

EXPERIENCING THE FULLNESS OF GOD' PRESCENCE
(Vol. 1 - Psalms 1-10)
PSALM 7: The Psalm of a Slandered Saint
(Session 8 - May 3rd, 2015)

Introductory Remarks:

PSALM 7

*A shiggaion of David, which he sang to the Lord
concerning Cush, a Benjamite.*

There is a Psalm for every emotion. Fearful - Psalm 56 or Psalm 91 or Psalm 23. Discouraged - Psalm 42. Feeling lonely - Psalm 71 or Psalm 62. If you are oppressed with a sense of sinfulness - Psalm 51 or Psalm 32. Worried or Anxious - Psalm 37 or Psalm 73. Angry - Psalm 58 or Psalm 13. Resentful - Psalm 94 or Psalm 77. Happy - Psalm 92 or Psalm 66. Forsaken - Psalm 88. Grateful - Psalm 40. Doubtful, failing faith - Psalm 119.

It is not known exactly what a "shiggaion" is, but there are some with ideas as to what it might be. The New King James Version of the Bible translates the word "meditation" in its place. The New Living Translation puts the word "psalm" instead of shiggaion. Others seem to believe that it is associated with "a loud cry" as to the Lord. The only other place in Scripture where this word is found is Habakkuk 3:1. Here, Habakkuk tells of the wrath that is going to fall on a people who have chosen to turn away from God. Habakkuk was the last of the Minor Prophets to preach in Judah (Southern Kingdom) before the final Babylonian invasion.

There is also nothing specific known about Cush except what is included here, that he is a Benjamite. King Saul was also from the Tribe of Benjamin and it is possible that Cush was someone close to the King. The Bible mentions some bitter enemies of David within this tribe: 2 SAMUEL 16:5-8 & 20:1.

PSALM 7:1-2 David's Appeal to God

O Lord my God, I take refuge in you; save and deliver me from all who pursue me, or they will tear me like a lion and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue me.

When in trouble and distress, David turns to the One he knows and trusts. David is not turning to men for the answers he seeks, it is only in God that he will find his answers and his salvation.

Lions were animals that David knew well from his early days as a shepherd. He would know and have experienced firsthand what a lion could do to its prey (PSALM 22:13, PSALM 35:17-25). Paul also picks up on this metaphor when he writes [about Nero] in 2 TIMOTHY 4:17, and Peter writing about the devil himself in 1 PETER 5:8. David's accuser is likened to a lion, just as our accuser in REVELATION 12:10.

Only God can deliver David, there is no other. Only Jesus can be our defender (1 JOHN 2:1-2). When Jesus was being attacked by devil in the desert, he used Scripture as his defense (MATTHEW 4).

PSALM 7:3-5 David's Claim of Innocence

O Lord my God, if I have done this and there is guilt on my hands - if I have done evil to him who is at peace with me or without cause have robbed my foe - then let my enemies pursue and overtake me; let him trample my life to the ground and make me sleep in the dust. Selah.

David appeals to the Lord himself in this matter. There is no other place where he feels that he can turn to get a fair hearing. The very person who David is probably being accused of hurting is the one who would be the highest ranking earthly authority of the day - King Saul, his sworn enemy.

The specifics of the accusations here are, in part, listed as doing evil to those who have been good to David and also taking what was not his to take. It is quite possible that David is being accused of attempting to take the life of King Saul (1 SAMUEL 24 & 26). In both of these stories David did not follow the suggestion of those with him to kill Saul, but rather he defended King Saul as God's anointed and spared his life.

In these verses we find David taking responsibility for his actions. He is ready to take responsibility and accept the consequences (and then some!) if he is

actually guilty of the accusations that have been leveled against him. David was so confident in his righteousness compared to his enemies, that he was willing to be given over to his accusers if they were in the right.

Selah - Stop and think about this. Meditate, chew on it for a time.

PSALM 7:6-9 Let God be the Judge

Arise, O Lord, in your anger; rise up against the rage of my enemies. Awake, my God; decree justice. Let the assembled peoples gather around you. Rule over them from on high; let the Lord judge the peoples. Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, according to my integrity, O Most High. O righteous God, who searches minds and hearts, bring an end to the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure.

God's anger is found elsewhere in scripture: EXODUS 32:10 (golden calf), EXODUS 34:6 (slow to anger...), DEUTERONOMY 29:25-28 (God's anger burned...), 2 KINGS 22:13, PSALM 30:5 (anger lasts only for a moment).

Anger: A strong feeling of displeasure and usually of antagonism.

Wrath: An intense emotional state induced by displeasure.

Rage: Suggests a loss of self-control from violence of emotion.

(Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition, 2000.)

Anger has its place. However, it is important to note that God's anger is not the same as our anger. There are major differences between God's emotions and our own. God's emotions are not tainted with sin as our own. God does not become angry in the "heat of the moment" or because he is confused or in a constantly changing, highly charged emotional state. God's anger is the response of his holiness - a direct, calculated response to sin. We can find multiple places in the Old Testament where God demonstrated his anger at the children of Israel in a very graphic manner. But it was never in haste or without ALL of the facts and it revolved around their (Israel) breaking covenant with God (DEUTERONOMY 11:17, 29:24-28, NEHEMIAH 13:18).

Our sin ends up hurting ourselves - and often other people as well. Since God passionately loves us and anyone else hurt by our sin, how could the God of love

possibly be unmoved when we sin. Sin rightly infuriates God. It must be remembered that God is slow to anger and quick to forgive (EXODUS 34:6-7). Nevertheless, God's anger tells us much about his love and the moral perfection that fires his passion for justice. The intensity of his fury reveals how important we are to the Almighty. Here the psalmist is using human terms to try and describe something, someone who is indescribable...

David paints a picture of a large courtroom, crowded with people. God is in charge and sits behind the bench as judge (PSALM 9:7-8, ACTS 17:30-31). David appeals to God to judge his enemies and is willing to be judged by the same measure for what he is accused of, should he be found guilty. A bold prayer on his part!

David in v.8 is not claiming moral perfection, but rather innocence of the crime of which he was charged. He is not trying to claim that he is sinless, but rather not guilty of the current charges. You only need to look to PSALM 32 and PSALM 51 to know how David viewed himself in his sin condition and his place in relation to a Holy God.

David's appeal to his judge moves from his individual situation to include the whole of humanity. This is a prayer for the ultimate, universal justice that one day will come when Christ returns to set up His kingdom (REVELATION 20:11-15). David here sees the big picture, looking beyond his own personal appeal for vindication.

PSALM 7:10-13 Confidence in God

My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart. God is a righteous judge who expresses his wrath every day. If he does not relent, he will sharpen his sword; he will bend and string his bow. He has prepared his deadly weapons; he makes ready his flaming arrows.

God is my protection. He will save me, he knows my heart. David is confident that he shall find God to be his powerful Protector and Savior (PROVERBS 18:10). God himself told Abraham that he need not be afraid because, "I am your shield..." (GENESIS 15:1).

God cannot act in a way that is contrary to his nature. His wrath is kindled because of his righteousness, because he is holy. God knows more than anyone how sin permeates and affects his creation and his wrath stems out of his love for us. He is a just judge, as we expect our earthly judges to be.

"If he (man) does not relent, then he (God) will sharpen his sword..." Here God is offering his mercy before his wrath is spoken of. Just as God's mercies are new every morning for the believer (LAMENTATIONS 3:22-24), so His anger and wrath is kindled against the wicked (JOHN 3:36). The only thing that holds back the immediate judgment of God against the sinner is the undeserved mercy of God, giving the sinner time to repent...

God will destroy the wicked. His delay in judgment is not to prepare (here we see that his weapons are at the ready!), rather it is to allow more time to repent (2 PETER 3:8-9).

PSALM 7:14-16 The Wicked Destroy Themselves

He who is pregnant with evil and conceives trouble gives birth to disillusionment. He who digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit he has made. The trouble he causes recoils on himself; his violence comes down on his own head.

The wicked will destroy themselves. Trouble and evil will lead you to disappointment and dissatisfaction. The source of sin is within the sinner - the sinner gives birth to sin. A wicked heart will show itself in wicked deeds.

In the end, David is confident that his enemy will reap what he has sown. Be careful that you do not fall into your own snare or trap! Sin is destructive and ultimately it will destroy the one who seeks to destroy. Biblical examples of this can be found in the stories of Haman and Mordecai (ESTHER 5:14-7:10) and also Daniel in the Lion's Den (DANIEL 6).

This also speaks of the final judgment when men will be judged based upon their own righteousness and found lacking...

PSALM 7:17 Thanksgiving

I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.

In the end, David gives thanks to God. He credits God with righteousness, knowing that God will act in accord with divine moral law (holiness/perfection, which is his very nature).

CONCLUSION

David begins the Psalm in distress, looking for God to save him (he needs something from God). When he gets to the end he is simply giving thanks and praising God for/because of who he (God) is. When we spend time in God's presence, talking with him, praying to him, casting our cares at his feet - he changes our heart, our focus. Rather than focusing on my "problem" and looking for an answer or a solution, I focus on God and how great and good he is and I am thankful...

It is also important to consider that Psalm 7 is ultimately a picture of Jesus Christ. He was falsely accused, and paid the ultimate price because of those accusations. However, the obvious difference between he and David (or us) was that not only was Jesus not guilty of what he was accused, but he was not guilty of anything! He was and remains the perfect, sinless Son of God who came to take away the sins of the world. Jesus did not attempt to defend himself. Jesus did not respond in anger to the false accusations. Jesus carried our sin to the cross and incurred the wrath that we deserve because of his wonderful, never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love for us...