

# Psalm 11: The upright will behold God's face



Psalm 11 (10) (Mode 4. 3...4 / 2...171)

Faced with evil, the psalmist refuses to flee.  
He asserts his faith in God who is just.  
He is certain that those who live a good life  
will experience God's presence and vindication.  
They will 'behold God's face'.

In the Lord I take refuge;  
how can you say to me:  
'Flee like a bird  
flee to the mountains?'

Those with no regard for God  
are bracing their bow.

They are fitting their arrow to the string;  
they shoot at the upright from the shadows.

When foundations are destroyed,  
what can the just do?

Israel is founded upon faith in the Lord, who cares for  
the poor and needy.

When this foundation is destroyed by the ruthless,  
where can those who are faithful to the covenant go to  
find redress?

Praying this psalm as a Christian we are reminded that  
'the foundation is Jesus Christ'(1Corinthians 3:11).

The Lord dwells in the holy temple,  
the Lord, whose throne is in heaven,  
whose eyes look down on the world,  
whose gaze is on the people on the earth.

As disciples of Jesus,  
our lives will be judged by how we respond to him  
and to his revelation concerning God:

‘Jesus of Nazareth commanded us to preach to the  
people and to testify that he is the one ordained  
by God as judge of the living and the dead’(Acts 10:42).

The Lord tests the faithful and the wicked,  
and rejects the lover of violence.

(Perhaps the following two lines could be omitted  
from the liturgy?)

God sends coals of fire and sulphur on the wicked;  
a scorching wind will be their lot.

Sodom and Gomorrah

‘They will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.’

(Revelation 14:10).

The key point here is that evil has evil effects. It matters what we do and we cannot pretend that we can do evil and not suffer the consequences.

The Lord is just and loves justice.

The upright will behold God's face.

‘Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved’(Genesis 32:30).

‘With Moses I speak face to face – clearly, not in riddles; and he beholds the form of the Lord’(Numbers 12:8).

‘In my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another’(Job 19:26-27).

Jesus said: ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God’(Matthew 5:8).



‘Now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known’(1Corinthians 13:12).

‘We boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.’  
(Romans 5:2)

‘And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit’(2Corinthians 3:18).

‘Christ in you, the hope of glory’(Colossians 1:27).