

A Cry for Justice

Psalm 7

This psalm is the song of a slandered man. It's a *Shiggaion*, a wandering or varied song in response to the accusations of Cush the Benjaminite against David. Perhaps Cush accused him of betraying King Saul, but regardless he put David in mortal danger. Rather than giving up in despair, David sings and prays this psalm, crying out for justice.

Judge Me, O God

David tells Yahweh that he puts his trust in Him, the only one who can save him from those who would tear him apart like a lion (vv. 1-2). Faith is not a general friendliness to the idea of divinity or openness to spiritual things. Faith includes knowledge, assent, and trust in the living God, the Father of Jesus Christ. To have faith means you believe God exists and will reward those who seek Him (Heb. 11:6). David takes a kind of self-maledictory oath, asking God to let his enemies pursue and overtake him, trample his life, and ruin his reputation if he has done what they are saying he did (vv. 3-5). He pauses to think and let us think about this, *Selah* (v. 5). The second half of verse four can be translated: "I have delivered him that without cause is my enemy". Cush is not a distant enemy, but an his ally because David had delivered him. While we don't know the details about the situation, we know when Saul tried to kill David repeatedly, David refused to kill him even when he was encouraged and had the opportunity to do so (1 Sam. 24:7). He didn't trust Saul, but called on God to judge: "Therefore let the Lord be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand" (1 Sam. 24:15). When David calls on God to "Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to my integrity within me" (v. 8), he is not asking the Lord to check and see if he ever sinned. The word *integrity* means wholeness, consistency, and blamelessness, referring to whether David really is lying, treacherous, plundering and treasonous as his enemies maintain. He is being accused and everything hinges on whether the charges are true or not. David is not calling on God to judge Him for salvation based on His works, but to judge him faithful in these circumstances and therefore to act on his behalf. He is walking in the light the way children of God are called to. It's not that Christians never sin—we do in countless ways. But we're called to take responsibility for our sins, confess them to God, and thereby be innocent of great transgression. Blameless believers have to constantly repent of sin, and all they have to do to wreck their lives is to stop for a minute and get proud. When you see a faithful Christian, never conclude it's because they are above temptation. They are resisting it. David does, and so he can pray this way. He has all of his skin in the game, his entire life and legacy on the line.

Arise, O Lord

God is not a neutral observer of human affairs. He is not looking down from above, aloof from all that is going on. He also isn't partisan, picking favorites regardless of what they are doing. As this whole psalm testifies, God isn't automatically on David's side. David has to be on His side. God is the righteous one, and we pick sides, whether we are for Him for against Him. Jesus says: "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad" (Matt. 12:30). It's possible for two opposing parties to both be against God and disobedient to Him, but this is not the situation with David. He is righteous and Cush is wicked. He asks God to arise in His anger (v. 6). He wants the congregation to gather for worship, wickedness to end, and the righteous to be established because God tests hearts and minds (kidneys) (vv. 6-9). That is, God tests our thoughts, motives, emotions, and desires. If you hear this and

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know your deep need of repentance, forgiveness, cleansing, and transformation, then God receives you, imputes Christ's righteousness to you, making you justified in His sight, and immediately begins transforming you to be upright in heart (v. 10). God is not an indifferent judge, but a just one who is angry with the wicked every day (v. 11). He won't turn a blind eye but sharpens His sword, bends His bow, and readies His flaming arrows (vv. 12-13). These images make many Christians uncomfortable who want God to only be nice. But to protect the innocent and do justice for victims means stopping the perpetrators. Because we don't understand biblical justice from Scripture, Christians learn a false version elsewhere (e.g. "social justice") or conclude God and His word are essentially irrelevant to the real world. If we sing the psalms we will know better. God sent Jesus Christ to take the sins of the world upon Himself, the propitiate His just wrath. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (Jn. 3:17). As His kingdom spreads throughout this earth, He transforms individuals, families, tribes, and nations into disciples who do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly. Jesus is the only person who stood completely against sin and injustice, and is working right now to change the world. He uses us in this work when we run from His anger into His merciful love and call Him to arise.

The Self-Defeat of the Wicked

David says the wicked birth iniquity; he conceives trouble and generates lies (v. 14). Remember some of these lies are about David, which is unjust and unfair. He doesn't get to lie about his enemies because the ends do not justify the means. He relies on the Lord, and sings of how God made the world such that the evildoer falls into the pit he dug for others, and the trouble he devised crashes down on his own head (vv. 15-16). Saul died in battle from a Philistine arrow and his own sword (1 Sam. 31:3-4). In His great mercy, God frustrates and confounds sinners, a great evangelistic blessing. People don't come to God when they are full of themselves and things are going great. When idols crumble and ungodly lives unravel, many people turn to the Lord. What is your pain trying to teach you? Stein's Law in economics is that whatever can't continue, won't. Jesus describes the advance of His kingdom in more positive terms: "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). We can call this "The gates must fall" principle. Sin doesn't work. Lies are counterproductive. Sinful hatred hurts the hater. Ingratitude to God is a pit of despair. The good news is that Jesus came to give abundant life forevermore. He frees us from our slavery to sin and fills us with the flourishing love of God. So don't be defeated by whatever evil is going on but sing with David: "I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high" (v. 17).