

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith

VII. Rightly Responding To Destructive Slander

(Psalm 7:1-17)

I. Introduction

- A. A very formidable trial one can face is destructive slander, for this sin can destroy not only one's reputation, but through it also his relationships, his economic welfare and eventually even his health.
- B. David once faced this sin from the man Cush of the tribe of Benjamin, and Psalm 7 reveals how to respond:

II. Rightly Responding To Destructive Slander, Psalm 7:1-17.

- A. Verse one in the Hebrew text comprises the introductory remarks in the English Bible (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 980), but we stay with the numbering system in the English translations for clarification with this lesson.
- B. David thus prayed, "O Jahweh, my Elohim, in You I seek refuge; save me from all who persecute (*radaph*, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 922-923) me, and snatch me away (*nasal*, Ibid., p. 664f)," Psalm 7:1.
- C. He added, "Lest he tear my life principle (*nepesh*, one's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual being, Ibid., Kittel; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. II, p. 587-591) like a lion, ripping me in pieces when there is no one to snatch (*nasal* again, cf. v. 2) me away," Psalm 7:2.
- D. Revealing the issue David faced was slander, he petitioned, "O Jahweh, my Elohim, if I have performed this, if injustice exists in the palms of my hands (Psa. 7:3), if I have repaid evil to him who is at peace with me, and robbed my adversary without cause (Psa. 7:4), then let those who are hostile to me pursue, persecute (*radaph* again, cf. v. 1) my life principle (*nepesh* again, cf. v. 2), and overtake me; let him trample my life principle (*nepesh* again) to the ground, and cause my honor to lie down in the dust," Psalm 7:5; B. K. C., O. T., p. 796.
- E. David was sure that he was not guilty as charged, so he prayed, "Arise, O Jahweh, in Your anger, rise up against the outbursts of fury (*'ebrah*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 720) of my foes; awake, my Elohim, and decree justice; (Psalm 7:6) Let the assembled peoples gather around You; rule over them from on high," Psalm 7:7.
- F. Accordingly, David added that "Jahweh shall give a verdict on the peoples; administrate judgment on me, Jahweh, according to my righteousness, and according to my integrity (*tom*, Ibid., p. 1070-1071)," Psalm 7:8.
- G. Confident of vindication, David said, "Bring to an end (*gamar*, Ibid., p. 170) the calamity of the wicked and make the righteous established, for the Righteous Elohim examines the mind (*lebab*, Ibid., p. 524-525) and emotional structure (*kilyah*, lit. "kidneys," used figuratively for emotional structure, Ibid., p. 480)," Psalm 7:9.
- H. David made several observations from this event in verses 11-16: "(v. 10) My small, round, hand-held warrior's shield (*magen*, Ibid., Kittel; Roland deVaux, Ancient Israel: Volume I, Social Institutions, 1965, p. 244-245) is Elohim, the Most High, Who saves those who are straight, right (*yashar*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 449) in heart. (v. 11) Elohim is a righteous Judge, and an Elohim Who expresses His wrath (in judgment) daily. (v. 12) If my opponent does not relent, God will sharpen His sword; He will bend and string His bow. (v. 13) And for him He has prepared His weapons of death; His flaming arrows He has prepared. (v. 14) Behold, he who is in birth pangs with iniquity and conceives with mischief (*'amal*, Ibid., p. 765) shall give birth to disappointment, disillusionment (*sheqer*, Ibid., p. 1055). (v. 15) He who digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit he has made. (v. 16) His mischief (*'amal* again, cf. v. 14) returns on his head, and on the very crown of his head his violence (*hamas*, Ibid., p. 329) descends."
- I. In concluding this psalm of request for divine vengeance and deliverance, David said: "I will thank Jahweh for His righteousness, and I will sing praise to the Name of Jahweh, the Most High," Psalm 7:17.

Lesson: *When David faced destructive slander, instead of taking his own vengeance on his foe in violation of Scripture (cf. Deut. 32:35; Romans 12:19 for the Church era), he sought God's intervention, thus also leaving himself open to God's evaluation of his own mind and emotional structure as well as that of his foe, confident the Lord would deal out justice and deliver him both from the slander and from its destructive intent and effects.*

Application: (1) *If facing harmful slander, instead of taking vengeance, may we seek God's intervention by prayer.* (2) *In doing so, may we examine our hearts and confess any sin to gain God's help (Psalm 66:18 with 1 John 1:9).* (3) *May we like David handle our pent-up anger against our foe NOT by VENTING OUR wrath on HIM, but in focusing on GOD'S righteous ways of HANDLING the WRONGDOER.* (4) *As David came to express thanksgiving for God's righteousness in this event (v. 17), may we use the experience of being harmfully slandered to appreciate the value of God's righteousness that we desire all the more to be upright!*