

Psa. 12:0 ¶ To the chief Musician upon Sheminith, A Psalm of David.

The Hebrew for "Sheminith" defines it as "eight." The NLT, NAS and WEB translate this as an eight-stringed instrument. Young Translates it as on the octave. The CJB indicates that it could reference a low-pitched instrument.

Again, this is a composition David gave to the head of the temple music ministry.

Psa. 12:1 ¶ Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

At this point in David's life he is disturbed at the decreasing number of people who are living their lives in submission to the LORD. It seems to him as though men of faith and obedience to God are quickly disappearing.

I can certainly identify with David's heart. There seems to be a significant difference to me in the numbers of people who attend church regularly, and there are very few churches that teach the whole scripture verse by verse. Today's "Christians" seem to be more interested in fellowship and social service than in equipping themselves through the study of God's word and investing in their personal relationship to Him. Many are beginning to place more emphasis on experience than on truth. Many are even denying the truth and inerrancy of the word of God. Following are some interesting statistics I found at www.religioustolerance.org from an article that was updated as of 2006.

- The percentage of American adults who identify themselves as Christians dropped from 86% in 1990 to 77% in 2001. This is an unprecedented drop of almost 1 percentage point per year.
- At the present rates of change, Islam will become the dominant religion in the world before 2050.
- At the present rate of change, most Americans would identify themselves as non-religious or non-Christian by the year 2035.
- The numbers of "unchurched" people has increased rapidly in the U.S. These are individuals who have not attended church in recent months.
- Agnostics, Atheists, and secularists are growing rapidly.

More interesting statistics re Americans from www.barna.org.

- 71% of those who attended high school or less believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings compared with 52% of those who have graduated from college. (2006)
- 59% of adults living in the South strongly affirm that the bible is accurate in all of its teachings versus 50% of those in the Midwest, 42% in the West and 37% in the Northeast. (2006)
- More than half of all adults (53%) believe that if a person is generally good, or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in Heaven. (2007)

Psa. 12:2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: *with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.*

The Hebrew for “vanity” makes reference to evil, deceptive and lying. “Flattering lips” are a reference to false or insincere praise, and a “double heart” is deceitful. David is saying that less and less people can be trusted. Deception and lies are becoming the norm rather than the exception among men. Things haven’t changed much since David’s time in that regard.

Psa. 12:3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things:

Psa. 12:4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?

Most of the translations word the beginning as a cry from the heart of David for God to act in judgment against these evil men, and that makes more sense to me. These people are so full of pride that they feel they can accomplish anything with their deceptive, lying but skillful use of words. They don’t feel accountable to God or anyone else.

It is obvious from the next verse that these men focus on taking advantage of the poor and needy among God’s children. I can’t help but think of those today who claim to be ministers of God and blanket the airwaves and fill arenas with just such a mindset.

Psa. 12:5 For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

The Spirit inspires David with an answer from the LORD. He is totally aware of what is going on. He will intervene on behalf of those who are being robbed and mistreated through the skillful manipulation of these smooth talkers. (We would call them “snake oil salesmen.”)

Psa. 12:6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

As God promises to intervene, David is reminded that God’s word is pure—without deceit, holy. David paints a picture of the purity of God’s word by comparing it to silver that has gone through the furnace of purification seven times. The number seven in scripture represents completeness and gives emphasis to the purity of God’s word; it does not contain one iota of deception; it is completely pure.

Psa. 12:7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

Psa. 12:8 The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.

When wicked men are the ones held in esteem, the wicked become bolder in their evil practices. In spite of that truth, He knows that the protection and security of those who are poor and needy among God’s people is with the LORD as declared by His promise in verse 5 and guaranteed by the purity of His word as expressed in verse 6.

David doesn’t necessarily understand why wicked men are being allowed to prosper, but he doesn’t let that fact affect his faith in God. He knows that God

will provide salvation for His own and will judge the wicked. I think he knew the truth expressed by the psalmist Asaph.

Psa. 73:11 And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?

Psa. 73:12 Behold, these *are* the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches.

Psa. 73:13 Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

Psa. 73:14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

Psa. 73:15 ¶ If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend *against* the generation of thy children.

Psa. 73:16 When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me;

Psa. 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end.