

## PSALM 35

*Prayer for Rescue from Enemies.*

### INTRODUCTION.

- A. A Psalm of David. "Prayer for Rescue from Enemies." Roy H. Enoch (4-20-94)
- B. This is the first of many psalms termed "Imprecatory Psalms." (Halley's *Pocket Bible Handbook* lists seven and Leupold cites over 12.) Halley says that "These psalms breathe vengeance upon enemies. They are not God's pronouncements of His wrath upon the wicked; but they are the prayers of a man for vengeance upon his enemies. This is just the opposite of the teachings of JC, who taught that we should love our enemies and pray for them that spitefully use us and persecute us."
- C. This attitude seems typical of many denominational scholars who feel free to accuse the scriptures of contradiction and the writers of giving their own opinions, and claim that they are the opposite of the teachings of God.
- D. Coffman quotes George DeHoff on the subject: "The imprecations of this Psalm are legitimate and proper. David is not here pleading for innocent people to be destroyed, but for wicked people to be punished for their evil deeds in order to bring them to repentance and ultimate salvation." In fact, it is the same kind of just judgment asked for by those martyred in: Rev. 6:9-11. The answer was that they would be avenged.
- E. Coffman uses Leupold's division headings for this psalm.
  1. A prayer that God may arise on David's behalf and repay those who have wrongfully attacked him (1-10).
  2. His true sympathy for his foes in their previous sorrow is shamefully returned in the form of evil for good (11-18).
  3. Prayer for justice on David's behalf against false friends who became enemies (19-28).
- F. Each of these sections begins with a cry for deliverance and closes with a vow of thanksgiving for the blessing.

### THE TEXT.

- 35:1** Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me;  
Fight against those who fight against me.
- 2** Take hold of buckler and shield  
And rise up for my help.
- 3** Draw also the spear and the battle-axe to meet those who pursue me;  
Say to my soul, "I am your salvation."
- 4** Let those be ashamed and dishonored who seek my life;  
Let those be turned back and humiliated who devise evil against me.
- 5** Let them be like chaff before the wind,  
With the angel of the LORD driving *them* on.
- 6** Let their way be dark and slippery,  
With the angel of the LORD pursuing them.
- 7** For without cause they hid their net for me;  
Without cause they dug a pit for my soul.
- 8** Let destruction come upon him unawares,  
And let the net which he hid catch himself;  
Into that very destruction let him fall.
- 9** And my soul shall rejoice in the LORD;  
It shall exult in His salvation.
- 10** All my bones will say, "LORD, who is like You,  
Who delivers the afflicted from him who is too strong for him,  
And the afflicted and the needy from him who robs him?"
- 11** Malicious witnesses rise up;  
They ask me of things that I do not know.
- 12** They repay me evil for good,  
*To* the bereavement of my soul.

- 13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth;  
I humbled my soul with fasting,  
And my prayer kept returning to my bosom.
- 14 I went about as though it were my friend or brother;  
I bowed down mourning, as one who sorrows for a mother.
- 15 But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered themselves together;  
The smiters whom I did not know gathered together against me,  
They slandered me without ceasing.
- 16 Like godless jesters at a feast,  
They gnashed at me with their teeth.
- 17 Lord, how long will You look on?  
Rescue my soul from their ravages,  
My only *life* from the lions.
- 18 I will give You thanks in the great congregation;  
I will praise You among a mighty throng.
- 19 Do not let those who are wrongfully my enemies rejoice over me;  
Nor let those who hate me without cause wink maliciously.
- 20 For they do not speak peace,  
But they devise deceitful words against those who are quiet in the land.
- 21 They opened their mouth wide against me;  
They said, "Aha, aha, our eyes have seen it!"
- 22 You have seen it, O LORD, do not keep silent;  
O Lord, do not be far from me.
- 23 Stir up Yourself, and awake to my right  
And to my cause, my God and my Lord.
- 24 Judge me, O LORD my God, according to Your righteousness,  
And do not let them rejoice over me.
- 25 Do not let them say in their heart, "Aha, our desire!"  
Do not let them say, "We have swallowed him up!"
- 26 Let those be ashamed and humiliated altogether who rejoice at my distress;  
Let those be clothed with shame and dishonor who magnify themselves over me.
- 27 Let them shout for joy and rejoice, who favor my vindication;  
And let them say continually, "The LORD be magnified,  
Who delights in the prosperity of His servant."
- 28 And my tongue shall declare Your righteousness  
And Your praise all day long.

## COMMENTS.

- A. A prayer on David's behalf to avenge those who mistreated him (35:1-10).  
**[v1-3]** "Plead my cause..." is a common phrase from legal contexts. David wants God to be his counselor, which is the word X used to describe the work of the HS for the apostles. He used it four times at the last supper and the KJV translates it "Comforter."  
**[v1-3]** He also uses the language of battle, "fight," "shield and buckler,... spear..."  
**[v5]** "Let those be brought to shame and dishonor who seek after life;..." David uses great restraint and does not even ask that they be destroyed. "Let them be like chaff before the wind,..." John the Baptist said that the X would burn the chaff with fire (Mt. 3:12) and Jesus said that the branches in Him who left Him would be gathered and burned. See JN. 15:6. Basically, David prays that whatever evil they try to bring on others be upon themselves. This is not vindictiveness, but justice which God often promises to mankind.  
**[v9,10]** "And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord....All my bones shall say, 'Lord, who is like you, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him,..." David's faith considers it done and he gives thanks for the blessings of deliverance.
- B. Those whom David had helped returned evil for good (35:11-18).  
**[v13]** "They reward me evil for good,..." David was describing real injustice. "...when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth;..." David genuinely mourned their misfortune.

**[v17]** “But in my adversity they rejoiced...” We are often warned not to rejoice at the misfortune of others, lest God be angry against us. “I will give You thanks in the great assembly;...” David promises public praise to God for His deliverance.

C. David prays for justice for his false friends (35:19-28).

**[v19]** “Let them not rejoice over me...” Don’t let their plans be successful against me.

**[v20,21]** “But they devise deceitful matters...and said, ‘Aha, aha! Our eyes have seen it.’” They made things up and claim to have been witnesses to them. “This You have seen, O Lord; Do not keep silence.” The Lord really knew what had happened and David depended on Him for justice.

**[v26]** “Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion who rejoice at my hurt.” David is still not asking for destruction, but for punishment as their mistreatment deserves.

**[v27]** “Let them shout for joy and be glad, who favor my righteous cause...” The righteous not only favor a righteous cause, but magnify God for His deliverance of the righteous and for just punishment of the wicked. “And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness...” David, again promises to praise God to others and worship.

D. I can find nothing in the spirit of this prayer that is contrary to the teachings of X. He promised the punishment of the wicked and that is all that David is asking for.