

Psalms 64:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

Analysis

And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing. This verse describes the universal response to God's judgment on the wicked: reverential fear and acknowledgment of divine justice. "All men" (kol-adam, כָּל-אָדָם) indicates comprehensive witness—not just Israel but humanity generally. God's righteous acts become testimony to all peoples, revealing His character and governance of human affairs.

"Shall fear" (vayir'u, וַיַּרְאוּ) uses the verb yare (יָרָא), meaning to fear, reverence, be in awe. This isn't terror that paralyzes but reverential awe that produces worship and obedience. When people witness God's judgment on evil, proper response is renewed reverence for God's power and justice. The waw-consecutive imperfect suggests consequential action: because God shoots His arrow (v.7), therefore all people fear. Divine action produces human response.

"Shall declare the work of God" (vayagidu pa'al Elohim, וַיְגִידוּ פָּעֵל אֱלֹהִים) uses the verb nagad (נִגַּד), meaning to tell, announce, proclaim, make known. God's acts of judgment become proclamation material—testimony shared among nations. Pa'al (פָּעֵל) means deed, work, action—specifically the work described in verse 7, God shooting His arrow at the wicked. When God acts in history, people can't help but talk about it, spreading the news of divine intervention. This recalls Exodus 9:16 where God tells Pharaoh He raised him up "that my name may be declared throughout all the earth."

"For they shall wisely consider of his doing" (uma'asehu hiskilu, וְמִשְׁׁעַדְתָּהוּ הַשְׁׁפֵלָה) indicates thoughtful reflection, not merely superficial acknowledgment. *Sakal* (שְׁכָל) means to be prudent, act wisely, have insight, understand. The Hiphil form (causative) suggests they cause themselves to understand, or they make others understand—active intellectual engagement with God's acts. This is the goal of divine judgment: not merely punishment but revelation. When God judges, He reveals His character—His justice, holiness, power, and governance. Wise people observe these acts and gain understanding of how God operates, what He values, and how He governs His creation. This wisdom leads to practical life adjustments—living in light of divine reality rather than ignoring God's existence or moral governance.

Historical Context

Throughout Israel's history, God's judgments served as public testimony to His power and justice. When God destroyed Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea, surrounding nations heard and trembled (Exodus 15:14-16). Rahab testified that Jericho's inhabitants were terrified because they heard what God did to Egypt (Joshua 2:9-11). When God gave Israel victory over enemies, it established His reputation among nations—demonstrating that Yahweh was not a tribal deity but sovereign over all peoples.

The wisdom tradition emphasized learning from observation of God's works. Proverbs counsels: "Go to the ant...consider her ways, and be wise" (Proverbs 6:6). If wisdom comes from observing insects, how much more from observing God's acts in history? The prophets repeatedly called Israel to remember God's past deeds as foundation for present faith and future hope. When Israel forgot God's works, they fell into idolatry and injustice. Remembering and declaring God's acts maintained covenant faithfulness across generations.

This psalm became particularly relevant during Israel's exilic and post-exilic periods. When God judged Israel through Babylon, then judged Babylon through Persia, surrounding nations witnessed divine governance. Daniel interpreted dreams and visions for pagan kings, declaring God's sovereignty over earthly kingdoms (Daniel 2, 4, 5). Each fulfillment of prophecy testified to God's control of

history, causing some pagans to acknowledge Israel's God (Nebuchadnezzar's decree in Daniel 4:34-37, Cyrus's proclamation in Ezra 1:2-4).

For Christians, this psalm anticipates the Great Commission—declaring God's mighty works among all nations. The gospel itself is proclamation of God's work: His judgment on sin at the cross, His vindication of Christ through resurrection, His future judgment at Christ's return. As people witness God's work in redemption and judgment, they respond with faith and fear, wisely considering what God has done and will do.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does witnessing God's judgment on evil produce reverential fear rather than casual familiarity with God?
2. What is the difference between merely acknowledging God's acts and wisely considering (understanding) His doing?
3. How should God's historical acts of judgment inform how we live, decide, and order our priorities?
4. In what ways does God's judgment on evil serve as testimony and proclamation to unbelievers about His character?
5. How do you cultivate the habit of 'wisely considering' God's works in history, Scripture, and your own life?

Interlinear Text

וּמְעַשׂ הָוּ אֱלֹהִים פְּעַלְתִּים
shall fear H3605 And all men H120 and shall declare H5046 the work H6467 of God H430 of his doing H4639

השְׁפִילוּ:

for they shall wisely consider

H7919

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 51:10 (References God): The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.

Isaiah 5:12 (Parallel theme): And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.

Psalms 40:3 (References God): And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Jeremiah 50:28 (References God): The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance of his temple.

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