel as dross: bronze, tin, iron and lead in the furnace. Dross is the impurities in precious metals. In order to take away the impurities in silver it has to be put under intense heat to be separated. The dross from silver has little value. It’s the stuff that’s swept away after pouring the pure metal in a mold.

Have you said the words ‘make a good choice’ to a child? Here, David is making a good choice. He sees the judgement of God upon the wicked and he chooses to turn towards God.

Verse 119: ‘Ungodly men and hypocrites are mingled among the servants of God, as dross is blended with the pure metal; but the fiery trial of divine judgments discovereth the difference.’—‘These dispensations increase our love of God’s word: because they give us sensible experience of its truth.’— Bp. Horne.

Where are your affections? In God’s testimonies or in the world? Will you be swept away like dross or purified as precious metals?

Our Psalmist ends this section of eight with verse 120.

Ps 119:120 My flesh trembles for fear of Thee, and I am afraid of Thy judgments.

What things make you fearful? Perhaps it is a devastating medical diagnosis, or loss of a loved one. It may be losing an income or home. Some people fear snakes or

spiders. Others fear failure or shame. **What do all these things have in common?** They are things of the world. Disease, loss, creepy-crawly things, failure.

The greater question is, **do you fear God and His judgments?**

When Habakkuk heard God's judgments against Israel, he trembled. **Hab 3:16**

The fear of punishment often keeps a child from misbehaving. God will punish sin and eradicate those who pursue evil. Hopefully this knowledge of God produces a reverence in us for Him and a healthy desire to keep His commands.

Spurgeon remarks this about Psalm 119:120: "Seeing others punished, we feel a holy awe in our own souls, and fear lest we also should be deceived by sin".

In **Philippians 2:12** Paul writes, "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling".

Heb 12:28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

When we read of God's judgment on the wicked does it cause us to fear His judgment upon us if we choose to disobey Him? Does His perfect judgment of those who are set on evil cause us to be in awe of who He is? Does your holy fear of God cause in you a desire to obey Him because you love Him?

Looking back through this last section of eight we see an example of a heart that is devoted to God.

Hates sin, loves God's law (113)

Counts on God's protection, waits for His answers (114)

Takes a stand against evil, observes God's commands (115)

Looks to God as sustainer and source of hope (116)

Counts on God for safety, continually regarding His commands (117)

Recognizes His judgment against those who are against Him (118)

Acknowledges His power over evil, chooses to love His commands (119)

Holds God in the highest esteem, has reverence for His righteousness (120)

Let's take the example we've been given in God's word and check our own hearts praying we might grow in our understanding and love for our Father.

Application Questions

Read Psalm 119:118-119. What are God's actions towards evil?

What is David's response?

Look up the word 'love'. What does it mean to love God's testimonies? Concentrate on the action love produces.

What does it mean to fear God in Psalm 119:120? Refer to Hebrews 12:28.

How should we respond to God's judgments? Read Philippians 2:12.

Review Psalm 119:113-120. How is God speaking to your heart through His word?