

PSALM 17

Prayer for Protection against Oppressors.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. A Prayer of David.
- B. "A Prayer for Protection Against Enemies."
- C. We do not know what time in David's life that he is writing about, but it fits the times he was being hunted like a wild animal in the wilderness by Saul and his army.

THE TEXT.

- 17:1** Hear a just cause, O LORD, give heed to my cry;
Give ear to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips.
- 2** Let my judgment come forth from Your presence;
Let Your eyes look with equity.
- 3** You have tried my heart;
You have visited *me* by night;
You have tested me and You find nothing;
I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.
- 4** As for the deeds of men, by the word of Your lips
I have kept from the paths of the violent.
- 5** My steps have held fast to Your paths.
My feet have not slipped.
- 6** I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God;
Incline Your ear to me, hear my speech.
- 7** Wondrously show Your lovingkindness,
O Savior of those who take refuge at Your right hand
From those who rise up *against them*.
- 8** Keep me as the apple of the eye;
Hide me in the shadow of Your wings
- 9** From the wicked who despoil me,
My deadly enemies who surround me.
- 10** They have closed their unfeeling *heart*,
With their mouth they speak proudly.
- 11** They have now surrounded us in our steps;
They set their eyes to cast *us* down to the ground.
- 12** He is like a lion that is eager to tear,
And as a young lion lurking in hiding places.
- 13** Arise, O LORD, confront him, bring him low;
Deliver my soul from the wicked with Your sword,
- 14** From men with Your hand, O LORD,
From men of the world, whose portion is in *this* life,
And whose belly You fill with Your treasure;
They are satisfied with children,
And leave their abundance to their babes.
- 15** As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness;
I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.

COMMENTS.

- A. **[v1-5]** Coffman comments, "Regarding the claims made by David here regarding his truth, integrity, and righteousness, and even the claim that God himself had found no fault in him we should remember that this psalm was very likely written in the early part of David's life, during his flight from the murderous vengeance of King Saul, and that it came from a period in David's life long before his shameful actions with regard to Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, sins which David tearfully repented of and openly confessed.
- B. We may not, therefore, find any fault with such vigorous protestations of innocence as we find here." But if this language is appropriate for David, then why not the language in the first part of Psa. 16?

- C. **[v6-9]** David expresses confidence because God has heard him in the past, and now asks for His “marvelous lovingkindness” to “save those who trust in You. “The apple of Your eye; . . . the shadow of Your wings,” are figures that appeared in Deut. 32:10-12. “From my deadly enemies who surround me” indicate that David was certain that his enemies sought nothing less than his complete destruction. This is in harmony with Saul’s attempts to take his life.
- D. **[v10-12]** “They have closed their fat hearts,” probably refers to arrogance and “fat” means that they have plenty of material things. These seem to focus on material possessions. “They have now surrounded us” indicates how hunters close in on game, and “crouching down to the earth, as a lion is eager to tear his prey,” would be appropriate to describe how Saul and his army tried to kill David.
- E. **[v13-15]** David alternates between the singular and plural in describing his enemy. This would be appropriate in describing Saul and his army. Verse 14 is difficult to understand. It may mean that the worldly are satisfied to be filled with material blessings and family without regard for God and eternal hope. David looked for even greater blessings of beholding God’s face in righteousness for eternity.