

David Desires God's Righteousness Over All

Psalm 7

Psalm 7 - *"O Lord my God, in You I put my trust. Save me from all those who pursue me, and deliver me, lest they tear me like a lion, rending me in pieces, while there is none to deliver.*

O Lord my God, if I have done this: if there is iniquity in my hands, if I have repaid evil to him who was at peace with me, or have plundered my enemy without cause, let the enemy pursue me and overtake me. Yes, let him trample my life to the earth, and lay my honor in the dust. Selah

Arise, O Lord, in Your anger. Lift Yourself up because of the rage of my enemies. Rise up for me to the judgment You have commanded, so the congregation of the peoples shall surround You. For their sakes, therefore, return on high.

The Lord shall judge the peoples. Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to my integrity within me. Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just; for the righteous God tests the hearts and minds. My defense is of God, who saves the upright in heart. God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword. He bends His bow and makes it ready. He also prepares for Himself instruments of death. He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.

Behold, the wicked brings forth iniquity; he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood. He made a pit and dug it out, and has fallen into the ditch that he made. His trouble shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown.

I will praise the Lord according to His righteousness, and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High."

Background Notes

In this psalm David desired God's righteousness as the top priority – and he wanted it even if it meant David himself was guilty, and would be disciplined by his enemies.

The title states that David is the author of Psalm 7. Two other items of information are included in the title. This psalm is a "*Shiggaion*" of David. What's that? It's a Hebrew word, and we don't know the exact definition, but it probably means a "song of lament." David sang this psalm, and it is a song expressing grief. The other item of information in the title of this psalm is the occasion. David sang this song to the Lord "Concerning Cush, a Benjamite." We don't know the when, where, and what the exact situation was. This individual, Cush, is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture. However, he may have been one of King Saul's hatchet men, whom Saul sent out to kill David when David was trying to hide from Saul in the Judean wilderness.

David was falsely accused of some injustice, even accused of taking something by force (v3-4). Verse 14 says that well-conceived lies were spoken against David. Cush was probably one of the men who were involved in slandering David.

Notice from the title that Cush is a “Benjamite.” Cush was from the tribe of Benjamin, the same tribe as King Saul. David had men like Cush in mind when he spoke to King Saul on two occasions in the wilderness. In 1 Samuel 24, when David spared King Saul’s life at En Gedi, Cush was probably one of those who told King Saul that David was out to harm him. *“And David said to Saul: “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘David is bent on harming you?’”(v9).*

1 Samuel 24:8-10: *“David arose, went out of the cave and spoke to Saul, “My Lord the king!” And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. And David said to Saul: “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Indeed David seeks to harm you’? Look, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you, but I spared you! I said, ‘I will not lay my hand on my lord, for he is the Lord’s anointed.’”*

In 1 Samuel 26 David again spared King Saul’s life in the wilderness of Ziph. Cush was probably one of the men who lied about David, and caused him to be driven out of the royal court. *“Then Saul knew David’s voice, and said, “Is that your voice, my son David?” David said, “It is my voice, my lord, O king.” And David said, “Why does my lord thus pursue his servant? For what have I done, or what evil is in my hand? Now let my lord the king listen to the words of his servant: If the Lord has incited you against me, then may He accept an offering. But if men have done it, may they be cursed before the Lord, for they have driven me today from sharing in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, ‘Go, serve other gods’” (1 Samuel 26:17-20).*

Doctrinal Points

1. Godly believers desire righteousness, even if it brings harm to themselves.

David wasn’t just taking refuge in the wilderness to escape from those who were out to kill him - he was taking refuge in the Lord! *“O Lord my God, in You I put my trust. Save me from all those who persecute me, and deliver me, lest they tear me like a lion, rending me in pieces, while there is none to deliver” (v1-2).* There’s no greater refuge than refuge in God!

Verses 3-5 reveal that David was willing to be caught and killed if he was in the wrong. *“O Lord my God, if I have done this: if there is iniquity in my hands, if I have repaid evil to him who was at peace with me, or have plundered my enemy without cause, let the enemy pursue me and overtake me. Yes, let him trample my life to the earth, and lay my honor in the dust. Selah”*

Wow! Have you ever prayed like that? Have you ever prayed, “Lord, if I am guilty in any way of the accusation that’s been made against me, then I’m willing for justice to be served - even if it means I have to die!”

Such a position before God would mean two things:

- a. You’ve examined your actions and attitudes, and you are convinced before God you are in the right - as completely as David was. “Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to my integrity within me.”
- b. If you are guilty in any way, you desire God’s righteous standards to be upheld at all costs - even at the cost of your own reputation and honor. Not many people are willing to take that position - even believers! But godly believers desire righteousness, even if it brings them harm.

2. Godly believers desire righteousness, so they cry for judgment of the ungodly.

Psalms 7 is the first of what are known as the “imprecatory psalms.” To “imprecate” means to “curse.” How are we to explain David’s prayer in verse 6? *“Arise, O LORD, in Your anger. Lift Yourself up because of the rage of my enemies. Rise up for me to the judgment You have commanded!”*

Aren’t godly believers told to “turn the other cheek” (Matthew 5:39)? And didn’t the Lord say we are to love our enemies, and bless those who curse us, and do good to those who hate us, and to pray for them who persecute us? Yes! Read Matthew 5:45.

So how could David be a godly believer, but pray an imprecatory prayer like verse 6? Answer: Godly believers desire righteousness, and that explains their cry for judgment of the ungodly.

Notice - David was not seeking personal revenge. No. He was seeking righteousness - a vindication of God’s righteousness. *“Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just; for the righteous God tests the hearts and minds. My defense is of God, who saves the upright in heart. God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day” (v9-11).*

If people do not repent of their unrighteousness, David approved of God’s judgment upon them. *“If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword. He bends His bow and makes it ready. He also prepares for Himself instruments of death. He makes His arrows into fiery shafts” (v12-13).*

There are prophetic implications in this psalm. In the last day, the godly remnant of believers will call for the judgment of the antichrist and his followers. Listen to the prayer of the Tribulation martyrs in Revelation 6:9-10: *“When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they*

held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

After David described the way God captures the wicked in their own traps, he concluded this psalm with his desire to see the righteousness of God upheld: *"I will praise the Lord according to His righteousness, and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High."*

Godly believers desire righteousness, so they their cry for judgment upon others.

Practical Application

Don't fall into your own pit!

Verse 15: *"He made a pit and dug it out, and has fallen into the ditch which he made..."*

And verse 16: *"His trouble shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown."*

In context, these verses are a description of the fate of many wicked people: God allows them to be caught in their own traps! Is it not ironic that King Saul was killed by his own sword - the very sword with which he had sought to kill David?

God has ways of allowing those who practice unrighteousness, or those who tamper with justice, to "shoot themselves in the foot" with a miscalculation or a mistake. It doesn't take much for God to take down someone who's not righteous – He simply allows unrighteous people to fall into the trap that they themselves created!

But let's not just apply this biblical principle just to ungodly people we may have in mind right now. What about ourselves? How about asking ourselves: Have I ever practiced unrighteousness? Have I ever bad-mouthed other believers unfairly? Have I ever schemed to harm someone because I dislike him or her? Have I ever gloated when a prosperous Christian hits hard times, because I've been jealous of their success? In Obadiah 12, God said: *"Don't gloat over your brother's day of misfortune!"*

Let's make sure we're practicing righteousness, because God has ways of bringing down those who are involved in wrongdoing. Don't fall into your own pit!