

(Sermon Notes)

“When Trouble Is on the Horizon” (Psalm 36)

Introduction:

30,000 foot flyover

Psalm 36 has three sections:

1. **36:1-4** description of the wicked (a wisdom Psalm?)
2. **36:5-9** praising God (a praise Psalm?)
3. **36:10-12** request for God’s protection (a lament Psalm?)

God’s steadfast love. The Hebrew: *Hesed*. [**36:5,7,10**]

36:1 Two ways to translate this verse:

- Sin is speaking to the heart of the wicked
- David is speaking from his heart about the sin of the wicked.

Clear: “There is no fear of God before his eyes.”

36:2 Two ways to translate this verse:

- Not by others (not even God)
- Not by himself (so that he will reject it)

Both translations reveal deep psychological insights into those who reject God.

We don't see people as so bad because we don't see their heart.

36:3-4 The result is harm to others.

Trouble=harmful

Plots trouble/harm

Progression: thoughts lead to words/actions

Another reason we don't see people as wicked: We don't see God as he really is.

36:5-6

No transition, sudden 180 degree pivot: stark, startling

David sets a good example: he looks deeply at the wicked, but then moves his focus to God.

This is bad news for the wicked; good news for the righteous.

They are "wicked" because they are not rejecting a God who rejects them but a God who loves them, desires them, and blesses them.

36:7-8

David Needham's purpose statement:

"I am a receiver, a responder, a displayer, and a dispenser of God's love."

36:9 fountain of life=source of all life

Light a figure for life. God is the source of life.

36:10-11

The reason for this psalm: there is a threat on the horizon.

What do you do in this in-between place? PRAY

36:12 An inclusion: begins and ends with the wicked

But now we see the destiny of the wicked.

This prepares us for Psalm 37, where there is a more detailed description of the downfall of the wicked (Ps 37:1-2ff).

Conclusion:

David is rehearsing the theological truths that prepare him for the troubles on the horizon. We need to do the same. What theological truths do we need to rehearse?

When threats are on the horizon:

-Have the right understanding (vv1-4)

-Have the right focus (vv5-9)

-Have the right action (vv10-11)

-Have the right expectation (v12) (also Ps 37)

The threat to true followers of Christ is real, and it may be here soon. It's already being experienced by our brothers and sisters in Iran, Nigeria, and China, and our turn will come. With God's help and the wisdom of Psalm 36 and other scriptures, let's prepare and stand strong!

The Biblical Poet's Toolbox

-Foreshadowing: Hinting or picturing in advance what is going to happen later.

Example: Abraham "sacrificing" the son he loves on Mt. Moriah.

-Inclusio: Similar material at the beginning and ending of a section, making a frame or envelope around the section.

Example: "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth" is the beginning and ending of Psalm 8.

-Key Word: A repeated word.

Example: "love" three times in Psalm 36.

-Merism: Contrasting words are used to express completeness or totality.

Example: “In his hand are the depths of the earth,
The mountain peaks belong to him. [*everything on the vertical axis*]
The sea is his, for he made it,
And his hands formed the dry land.” [*everything on the horizontal axis*]
(Ps 95:4–5)

-Parallelism: Two lines, usually about the same length, where the first line says something and the second line says something that is related. (Sometimes three lines are parallel.)

Example of **Affirming parallelism** (the second line says something similar):

“But his delight is in the law of the Lord
And on his law he meditates day and night.” (Ps 1:2)

Example of **Opposing parallelism** (the second line says something opposite):

“Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
But he who trusts in the Lord, lovingkindness will surround him.” (Ps 32:10)

Example of **Advancing parallelism** (the second line simply moves on from the first line, adding information.)

“Delight yourself in the Lord,
And he will give you the desires of your heart.” (Ps 37:4)

-Refrain: A repeated line or verse.

Example: “Man in *his* pomp will not remain;
He is like the beasts that perish.”

“Man in *his* pomp, yet without understanding,
Is like the beasts that perish.” (Ps 49:12, 20)