

Psalms 35:0 ¶ *A Psalm of David.*

This is another psalm of David obviously composed at a time when he felt his life was in danger.

Psalms 35:1 ¶ Plead *my cause*, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.

Psalms 35:2 Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.

Psalms 35:3 Draw out also the spear, and stop *the way* against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I *am* thy salvation.

Psalms 35:4 Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

The psalm opens as a prayer asking the LORD to defend him against his enemies, to consume and destroy (from Hebrew for “fight”) those that fight against him. He pictures the LORD as a warrior on his behalf and asks Him to equip Himself accordingly. The shield and buckler seem to make reference to a shield and something pointed, possibly even sharp protrusions on the shield. The spear is obviously an offensive weapon for use in disabling or destroying the enemy. David pleads with the LORD to show Himself to be David’s savior. He asks the LORD to disappoint the enemy in their goal to kill him, to wound them and drive them away.

Again, we must be reminded that David lived under the law, a time when the consequences of breaking God’s law called for specific judgments. He knew nothing of the teachings of Jesus and the higher law of grace. In his thinking, it was right to call for the LORD to destroy his enemies since he tried to honor the LORD and they rejected Him as LORD. He would never have thought about loving his enemies or praying for their salvation as Jesus taught us to do.

Matthew 5:44 “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you....”

We are to pray for the salvation of our enemies and kill them with kindness, hoping that they will turn to the LORD in repentance and deliver their souls from hell. This does not mean we are not to defend ourselves from evil men that attack us. Jesus even instructed His disciples to equip themselves for self-defense.

Luke 22:36 “Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.”

From the beginning, the LORD declared that those who kill others are to be killed.

Genesis 9:6 “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.”

Scripture also tells us that evil spreads when justice is prolonged.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

The key truth is that we are to trust Jesus when it comes to exacting vengeance and we are to seek peace by every means possible. We are also to realize that God often uses the powers that be and established law to exact His wrath against those that do evil.

*Romans 12:19 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, **Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.**"*

*1 Peter 3:10–12 "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him **seek peace, and ensue it.** For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."*

*Romans 13:3–4 "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, **a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.**"*

Psalms 35:5 Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase them.

Psalms 35:6 Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

Psalms 35:7 For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.

David calls for the LORD to make his enemies like the worthless part of the wheat harvest that gets blown away by the wind. He calls for the angel of the LORD to drive them away and pursue them with hostile intent (from the Hebrew). As the enemy runs, he prays for them to slip and fall to their destruction (from the Hebrew). David declares that the enemy has no just cause for trying to trap him in their net of destruction.

Spurgeon: "Net-making and pit-digging require time and labour, and both of these the wicked will expend cheerfully if they may but overthrow the people of God."

Psalms 35:8 Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.

Psalms 35:9 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.

Psalms 35:10 All my bones shall say, LORD, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?

David asks the LORD to turn the actions of the enemy against them and destroy them as they thought to destroy him. Such action will cause him to rejoice in the salvation of the LORD. He pictures every bone in his body amazed at the power of Almighty God and how He watches out for the poor and needy.

Spurgeon: "We do not triumph in the destruction of others, but in the salvation given to us of God."

Psalms 35:11 ¶ False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge *things* that I knew not.

Psalms 35:12 They rewarded me evil for good *to the spoiling of my soul.*

Again, David declares he is innocent of the charges made against him by false witnesses.

I liked the CJB for verse 12 after looking at the Hebrew: "*They repay me evil for good; it makes me feel desolate as a parent bereaved.*"

Psalms 35:13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing *was* sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.
Psalms 35:14 I behaved myself as though *he had been my friend or brother*: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth *for his mother.*

David describes the goodness which he had shown his enemies. He had fasted and prayed for them when they were sick, in the same way he would have for a close friend or brother. He had mourned for them as sincerely as he would mourn for his mother.

"my prayer returned into mine own bosom" – Translations vary. It could be a picture of abject sorrow as he prayed, but I think the CJB is probably best— "*I can pray that what I prayed for them might also happen to me.*"

Psalms 35:15 But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: *yea, the objects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not:*

Psalms 35:16 With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

On the other hand, these men joined together and rejoiced in David's trouble. Even people he did not know joined in their ceaseless attack. He identified them as hypocrites; in other words, they were probably guilty of the accusations they made against David.

I can't help but make application to the political situation in America today. People on both side of the political spectrum are hypocrites. They make accusations against others of which they are guilty. I heard one man say this morning that a person should never be made to go against what he believes in reference to NFL football players kneeling in protest before the flag when the national anthem is played. That same man, however, aligns himself with those that believe that Christians with private businesses should be made to act against what they believe when it comes to providing services that would cause them to act against what they believe. I could go on and on....

Psalms 35:17 ¶ Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.

Psalms 35:18 I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.

David wonders why the LORD has not yet acted on his behalf. He pleads with the LORD to deliver him and promises to publicly declare his thanks before the people for his deliverance.

David was just like the rest of us. We can't understand why the LORD doesn't answer our prayers right away. It always goes back to a couple of verses for me.

Isaiah 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD."

Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Psalms 35:19 Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

Psalms 35:20 For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.

Psalms 35:21 Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.

David pleads with the LORD not to let those that have no just cause against him to rejoice over his defeat. These men do not seek peace; they plan deceitful actions against those that are at peace, using false accusations against David as part of that plan.

Psalms 35:22 This thou hast seen, O LORD: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me.

Psalms 35:23 Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.

David knows that the LORD is witness to all that goes on in His creation. He begs Him not to keep silent, not to draw away from him. He pleads for the LORD to spring into action to defend him as "his" God and "his" LORD.

David's confidence in the LORD was rooted in a personal relationship with Him. He trusted Almighty God as his Lord, his master.

Psalms 35:24 Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.

David always bases his call for the LORD to judge him based on His righteousness, not on his own. I believe that is a reference to God's promises as declared in His word.

Deuteronomy 5:33 "Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess."

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Psalms 35:25 Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.

Psalms 35:26 Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify *themselves* against me.

David prays that the LORD not allow his enemies to gain the victory over him. He asks that He let them suffer the shame of defeat and dishonor.

Psalms 35:27 Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

Psalms 35:28 And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness *and* of thy praise all the day long.

David closes this psalm with a call for the people to shout for joy because righteousness has been upheld. May they always exalt the LORD who takes pleasure in the welfare of His servant. As for David, he will testify to the righteousness of the LORD and praise him continually.