

WHO IS ENFORCING THE RULES?

PSALM 58

Introduction:

Eugene Peterson catches the thrust of this Psalm when he paraphrases the last verse as: “Everyone cheering, “It’s worth it to play by the rules!

God’s handing out trophies and tending the earth!”

Every human being seems to be born with an innate sense that there are some rules by which life ought to be lived. They also seem to just know that those who sit in places of judicial authority are supposed to impose the rules. Those who do harm to others are supposed to be punished, and those who do good are supposed to be rewarded. But at any moment in time there are people on the earth who wonder if anyone is enforcing the rules.

One Old Testament scholar places this psalm of David during the time when Absalom made his bid to overthrow his father. One of the arguments that they used against David was they would do a better job than David in enforcing the rules. Actually this was just a ploy they were using to create unrest among the people. As David confronted this situation, he wrote this psalm. He is wondering if there is anyone who enforces the rules.

It is still a good question. Before the psalm is finished, the answer is given.

There is a bold affirmation that the God of all the earth does indeed enforce the rules of righteousness and justice on the earth.

I. THE WICKED BREAK THE RULES. (v. 1-5)

1. They plot evil in their hearts (v. 1-2)
2. Evil comes naturally to them (v. 3)
3. They refuse all efforts at correction (v. 5)

II. THE RIGHTEOUS PRAY FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE RULES. (v. 6-8)

1. They pray that the rule breakers may be disarmed (v. 6)
2. They pray that the rule breakers may be destroyed.

III. THE LIVING GOD ENFORCES THE RULES. (v. 9-11)

1. The destruction of the rule breakers will come swiftly. (v. 9)
2. The rule keepers will triumph in the end.
3. The rule keepers will be rewarded in the end.