

## PSALM 36:1-12

### CHAPTER STUDIES ON THE PSALTER

"Even the silliest bird will not set traps for itself; the most petty and quibbling attorney will not cheat himself. "

**(Ps. 36:1) The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.** Eyes that have no fear of God will have the terrors of hell before them forever.

**(Ps. 36:2) For.** Here is the argument to prove the proposition of the previous verse. David reviews the reasoning process which convinced him that the wicked have no proper idea of God or respect for Him. God-fearing people see their sins and repent. Where the reverse is the case, there is no fear of God. **He flattereth himself in his own eyes.** He considers himself a fine fellow, worthy of great respect. He quiets his conscience. He deceives his judgment and considers himself a model of excellence, if not for morality, for having sense enough not to be enslaved by rules that bind others. He is the freethinker, the strong mind, the philosopher, and God's servants are, in his esteem, mean-spirited and narrow-minded. This is the most absurd and dangerous of all flatteries. Even the silliest bird will not set traps for itself; the most petty and quibbling attorney will not cheat himself. To smooth one's conduct to one's conscience (which is the meaning of the Hebrew) is to smooth one's own path to hell.

**Until his iniquity be found to be hateful.**

At length, he is found out and detested. Rottenness eventually smells too strong to conceal. There is a time when leprosy cannot be hidden. At last, the old house can no longer be propped up and falls about the tenant's ears. There is a limit to self-joy. He is found out amid general scorn; he can no longer keep up the farce. If not in this life, the hand of death will shed light on the covered character and expose the sinner to shame and contempt. The self-flattering process plainly proves the atheism of sinners, and the bare reflection, which God sees, makes self-flatteries impossible in the long run. Belief in God, like light, reveals and then our sin and evil are perceived. Yet the wicked are in the dark. They cannot see what is so clearly within and around them.

**(Ps. 36:4) He deviseth mischief upon his bed.** His place of rest becomes the place for plotting. His bed is a hot bed for poisonous weeds. The God-fearing meditate on God and serve Him, but those who turn their thoughts and their inventive faculties toward evil prove their godlessness. He has the devil for a bedfellow who lies in bed and schemes how to sin. God is far from that person.

**He setteth himself in a way that is not good.** When he gets up, he resolutely and persistently pursues the mischief he planned. The worst of ways he prefers, for he has taught his heart to love filthiness, having accustomed himself to revel in it.

**He abhorreth not evil.** Far from having a contempt and abhorrence for evil, he rejoices in it. He never hates a wrong because it is wrong, but he meditates on it, defends it, and practices it. What a portrait of a graceless man these few verses afford! His jauntiness of conscience, licentiousness of speech, intentness on wrongdoing, and deliberate and continued preference of iniquity are in his atheistic heart. Lord, save us from being such.

**(Ps. 36:5)** The psalmist turns his contemplation from the baseness of the wicked to the glory of God. The contrasts are impressive. **Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens.** Like the ethereal blue, **Thy mercy** encompasses the entire earth, smiling on universal nature, and acting as a canopy for all earth's creatures. It surmounts the loftiest peaks of human provocations and rises high above the mists of mortal transgression. Clear sky is evermore above, and mercy calmly smiles above the din and smoke of this poor world. Darkness and clouds are only in earth's lower atmosphere; the heavens above it are always serene and bright with innumerable stars. Divine mercy and matchless patience abide in its vastness, unaltered by man's rebellion. When we

can measure the heavens, then will we limit the Lord's mercy. Especially to His servants, in the salvation of the Lord Jesus, He has displayed grace higher than the heaven of heavens and wider than the universe. If the atheists could see this, they would long to become servants of Jehovah!

**Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.** Far, far above all comprehension is God's truth and faithfulness. He never fails, forgets, falters, or forfeits His word. Afflictions are like clouds, but divine truthfulness is all around them. Under the cloud, we are in the region of God's faithfulness; when we fly above it, we will not need such an assurance. To every word of threat, promise, prophecy, or covenant, the Lord has exactly adhered. "God is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man that He should repent" (Num. 23:19). (The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Mark Wash)

**Explain the words of Psalm 36:9 "In Your light we see light".** Job 29:3 Ps. 27:1 Ps. 35:3