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## Psalm 35

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Psalm 35.

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### Topics.

- LORD, fight against those who fight against me and rise for my help.
- Who is like God, delivering the poor from him who is too strong?
- I grieved as one who laments his brother, but they were against me.
- I will thank and praise you in the great congregation.
- Vindicate me, o LORD; let not my enemies rejoice over me.
- Let those who delight in my righteousness shout for joy and be glad.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### INTRODUCTION

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Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

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### BOOK ONE (PSALM 1-41)

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### PSALM 35:1-8

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A Psalm of David.

#### **O LORD, Fight against those who Fight against Me and Help.**

- **Psalm 35:1-8:** Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me! <sup>2</sup>Take hold of shield and buckler and rise for my help! <sup>3</sup>Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers! Say to my soul, "I am your salvation!" <sup>4</sup>Let them be put to shame and dishonour who seek after my life! Let them be turned back and disappointed who devise evil against me! <sup>5</sup>Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the LORD driving them away! <sup>6</sup>Let their way be dark and slippery, with the angel of the LORD pursuing them! <sup>7</sup>For without cause they hid their net for me; without cause they dug a pit for my life. <sup>8</sup>Let destruction come upon him when he does not know it! And let the net that he hid ensnare him; let him fall into it—to his destruction!

Throughout this Psalm David has in mind adversaries who:

- Contend and fight against him (v1).
- Pursue after him to destroy his life (v4).
- Had no just-cause to rise up against him (v7).
- Spread a net of destruction around him by lies and deceit (v7).
- Without any justifiable reason plotted his death (v7).

- Maliciously witnessed against him, accusing him of things unknown to him (v11).
- Plotted his ruin even though he had done-good to them and sympathised with them (v12).
- Worked against him without ceasing even though he did not know them (v15).
- Were blasphemous mockers who attacked him with aggressive anger (v16).
- Speak words of deceit and war against the quiet and peaceful in the land (v20).
- Desired to overpower him and his kingdom (v25).
- Rejoiced at his calamity and magnified themselves against him (v26).

David is bereft, he has friends who he mourned and grieved for and afflicted himself with fasting when they were sick and now, they are plotting to bring him to ruin and destroy his life. Some are spreading malicious lies while others are even seeking to kill him without cause. This is why he is so desperately pleading to the LORD to fight against those who fight against him. It is interesting to see that David views the LORD as a mighty warrior with a shield spear and javelin and is calling Him to go to battle for him. There are occasions in Scripture that pictured God as a mighty warrior riding a chariot on the wings of the wind.

- The LORD rode on a cherub and flew; he was seen on the wings of the wind. (2 Samuel 22:11).
- The LORD rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. (Psalm 18:10).
- The LORD lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind. (Psalm 104:3).

When the context of the person praying is upon needing comfort because of depression, sickness, loneliness etc., God is seen as a loving heavenly Father, but when it is in the context of war and battle God is seen as a mighty warrior. David is not the aggressor in this Psalm in fact it's quite the opposite. Some of these enemies were once his friends and others who are plotting his ruin and death, he does not even know so David is justified in calling God to defend him against such aggressive evil enemies and to give him victory over them.

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### PSALM 35:9-10

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#### **Who is like God, Delivering the Poor from Him who is too Strong?**

- **Psalm 35:9-10:** Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD, exulting in his salvation. <sup>10</sup>All my bones shall say, "O LORD, who is like you, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, the poor and needy from him who robs him?"

The poor and needy in these verses refer to David, he feels poor and weak, because his enemies who are coming against him as robbers to steal and destroy are far greater in power than he is and he is needy because he needs help to overcome his enemies.

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### PSALM 35:11-16

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#### **I Grieved as One who Laments his Brother.**

- **Psalm 35:11-16:** Malicious witnesses rise up; they ask me of things that I do not know. <sup>12</sup>They repay me evil for good; my soul is bereft. <sup>13</sup>But I, when they were sick—I wore sackcloth; I afflicted myself with fasting; I prayed with head bowed on my chest. <sup>14</sup>I went about as though I grieved for my friend or my brother; as one who laments his mother, I bowed down in mourning. <sup>15</sup>But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered; they gathered together against me; wretches whom I did not know tore at me without ceasing; <sup>16</sup>like profane mockers at a feast, they gnash at me with their teeth.

Here is the gross evil of these enemies, David had fasted, grieved and prayed for them while sick with the same passion as one who grieves for a loved family member. It is almost certain David in this Psalm is praying with a mixture of two emotions, firstly, deep hurt that such friends would turn against him with such hatred, and secondly fear that they would achieve their evil plans and have him killed.

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## PSALM 35:17-21

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### **I will Thank and Praise You in the Great Congregation.**

- **Psalm 35:17-21:** How long, O Lord, will you look on? Rescue me from their destruction, my precious life from the lions! <sup>18</sup>I will thank you in the great congregation; in the mighty throng (among much people in KJV) I will praise you. <sup>19</sup>Let not those rejoice over me who are wrongfully my foes, and let not those wink the eye who hate me without cause. <sup>20</sup>For they do not speak peace, but against those who are quiet in the land they devise words of deceit. <sup>21</sup>They open wide their mouths against me; they say, "Aha, Aha! our eyes have seen it!"

**Lions:** in Scripture are often spoken of as enemies, because lions are strong, fierce and devour and tear their prey apart without mercy. David feels like a helpless creature being surrounded by ravaging lions ready to devour their prey. Notice how David considers his life precious before God this is because he knows God loves Him and will fight for him and because he is the innocent victim amongst these ravaging lions.

**I will thank you in the great congregation; among many people I will praise you** (v18) David of course is speaking of himself telling God if He rescues him, he will publicly thank Him amongst all the faithful, but it also echoes the following verses of Hebrews:

- For it was fitting that God, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. <sup>11</sup>For Jesus who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers, <sup>12</sup>saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." (Heb. 2:10-12).

Though Christ did not appear during the Old Testament age, David was still saved by faith in him, because he by faith looked:

- Toward the promised seed of the woman spoken of in Genesis. (Genesis 3:15).
- Toward the promised seed of Abraham. (Gen. 26:4) (Gal. 3:16).
- Toward the prophet Moses said was to come like him. (Deut. 18:15) (Acts 3:22) (Acts 7:37).
- Toward the Holy One to come (whose body God will not let see corruption in death) (Psalm 16:9-11).
- Toward the promised seed of David. (Psalm 89:4) (Psalm 132:11) (Jer. 23:5) (Matthew 1:1).
- Toward the Messiah the Christ all the Old Testament prophets and the Scriptures speak of such as (Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53). The Lord Jesus himself said, "I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of

me in the scroll of the book (Heb. 10:7) (the scroll of the book refers to the Scriptures).

Though David had never seen the Lord mattered little because he by faith looked toward the promised Messiah the Christ and by this faith had Christ's Spirit and love dwelling within in the same way that the faithful today who have also have never seen the Lord have by faith Christ's Spirit and love dwelling in their hearts and minds. Since David was by faith filled with Christ's Spirit and was not only a king, but also a prophet many faint and sometimes very loud echoes of Christ can be found in many of his Psalms even though he is speaking of himself. With Christ in mind consider the following verses of this Psalm:

- Without cause they hid their net for me; without cause they dug a pit for my life. (v7).
- They repay me evil for good; my soul is bereft. (v12).
- When they were sick I prayed as though I grieved for my friend or my brother; as one who laments his mother (v13-14).
- At my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered; they gathered together against me; tore at me without ceasing (v15).
- Let those who delight in my righteousness shout for joy and be glad and say evermore, "Great is the LORD, who delights in the welfare of his servant!" (v27).

This entire Psalm can be seen as echoing Christ's suffering at the hands of the chief priests, the Pharisees and scribes and at the hands of the Romans and his suffering upon the bloodstained cross of Calvary.

**They do not speak peace, but against those who are quiet in the land they devise words of deceit** (v20). Here is the enormous evil of David's adversaries, David and those with him are living in peace with their friends and their families while these enemies are plotting war against him and those with him. No Christian today is called to go to war, but if worldly enemies attack our families and children to rob, rape and inflict harm it is the duty of the father to protect them, but if they are attacking because the father is preaching the Gospel they cannot go to war or even fight since we are called to lay our lives down for our faith so they are left with the following three choices:

1. Flee.
2. Pray God would miraculously deliver and rescue them.
3. Lay their lives down as Christ laid his life down on the bloodstained cross of Calvary.

No father who is a minister of the Gospel should put his family in situations where such danger is obvious unless they are all prepared to die for their faith in Christ. It is extremely unlikely God would call a minister who has young children to proclaim the Gospel where it is obvious to all they may be killed. Should such a man feel he is called to proclaim the Gospel in such dangerous environments wisdom and common sense would say, "Leave your family at home," for those who think this reasoning faulty, consider this, "What soldier takes his family to the front line of the battle field?"

**Let not those rejoice over me who are wrongfully my foes** (v19) David speaks of his adversaries being wrongfully his foes, because they should be his friends. In the same way that the religious leaders of Jesus day (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) should have been the ones to most welcome Jesus and have been so overjoyed to be his friends not only turned against him, but also plotted behind closed doors his murder these friends of David are acting from the same spirit of betrayal and murder.

## **Vindicate Me, O LORD, Let Not My Enemies Rejoice over Me.**

- **Psalm 35:22-26:** You have seen, O LORD; be not silent! O Lord, be not far from me!  
<sup>23</sup>Awake and rouse yourself for my vindication, for my cause, my God and my Lord!  
<sup>24</sup>Vindicate me, O LORD, my God, according to your righteousness, and let them not rejoice over me! <sup>25</sup>Let them not say in their hearts, "Aha, our heart's desire!" Let them not say, "We have swallowed him up." <sup>26</sup>Let them be put to shame and disappointed altogether who rejoice at my calamity! Let them be clothed with shame and dishonour who magnify themselves against me!

**Vindicate me, O LORD, my God, according to your righteousness** (V24) means vindicate me according to your justice. David is innocent he should not be brought to ruin and killed by enemies that are guilty of gross sin. This is why he feels totally justified in asking God to defend him and destroy his enemies.

**Awake and rouse yourself:** (v23) these words of David show us the fabulous relationship David had with God, how many of us would be game enough to say, "God wake up stop sleeping come to my rescue," Only those who have a very intimate relationship of love and a very close friendship are able to speak this type of language without the one being spoken to being offended.

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### **PSALM 35:27-28**

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#### **Let those who Delight in My Righteousness Shout for Joy.**

- **Psalm 35:27-28:** Let those who delight in my righteousness shout for joy and be glad and say evermore, "Great is the LORD, who delights in the welfare of his servant!" <sup>28</sup>Then my tongue shall tell of your righteousness and of your praise all the day long.

David is fully aware that many look to him as a righteous man of the Most High God and because of this he not only wants to be saved from death, but also deeply desires that He will be vindicated as a man who proclaims the only true God and the God of all power so that the faith of those who have trusted in him as a man faithful to God would not be shaken or destroyed. Today this could be likened to a faithful minister of the Gospel being accused of something they had not done desiring that their own reputation would be put right not so much for themselves, but so that those who have trusted their teaching would not feel betrayed and their faith would not be shaken or brought to ruin.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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