

PSALM 35

A PLEADING FOR DEFENSE

This is a prayer wherein David complains bitterly against those bad persons who are found in courts and palaces, and who flatter kings and rulers. In order to achieve their own gain and advantage, they tickle the royal ears with adulation; and at the same time, they speak evil of the innocent, enflame the powerful against the preachers and professors of the Word of God, endeavor to suppress the truth, and cause awful injuries to both churches and individual believers. It was such characters as these who defamed and slandered David before King Saul – even though they were persons to whom David had rendered the greatest services, and for whom he had most fervently prayed. Moreover, in endeavoring to save and protect them, David had brought upon himself much personal misery, danger, and distress.

The content of this Psalm is a great consolation to us in times when we see the doctrines of truth and the Gospel of Jesus being hated by kings and governments, and being defamed by the most impudent lies and the most virulent speeches of the enemies of everything that is honest and good. Such was the case in the days of the great Reformer, Martin Luther. The impudent and malicious report of some persons was all that was talked about in the Pope's palace; they claimed that Luther denied the Lord Jesus, that he despised the Virgin Mary, that he contemptuously set aside baptism and the sacraments, that he winked at theft and adultery and other open sins, and that he permitted them to be committed freely. But these forgers of this manifest lie were put to shame openly at an assembly in the presence of Emperor Charles V, where everyone who was present heard the Reformer make a public confession of his doctrine. There are still many of these slanderers and liars in our own day.

It is no new thing for the most righteous of persons and the most noble of causes to meet with enemies and opposition. This is a fruit of the old enmity that exists in the seed of the serpent against the Seed of the Woman. David in

Overview of the Psalm, adapted from Charles Spurgeon:

The fact that this is "a Psalm of David" is all that we know concerning this composition; but internal evidence seems to fix the date of its writing in those troublous times when Saul hunted David over hill and dale, and when those who fawned upon the cruel king slandered the innocent object of his wrath. The whole Psalm is the appeal to heaven of a bold heart and a clear conscience that is irritated beyond measure by oppression and malice. Beyond a doubt, David's Lord may be seen here by the spiritual eye.

The most natural mode of dividing this Psalm is to note its triple character. Its complaint, prayer, and promise of praise are repeated with remarkable parallelism three times – just as our Lord in the Garden prayed three times, using the same words. The first portion begins in verse 1, the second in verse 11, and the last in verse 19 – each section ending with a note of grateful song.

his afflictions, Christ in His sufferings, the Church under persecution, and the Christian in the hour of temptation all beseech the Almighty One to appear on their behalf, and to vindicate their cause. This is what David did here in verses 1-10; he prayed to God to manifest Himself during his time of trial. If God is our salvation, we desire no more to make us happy. If He is our Friend, it does not matter who is our enemy. By the Spirit of prophecy, David – in these verses – foretells the just judgments of Jehovah that would come upon his enemies for their great wickedness. These predictions show the doom of the enemies of Christ and His Kingdom. And having committed his cause to God, David did not have any doubt of his own deliverance; and he promises to serve and glorify God with all his strength (verses 9-10). If such language may be applied to outward deliverances, how much more does it apply to heavenly things in Christ Jesus!

In verses 11-16, David shows how tenderly he had behaved toward his enemies when they were under affliction, and herein he stands as a picture of Christ. We shall not truly lose by the good things that we do to anyone, no matter how ungrateful they may be.



Let us learn to possess our souls in patience and meekness like David – or rather like Christ's example.

Although the people of God endeavor to be quiet and peaceable, yet it has been common for their enemies to devise deceitful matters against them (verses 17-28). As it happened to Christ our Head, so it is now with His Church and all who love the Lord. The unbounded and insatiable cruelty of His enemies is always raging against those who fear Him, as David here complains. But the roaring lion shall not destroy their souls any more than he could destroy Christ, their Surety. They trust their souls and bodies into His hands, they are united with Him by faith, and they are precious in His sight; and they shall be rescued from destruction so that they may give thanks to Him in heaven!

Lord, we repent of times when we have not imitated our Savior's example in regards to those who hate and persecute us, and we pray for grace to improve in this matter. However, we give You thanks that the doom of the enemies of Christ and His Kingdom has already been won, and so we do not need to have any doubt of our own deliverance from their slanderous lies! Amen.