

## *Psalm 11 (ASV)*

<sup>1</sup>In Jehovah do I take refuge:  
How say ye to my soul,  
Flee *as* a bird to your mountain;  
<sup>2</sup>For, lo, the wicked bend the bow,  
They make ready their arrow upon the string,  
That they may shoot in darkness at the upright in heart;  
<sup>3</sup>If the foundations be destroyed,  
What can the righteous do?  
<sup>4</sup>Jehovah is in his holy temple;  
Jehovah, his throne is in heaven;  
His eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.  
<sup>5</sup>Jehovah trieth the righteous;  
But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.  
<sup>6</sup>Upon the wicked he will rain snares;  
Fire and brimstone and burning wind shall be the portion of their cup.  
<sup>7</sup>For Jehovah is righteous; he loveth righteousness:  
The upright shall behold his face.

Study the Psalm and fill in the categories as Scripture reveals.

**God is:**

**God will:**

**I will:**

**Wicked will:**

### *Prayer*

Dear Father God,

First, I pray that you will keep me from judging others, for that is not my desire, but to bring attention to the issues at hand. Speak to me from Your throne in Heaven, through Your Holy Spirit, to pray for the lost, pray for victims of the sin of others, and repent of my own sin. You and only You are just and righteous. And only You can equip me to trust You, love others, and forgive others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## Reflection

When has God offered you refuge?

Define: justice, righteousness, judgment, consequences, and vindication.  
How do those terms relate to God, believers, and the wicked?

Which qualities should we look for in people from whom we take advice?

## Response

Sometimes, I long to escape the struggles of this world. In recent months, Jewish college students were bullied, threatened, and even blocked from attending classes. A celebrity severely abused and intimidated his girlfriend for years—he was charged and found guilty on some counts, while crowds gathered outside the courthouse to cheer for him. A man was shot in the back on a public street in broad daylight. On separate occasions, murderers brutally killed innocent, young girls—one stabbed on a light rail, and another dragged from her bed and shot in the head. An assassin killed a Christian husband and father of two simply for speaking the truth.

Though violence is not new, I now see our moral foundations crumbling—both in our nation and across the world. People cheer these deaths and even raise money to fund murderers' legal fees. They riot, target, and attack law enforcement. There is a clear reason why these tragedies continue and even escalate: when lesser crimes go unpunished, it emboldens those with a criminal spirit to push further into destruction.

The Bible warns us that “in the last days” godlessness will increase before Christ's return (2 Timothy 3:1–5). It feels as though we are approaching that point.

When David's advisors urged him to flee, he refused—choosing instead to trust God with his life. I want to take that same lesson to heart. When the weight of the world becomes too heavy for me to bear, I will seek the Lord's face, run into His arms, and find refuge in His warmth and protection. He is righteous, and for the wicked who refuse to repent, “a scorching wind” will blow—in God's time.

## Guest Response

The Psalms have long held a special place in my heart. For a time, after my father was first ordained an episcopal priest, he insisted on our family reading a psalm together every morning at the breakfast table. As you might imagine, this was not popular with his teenage daughters. But we indulged his wish, if only to get a ride to school. I look back on this practice today with considerably more warmth. I can hear his beautiful deep voice reading the words, and it brings me solace. I don't recall if we made it through the entire Psalter – there are 150 psalms – but since this is #11, we almost certainly read this one. Oh, how I wish I could remember.

Generally speaking, when analyzing religious texts, we tend to over-complicate. Instead of building layers of meaning on top of the words, I suggest focusing on the essentials. For Psalm 11, that is verse 3: *When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?*

The more things change the more they stay the same, right? Centuries ago, when this psalm was written, it must have seemed like the world was coming to an end. And it can still feel that way today. But the righteous are not called to flee with our loved ones to the mountains (or to the beach, either, for that matter.) Instead, we are meant to take refuge in the Lord.

The word “righteous” also has taken on a shade of meaning which can distract us. We associate it with “self-righteous,” not just doing the morally right thing, but believing that we are morally superior. We can use this to justify the act of judging who is *wicked* and who is *true of heart*. It is all the more tempting when we read that *coals of fire and burning sulfur and a scorching wind shall be their lot*. Who wouldn't wish this upon their enemies? But it is not ours to decide. It is up to us to simply do the right thing.

Taken in its purest form, this psalm can be distilled into two impactful lines: Do what is right despite the violence that is threatening the very foundation of our world; Don't run away, but take refuge in the Lord, and He will grant you eternal life.

**Further reading or listening:**

Isaiah 51 (entire chapter)

How Firm a Foundation - Hymn 637 (The Episcopal Hymnal, 1982)

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*Reminder*

I would love to hear from you! Use the “Contact” page under “More” to submit your response about how God moved you in this passage. If permission is granted in your response, I may post it on the main page of the website for the following week. If you don't want it posted, that's okay too. I will keep it private. Thank you, and I pray you are blessed in amazing ways.

Activity: internet crossword puzzle