

Psalm 7 - A Cry for Justice

Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.

1 O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:

2 Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending [it] in pieces, while [there is] none to deliver.

3 O LORD my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;

4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:)

5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take [it]; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.

6 Arise, O LORD, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me [to] the judgment [that] thou hast commanded.

7 So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high.

8 The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity [that is] in me.

9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

10 My defence [is] of God, which saveth the upright in heart.

11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry [with the wicked] every day.

12 If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.

13 He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.

14 Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

15 He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch [which] he made.

16 His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.

17 I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.

(King James Version)

I. A Psalm written in the midst of unjust persecution

- a. This psalm is called a “Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD.” The meaning of the word “shiggaion” is unknown but speculated to be from a root word “shagah” which means “to wander” so it is believed by scholars to be a hymn or song composed while wandering. David had many periods of wandering, especially when he was fleeing from Saul’s wrath.
- b. The setting and background are not explicitly stated but can be surmised from the content of the psalm. It is stated to have been written in response to “the words of Cush the Benjamite” which is an unknown person. However, some scholars believe this was a “code word” for Saul, the son of Kish from the tribe of Benjamin, who was the chief persecutor of David’s life. His words were false accusations that stated that David was trying to overthrow Saul’s reign.
- c. This psalm pleads for God’s intervention in the midst of unjust persecution and ends with a confident praise to God for His justice and righteousness.

II. Verse by Verse Analysis

- a. Verse 1 – O Jehovah, my Elohim(mighty God, ruler, judge) – in you do I seek refuge/flee for protection (put my trust) save me/rescue me/preserve me from all them that persecute me and deliver me – snatch me or pluck me out of their hand. David was feeling overwhelmed and ran to his place of refuge – the Lord.
- b. Verse 2 - Lest he tear my soul like a lion – David feared being destroyed by this enemy – one reason it is highly likely that the persecutor he refers to here was Saul - who was chasing him with an army. The picture of a lion being his enemy is a familiar metaphor for a shepherd being his most dangerous enemy – and Saul was the most formidable foe that David faced as king of the land. There is none to deliver – is a statement that David had no other place to turn but to the Lord.
- c. Verses 3-5 – David pleads his innocence by saying if all these accusations are true about me – then let my enemy kill me and ruin my reputation.

- d. Verses 6 – Arise O Lord – David calls upon God to act in his behalf in response to the rage his enemies have demonstrated against God’s servant. He also acts God to bring judgment according to His word.
- e. Verse 7 - 9 – we see a picture of David calling to the Lord to come as the righteous judge - as in David’s day – the judge would sit at the gate of the city, the people would gather and the judge would hear the cases of the people presented before him.
- f. Verse 10 - My defense is of God – this means God is my shield of protection – God rescues those who are upright in heart.
- g. Verse 11 – there is a debate about whether God is “angry every day” but for certain God’s standard of hatred for sin remains the same yesterday, today and forever, though He is ever ready to forgive and cleanse the sinner.
- h. Verses 12 – 13 refer to God’s readiness to bring judgment on those who will not turn away from their wickedness
- i. Verses 14 - 16 touch on the biblical truth that evil doers reap what they sow.
- j. Verse 17 – the psalmist reiterates his confidence that God is a just judge and praises Him for it. This psalm brings to mind the powerful truth written in Genesis 18:25 – ***Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?***