

*THE  
BOOK  
OF  
PSALMS*

## Psalm 7

- 0** A Meditation of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning the words of Cush, a Benjamite.
- 1** O LORD my God, in You I put my trust;  
Save me from all those who persecute me;  
And deliver me,
- 2** Lest they tear me like a lion,  
Rending *me* in pieces, while *there is* none to deliver.
- 3** O LORD my God, if I have done this:  
If there is iniquity in my hands,
- 4** If I have repaid evil to him who was at peace with me,  
Or have plundered my enemy without cause,
- 5** 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
- 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!
- 7** So the congregation of the peoples shall surround You;  
For their sakes, therefore, return on high.
- 8** The LORD shall judge the peoples;  
Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness,  
And according to my integrity within me.
- 9** Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end,  
But establish the just;  
For the righteous God tests the hearts and minds.
- 10** My defense *is* of God,  
Who saves the upright in heart.

## Psalm 7 (Cont.)

- 11** God *is* a just judge,  
And God is angry *with the wicked* every day.
- 12** If he does not turn back,  
He will sharpen His sword;  
He bends His bow and makes it ready.
- 13** He also prepares for Himself instruments of death;  
He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.
- 14** Behold, *the wicked* brings forth iniquity;  
Yes, he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood.
- 15** He made a pit and dug it out,  
And has fallen into the ditch *which* he made.
- 16** His trouble shall return upon his own head,  
And his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown.
- 17** I will praise the LORD according to His righteousness,  
And will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

# Introduction

## Title:

“A Meditation of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning the words of Cush, a Benjamite.”

The title identifies the author as David. The NKJV calls it “A Meditation of David”, but the KJV, NASB, ESV, and some other translations use the Hebrew word “Shiggaion” instead of “Meditation”. Shiggaion literally means “an aberration”. Technically, it is “a rambling poem”. It is also translated as “a wandering.” The word is used only here; the plural form is found in Habakkuk 3:1.

We do not know the identity of Cush. The commentators propose several possibilities, but these are all speculations; none of them can be supported by any evidence or even allusion in Scripture. We do know Cush was a Benjamite who made accusations against David. The commentators almost universally agree that Cush made accusations about David to King Saul, who was also from the tribe of Benjamin. Saul also pursued David and tried to kill him, because Saul was jealous of David and knew that David was going to become King.

# Background

The commentators' conclusions that Cush accused David to King Saul probably result from the previously stated fact that Cush and Saul were both Benjamites, from the reference in verse 1 to David's "pursuers", and to the similarity between verses 3-4 and David's statements to Saul in 1 Samuel 24:11-12.

The NKJV translates the second line of verse 1 as "Save me from all those who persecute me;", but the NASB, ESV, and the Darby Bible translate the word "persecute" as "pursuers" or "pursue". It is exactly the same word in Hebrew as the word translated "pursue" in verse 5. David was only actually pursued twice when his life was endangered. The first time was when King Saul pursued him to try to kill him, and the second time was when Absalom pursued him to try to kill him. However, he was persecuted by various people in a number of ways throughout his life. Since Cush, a Benjamite like Saul, made accusations against him that resulted in David being pursued and put his life in danger, it is reasonable to conclude that the Psalm refers to accusations made to Saul who already wanted David killed.

We will look at the similarity between verses 3-4 and 1 Samuel 24:11-12, when we discuss verses 3-4.

Chapters 18 through 27 of 1 Samuel describe Saul's obsession with David. Saul tries to kill David and pursues him with the intent to kill him. 1 Samuel 18:5-11 tells us about the beginning of Saul's fear of David and his first attempts to kill him.

Beginning in verse 5, we read:

“<sup>5</sup>So David went out wherever Saul sent him, *and* behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. <sup>6</sup> Now it had happened as they were coming *home*, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. <sup>7</sup> So the women sang as they danced, and said:

“Saul has slain his thousands,  
And David his ten thousands.”

<sup>8</sup> Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *only* thousands. Now *what* more can he have but the kingdom?” <sup>9</sup> So Saul eyed David from that day forward. <sup>10</sup> And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played *music* with his hand, as at other times; but *there was* a spear in Saul's hand. <sup>11</sup> And Saul cast the spear, for he said, “I will pin David to the wall!” But David escaped his presence twice.”

David continued to be victorious in battle and the people loved him; so, Saul feared him. Saul did not need anyone to accuse David of anything in order to motivate him to pursue David. But, we can easily imagine that someone like this man named Cush would try to gain the king's favor by making accusations against David.

## Structure

Psalm 7 contains eleven couplets and six, three-line stanzas. There is no pattern to the arrangement of the stanzas of different lengths. Structurally then, it can be properly called “a rambling poem”, as the title suggest. Almost every commentator suggests a somewhat different structure generally containing the same or very similar elements.

A logical structure seems to consist of seven parts:

- I. A statement of faith in God and a prayer for deliverance.  
vv. 1-2
- II. An assertion of innocence. vv. 3-5
- III. A plea for God to display His justice so the people will praise Him. vv. 6-7
- IV. A declaration that God will judge all peoples as a righteous judge and will confirm David’s innocence. vv. 8-10
- V. A description of God’s judgment of the wicked. vv. 11-13
- VI. A description of the wicked and of God’s judgment manifested in the wicked suffering from the results of their own actions. vv. 14-16
- VII. Praise to God for His righteousness. v. 17

## Theme

**The Theme of Psalm 7:** God is the righteous judge of all mankind, and He will save His people from the accuser and from him who pursues their souls.

In this Psalm, David describes, what appears to be, accusations made against him to King Saul, who pursued David for the purpose of killing him. David cries out to God to defend him and deliver him. In the course of doing so, David declares the righteousness of God and that He will judge all peoples. By His judgment, God will defend the “upright in heart” and punish the wicked.



# Exposition

## I. A Statement of Faith in God and a Prayer for Deliverance. vv. 1-2

- A. <sup>1</sup>“O LORD my God, in You I put my trust;  
Save me from all those who persecute me;  
And deliver me,  
<sup>2</sup>Lest they tear me like a lion,  
Rending *me* in pieces, while *there is* none to deliver.”  
vv. 1-2

1. This is the first time in the Psalms that David calls on God using the two names “Jehovah” and “God.” The united names doubly emphasize the sovereignty, power, and mercy of God. David begins his prayer with a strong declaration of faith in God, then pleads with God to save him from those who persecute or pursue him.
2. In v. 2, he expresses his fear. So, he communicates his faith first, then shows his fear to God. The NKJV uses the plural pronoun “they”; however, many literal translations use the singular pronoun “he”, which is probably the most correct. It would also support the conclusion that Cush is making his accusations to King Saul (See Proverbs 19:12, 20:2).

# Exposition

## I. A. (cont.)

There is evidence that it may have been common to compare a king's anger with a roaring lion.

Proverbs 19:12    The king's wrath *is* like the roaring of a lion,  
But his favor *is* like dew on the grass.

Proverbs 20:2    The wrath of a king *is* like the roaring of a lion;  
*Whoever* provokes him to anger sins *against* his own life.

## II. An Assertion of Innocence. vv. 3-5

B. <sup>3</sup>O LORD my God, if I have done this:

If there is iniquity in my hands,

<sup>4</sup>If I have repaid evil to him who was at peace with me,

Or have plundered my enemy without cause,

<sup>5</sup>Let the enemy pursue me and overtake *me*;

Yes, let him trample my life to the earth,

And lay my honor in the dust. vv. 3-5

1. Here, David forcefully declares his innocence. In order to dramatize how strongly he denies his guilt, David calls down a curse on himself if he is guilty. He declares that his hands are free of wicked actions, that he has not committed evil against anyone at peace with him, and that he has even treated his enemy fairly.
2. Compare with 1 Samuel 24:12 and 26:18. Again, this gives more reason to conclude that the Psalm relates to Saul's pursuit of David.

1Sam. 24:12 Let the LORD judge between you and me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you.

1Sam. 26:18 And he said, "Why does my lord thus pursue his servant? For what have I done, or what evil *is* in my hand?"

**III. A Plea for God to Display His Justice so the People Will Praise Him. vv. 6-7**

A. <sup>6</sup>“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!  
<sup>7</sup>So the congregation of the peoples shall surround You;  
For their sakes, therefore, return on high.” vv. 6-7

1. In verse 6, David calls God to “Arise”. Calvin explains that this is figurative speech by which David is asking God to “ascend to His judgment seat.” David contrasts God’s anger with the rage of David’s enemies. What he describes as anger is actually God’s love for His people displayed in His actions to protect and defend them. For example, imagine the actions of a mother whose three-year-old child is threatened by a pit-bull. It will look like she is angry; however, she is just manifesting her nature which is her love for her child by taking action to protect the child. Her love does not change; the expression of that love is simply dramatically intensified.
2. Here, the NKJV uses the phrase “Rise up”; most translations read “awake”, which is the most accurate translation of the Hebrew.

III.A.2. (Continued)

2. (cont.) David is not suggesting that God sleeps. From David's perspective, he has been under attack and God has not stopped the attack. So now, David calls on God to help him. This is just an expression of David's urgent need for God to defend him.
3. The "judgment [God] has commanded", which David asks God to execute, is God's judgment against sinners in general and against those who persecute His people in particular. More specifically, we may read this as David asking God to impose whatever judgment He has decreed for the sins committed by David's enemies.
4. In his comments on v. 7, Calvin explains that, "David here alludes to the practice of a people who surround their king, as in a circle, when he holds a solemn assembly." In other words, by defending David, God will display His justice to the nations, who may turn to God because of it. David asks that God display His justice "For their sakes" – for the sakes of the nations.

IV.A declaration that God will judge all peoples as a righteous judge and will confirm David's innocence. vv. 8-10

A.<sup>8</sup>The LORD shall judge the peoples;

Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness,  
And according to my integrity within me.

<sup>9</sup>Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end,  
But establish the just;

For the righteous God tests the hearts and minds.

<sup>10</sup>My defense *is* of God,  
Who saves the upright in heart.

1. In v. 8, David states a global view of justice declaring that God will judge all nations, the entire world. In fact, by His nature and providence, God constantly, daily judges all men, in the context of their daily lives. Such a view is expressed in v. 11, where David writes "God is angry with the wicked every day." Since God rules over all creation, an inherent part of that rule is His meting out justice. The Hebrew word translated "judge", here, is "*deen*". In Zechariah 3:7, the same word is translated "govern". So, David is not simply asking for God to announce a finding of guilt and punishment, he is also asking that God govern the events in the lives of people and his own life. In relation, to himself, David is not suggesting that he is sinless; he is only saying that in relation to the accusation made against him, he is innocent.

## Exposition (Cont.)

V. A description of God's judgment of the wicked. vv. 11-14

A. <sup>11</sup>God *is* a just judge,  
And God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

<sup>12</sup>If he does not turn back,  
He will sharpen His sword;  
He bends His bow and makes it ready.

<sup>13</sup>He also prepares for Himself instruments of death;  
He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.

1. Verse 11 tells us that God is absolutely perfect in executing justice, and that He is constantly opposed to evil by His nature.
2. In v. 12-13, David says that if the wicked, and presumably David's enemy, does not stop pursuing him, God will defend him, including bring death to David's enemies.

VI. A description of the wicked and of God's judgment manifested in the wicked suffering from the results of their own actions. vv. 14-16

A. <sup>14</sup>Behold, *the wicked* brings forth iniquity;  
Yes, he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood.  
<sup>15</sup>He made a pit and dug it out,  
And has fallen into the ditch *which* he made.  
<sup>16</sup>His trouble shall return upon his own head,  
And his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown.

1. Here, David describes the wicked as in “travail”, like a woman giving birth, and producing evil or sinfulness. David's enemies are characterized by conceiving, or becoming pregnant, with trouble and giving birth to lies.
2. God's earthly judgment is manifested in the wicked suffering the results of their sinful schemes and actions.



VII. Praise to God for His righteousness. v. 17

A. <sup>17</sup>I will praise the LORD according to His righteousness,  
And will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

1. The Psalm ends with an exclamation of praise to God for His righteousness. This is the first time in the Book of Psalms that God is called “the Lord Most High.” The first time this name is used is in Genesis 14:18 “Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he *was* the priest of God Most High.” The phrase is used “more than twenty times in the Psalms.” (Plumer) The name expresses the infinite, boundless holiness, knowledge, power, love, and mercy of God.
2. David is either expressing his faith that God will protect and deliver him from his pursuer, or he is praising God because God has already delivered him.
3. Once again, in this verse David contrasts God’s blessing of the righteous with the punishment of the ungodly.

## Application

We cannot always make direct application of David's circumstances and God's deliverance of him to similar experiences in our own lives and assurance of God's deliverance in the face of such circumstances. In other words, someone may falsely accuse us, but we cannot assert that God will always defend us and deliver us from the consequences of those false accusations. In fact, we may very well suffer from the results of false accusations. In this Psalm, we must look at the circumstances from broad spiritual perspectives.

- 1) When evil people accuse us and pursue us, we must trust in God to deliver us and defend us. If God does not do so in this life, He will certainly do it in the final judgment.
- 2) We should strive to live our lives so that we can always truthfully assert our innocence against any false accusations. But, we must be wise and remember that false accusations will quite frequently be very subtle and include some element of truth; so we must ask God for wisdom to know how to clarify the false accusation and distinguish it from the part of the statement that is true.
- 3) We should cultivate a desire or motive that people would see God deliver and protect us so that God would be honored by them, not simply a desire for our own welfare.
- 4) In the face of trouble and danger, we must constantly remind ourselves that God will judge the world, and on that day, He will save us from all accusation and danger, including death. He possesses all power and all the weapons of evil men and Satan are useless against God.

## Application

5) Although the wicked will continually devise evil schemes and attacks against the righteous, they will eventually suffer the judgment of God which their rebellion and evil plans has brought on them.

6) Also, we must remember that in this life, Satan is our accuser. Because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, God has declared us innocent and credited us with the righteousness of Christ. So, we are “the upright in heart” who God saves (v. 10). From this perspective, the Psalm teaches us to depend on the righteousness of the Lord Jesus and the holy judgment of God to defend us from the accusations of the devil and to save us. The Psalm also shows the contrast between God’s salvation of the righteous and His punishment of the wicked, which is a theme that runs throughout the Psalter. The wicked suffer the results of their own evil actions. Our proper response is praise and thanksgiving to God who defends us and saves us.