

Psalm 7, David asks Yahweh to deliver him and vindicate him

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History

We do not know the specific incident, but likely it had to do with Saul and his men pursuing David. Cush, like Saul, was from the tribe of Benjamin (1 Samuel 24 and 26. See 1 Samuel 24.11, 17). According to 2 Samuel 16.5-14 and 20.1-2 David had enemies in Benjamin. When the psalm was written and received into the sanctuary it was available for use by anyone in similar circumstances.

Summary

David takes refuge in Yahweh his God because he finds himself pursued and harassed by violent men who want to tear him apart like a lion would. He knows he is innocent of wrong, so much so that if he is guilty, let the enemy destroy him. He then asks Yahweh to rise up and judge the adversaries, and at the same time vindicate him. He knows that God is righteous, that he examines the thoughts, that he is a shield, a deliverer, and judge. If a person will not repent God will judge him, and not only that, the unrepentant will judge himself by consequences of his bad ideas and actions. At the end, David shows his confidence in Yahweh by saying that he will give thanks and praise to Yahweh most high.

Outline

1. Psalm 7.1-2. David's asks Yahweh to deliver him from those pursuing him.
2. Psalm 7.3-5. David is so sure of his innocence, that asks that the enemy may destroy him if he is guilty.
3. Psalm 7.6-11. David asks Yahweh to judge the adversary and to vindicate himself, David.
4. Psalm 7.12-16. God judges the unrepentant, and they also inflict judgment on themselves.
5. Psalm 7.17. David, confident of Yahweh's deliverance, will thank and praise Yahweh.

Brief Exposition

1. Psalm 7.1-2. David's asks Yahweh to deliver him from those pursuing him.
 - 1.1. Psalm 7.1. David has taken refuge in Yahweh his God (2 Samuel 22.3,31). A refuge is a place one goes for protection and safety. The word refuge (חֹסֶן chasah) is used twice in Psalm 57.1 in the same kind of context. David is chased by Saul's army.
 - 1.2. Psalm 7.2. Violence is imminent. He compares the possible attack to a wild lion tearing him limb from limb and then dragging him off to complete the destruction. There are many YouTube videos of lion attacks on people and animals. They are very vicious. The verse is hyperbole, but the meaning is clear. David faces violent attacks.
2. Psalm 7.3-5. David is so sure of his innocence, that asks that the enemy may destroy him if he is guilty.

- 2.1. Psalm 7.3-4. David says if three times. If he is guilty, if he has treated someone unjustly, if he has rewarded evil to his allies ("plundered without cause" is a difficult interpretative question). He is convinced that he is free of any guilt for these acts. He does not deserve the hatred and attempts on his life.
- 2.2. Psalm 7.5. But if he is deserving this treatment, then let the enemy pursue, overtake, trample, and lay my glory in the dust means let the enemy humiliate me and kill me.
3. Psalm 7.6-11. David asks Yahweh to judge the adversary and to vindicate himself, David.
 - 3.1. Psalm 7.6. This is a call that Yahweh will actively enter into the situation and judge those attacking David. David speaks as if Yahweh has not actively entered the battle on his behalf. David is calling for God to judge the enemies.
 - 3.2. Psalm 7.7. David requests that Yahweh gather the assembly of people and then to make his judgment which will vindicate David.
 - 3.3. Psalm 7.8. This verse brings together David's requests. Since the LORD is the judge (**דִּין**, Qal impf 3ms, to pass sentence, bring justice) of all, he is able to proclaim David innocent of the charges leveled against him (vindicate me **שָׁפַט** shaphat to decide, settle, act as judge qal impv). See Psalm 9.4, and Psalm 140 for parallel ideas. It is not that David is perfect, he is right with God in this situation and makes application of the law to his life. He is a faithful believer, not sinless.
 - 3.4. Psalm 7.9. This continues to ask Yahweh to end the evil deeds of the wicked (**רָשָׁע** rasha', wicked; is plural for those attacking him), and to make to make firm or establish the righteous (**צַדִּיק** tzadiq singular adjective; innocent, guiltless, righteous). The second line affirms the character of God and what he does. He examines (**בָּחַן** bachan, qal participle; put to the test) the hearts and minds of all people. See Psalm 139.23. The spiritually healthy Christian should never fear this divine examination.
 - 3.5. Psalm 7.10. David now summarizes why he has confidence in God at this time. God is his shield (**מָגֵן** magen, a shield, refuge, something that protects; Psalm 3.3; 18.2; 84.9; 115.9-11, Proverbs 2.7, Genesis 15.1). God saves the upright in heart (**יָשָׁע** yasha').
 - 3.6. Psalm 7.11. God is a righteous judge, and God is indignant (**זָעַם** za'am, qal participle, who is angry or indignant; Nahum 1.2,6). God is both righteous in his judgment and angry at sin.
4. Psalm 7.12-16. God judges the unrepentant, and they also inflict judgment on themselves.
 - 4.1. Psalm 7.12-13. God judges the man who does not repent (**שׁוּב** shub, turn back, return, repent). The judgment is pictured by a sword and a bow with arrows. God is ready to execute judgment if necessary. Repentance can often stop judgment.
 - 4.2. Psalm 7.14. The evil person finds that his wickedness, mischief, and lies come back on himself. The Hebrew picture is one who travails, plans (**חָבַל** habal to pledge, bind) a pregnancy (wickedness), conceives (**הָרָה** harah become pregnant) mischief (**עַמַּל** `mal, trouble, toil) and gives birth (**יָלַד** yalad, to bear, give birth to) to lies
 - 4.3. Psalm 7.15. The pit that he dug to trap the righteous will become his own trap.

- 4.4. Psalm 7.16. The evil that he planned for another will instead come back on himself. His mischief will return, his violence will descend upon himself. The evil person will get for himself what he planned for others (1 Samuel 25.1-39. Evil Nabal refused food for David and his men who had protected Nabal's shepherds. Abigail persuaded David not to take revenge. Ten days later the LORD took Nabal's life. See Haman in the Ester story. He was hanged on the gallows he planned for Mordecai (Esther 3-7). See Romans 12.17-21.
5. Psalm 7.17. David, confident of Yahweh's deliverance, will thank and praise Yahweh. David now proclaims that he will give thanks to Yahweh. The word for give thanks (**יָדָה** yadah, to throw, and in the hiphil to give thanks. See Psalm 6.5; 28.7; 33.2; 42.5. David recognizes that Yahweh will answer his request. He will also sing praises (**זָמַר** zmr, to praise, sing praise) to Yahweh Most High. See Psalm 30.12; 47.7; 71.22).

So what for us?

1. LORD God is both judge of the guilty, and refuge and deliverer of the righteous.
2. The LORD will vindicate the righteous believer who is falsely attacked, and even turn the attack back on the attacker himself.
3. The LORD God is the refuge, protector, and the deliverer of the righteous one being falsely attacked.
4. If you are attacked, prayer is in order.
5. So, if you attack a righteous believer watch out. The LORD will take revenge on you and vindicate the one you attacked,
6. The LORD works according to his righteousness, Remember that. Thank him and praise him.
7. What about attacking sinning believers. That is also wrong. Do not attack, spread harmful charges, or undermine the reputation of other believers. Instead cover over the sin (1 Corinthians 13.5,7), help restore that person if you are able to do so (Galatians 6.1), and leave correction to the Lord or the right authority (2 Timothy 2.24-26; 2 Timothy 4.2; Titus 2.10-12; Titus 2.15; Titus 3.1-2,10-11).