

Psalm 112: Biblical Reading and Reflections

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- [0 : 0 0] Psalm 112 Psalm 11 Psalm 112 begins with the same statement that Psalm 111 begins with,
- Praise the Lord. It also takes up the baton from the psalm that preceded it. The final line of that psalm began with the statement that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Now, at the start of this psalm, we begin with the man who fears the Lord in such a manner.
- He delights in the commandments of the Lord, returning us to the theme with which the previous psalm ended. It makes a great deal of sense to read this as a companion to the preceding psalm.
- Perhaps most noteworthy of the associations between the two psalms is the fact that back to back, there are two acrostic or alphabetical psalms, each going through all of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
- Psalm 111 declares the fear of the Lord, his great deeds and his enduring character. Psalm 112 declares the character of the man who fears the Lord in this manner. The two are companions.
- [2 : 0 2] The one tells the character of God, the second the character of the godly. The perfection of God's character displayed in the acrostic form is mirrored in the character of the upright man.
- The message of the psalm, perhaps, is that this is what the true imaging of God looks like. This is what it looks like when people act as sons of God. Beyond the shared fundamental structure, the thematic associations between the psalms, and certain common expressions, the placing of these two psalms alongside each other invites us to look for deeper parallels, to see how we might map the one onto the other, and through that gain understanding.
- Engaging in such reflection, Gordon Wenham writes, Like God's precepts, the heart of the righteous is established or steady.
- Apart from these close verbal parallels, there are other parallel ideas. Whereas God provides food for those who fear him, the righteous has distributed freely, he has given to the poor.
- The Lord has sent redemption to his people, so that the righteous looks in triumph on his adversaries. The trustfulness of the godly man in 112 verses 7 and 8 answers to the trustworthiness of Jehovah in 111 verses 7 and 8.
- [3 : 2 7] The message of the psalm more generally might remind us of Psalm 1. It begins with the blessedness of the man who fears the Lord, who meditates upon the Lord's commandments, and it ends with the fate of the wicked.
- The righteous man within this psalm reflects the Lord, not just in his righteousness, but also in the way that he uses his might. The righteous man here is one who has wealth and riches.

God's works are full of splendour and majesty. The second half of verse 4 in both psalms parallels the graciousness and the mercy of the Lord and the righteous man. Both of them use their might to lift up others.

The Lord's provision of food at the beginning of verse 5 in Psalm 111 is paralleled with the generosity of the righteous man at the beginning of verse 5 in 112. The Lord's precepts are established forever, and the heart of the righteous man is steady.

The most noteworthy parallel is found in the second half of verse 3. In both cases, the righteousness of the person in question endures forever. The picture of the righteous man that emerges here is not just one in which he shares moral traits with the Lord, but one in which he is lifted up because of his faithfulness, and is given to express might like the Lord, a might that is graciously used to save and lift up others.

[4 : 42] If God is on the side of the needy and the oppressed, so are the godly. Power is here presented as something that can be very positive. The person with power can employ it in a way that is like the way that the Lord acts with might in the world, reflecting both his power and authority, and his character.

The blessed and the wise man is here seen primarily in the way that he blesses and gives to others. This man is not built up merely for his own benefit. He is someone that benefits everyone around him.

Everyone is better off for having such a person in their society. Meanwhile, the wicked are frustrated by such a person. They are made angry by seeing his success. They will perish and their schemes and plans will fail, but the righteous man will be established.

A question to consider. Holding Psalms 111 and 112 alongside each other, what further parallels can you see? How might these parallels deepen our understanding of the meaning of the two Psalms?

How many

