

# Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Adult Sunday School  
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by  
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## Psalm 7 — Judge, O LORD



### 1.0 Introducing Psalm 7

#### 1.1 “A Meditation of David”

- “Meditation” (*Shiggaion*) might mean “lamentation” or “agitated song.”
  - The root of the word means “stray” or “stagger”—perhaps indicating either a melody that has slurs and trills or a rhythm that is not even.
- See Habakkuk 3:1, “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.”

#### 1.2 “concerning the words of Cush, a Benjamite”

- One of thirteen psalm headings referring to incidents in David’s life.
- There is no mention of a Benjamite named Cush in the Old Testament history of David.
- 1 Samuel 24:11-17?
- 2 Samuel 16?
- 2 Samuel 18:21-33?

#### 1.3 “which he sang”

- Indicates that David composed this psalm and performed it.
- Therefore, “of David” is confirmed to be an indication of authorship.

## 2.0 Reading Psalm 7

A Meditation of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning the words of Cush, a Benjamite.

**7:1** O LORD my God, in You I put my trust;  
Save me from all those who persecute me;  
And deliver me,

**7:2** Lest they tear me like a lion,  
Rending *me* in pieces, while *there is* none to deliver.

**7:3** O LORD my God, if I have done this:  
If there is iniquity in my hands,

**7:4** If I have repaid evil to him who was at peace with me,  
Or have plundered my enemy without cause,

**7:5** Let the enemy pursue me and overtake *me*;  
Yes, let him trample my life to the earth,  
And lay my honor in the dust.

**Selah**

**7:6** **Arise**, O LORD, in Your anger;  
**Lift Yourself up** because of the rage of my enemies;  
**Rise up** for me *to* the judgment You have commanded!

**7:7** So the congregation of the peoples shall surround You;  
For their sakes, therefore, return on high.

**7:8** The LORD shall judge the peoples;  
Judge me, O LORD, according to **my righteousness**,  
And according to my integrity within me.

**7:9** Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end,  
But establish **the just**;  
For **the righteous God** tests the hearts and minds.

**7:10** My defense *is* of God,  
Who saves the upright in heart.

**7:11** God *is* **a just judge**,  
And God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

**7:12** If he does not turn back,  
He will sharpen His sword;  
He bends His bow and makes it ready.

**7:13** He also prepares for Himself instruments of death;  
He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.

**7:14** Behold, *the wicked* brings forth iniquity;  
Yes, he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood.

**7:15** He made a pit and dug it out,  
And has fallen into the ditch *which* he made.



**7:16** His trouble shall return upon his own head,  
And his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown.

**7:17** I will praise the LORD according to **His righteousness**.  
And will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

To the Chief Musician. On the instrument of Gath.

### 3.0 Understanding Psalm 7

#### 3.1 Outline

- I. Superscription – Literary and Historical
- II. Prayer for Refuge (vv. 1-2)
- III. Protestation of Innocence (vv. 3-5)
- IV. Prayer for Justice (vv. 6-13)
  - A. Act Now (vv. 6-8)
  - B. Act in My Defense (vv. 9-10)
  - C. Act with Deadly Force (vv. 11-13)
- V. Proclamation of Retribution (vv. 14-16)
- VI. Praise for God’s Righteousness (v. 17)
- VII. Subscription – Musical

#### 3.2 Notes

- v. 1 “I put my trust”
  - “Trust” means to flee to in order to take refuge or shelter (cf. 2:12; 5:11).
    - A problem is identified: Enemies (vv. 1-9).
    - A complaint is filed: “Rise up against the rage of my enemies” (vv. 6, 14-16).
    - A declaration of trust in God is confessed (vv. 1, 9-11).
    - A petition is prayed: “Save and deliver me from all who pursue me” (vv. 1-9).
    - A solution is specified: refuge in the Lord and personal integrity (vv. 1-2, 8, 10-13).
    - A vow to praise God is declared: “I will give thanks to the LORD” (v. 17).
  - The psalmist appears to be genuinely innocent.

- v. 2 “tear me like a lion ... Rending *me* in pieces”
  - In Hebrew poetic literature enemies are often depicted mauling their victims like a lion.
  - See Psalms 10:9; 17:12; 22:13, 21.



- **vv. 3-5** Protestation of Innocence
  - The psalmist proclaims an oath of innocence by proposing those deeds which he has not done and supporting the punishment that should come upon him if he had been guilty.
  - Cf. 1 Kings 8:31-32; Job 31.
  
- **v. 5** “me ... my life ... my honor”
  - David makes a threefold emphatic reference to himself.
  - “Me” is literally “my soul.”
  - “My honor” (or, “my glory”) probably is the equivalent of the preceding two words.
  
- **v. 6** “Arise, O LORD”
  - The same basic prayer was given at the time the ark of the covenant was sent forth with the Israelite army in war (Numbers 10:35).
  - The threefold reference to the LORD’s initiation of action is emphatic.
  
- **v. 7** “return on high”
  - Compare with the second prayer regarding the ark of the covenant in Numbers 10:36.
  
- **vv. 8-11, 17** “my righteousness ... the just ... the righteous God ... a just judge ... His righteousness”
  - All of these are from the same Hebrew word (cf. **Melchizedek**).
  - The focus of the core of the psalm is on the concept of righteousness.
  
- **v. 10** “defense”
  - Literally, “shield” (the small round shield used in close combat).
  - See Psalm 3:3.
  
- **v. 14** “*the wicked* brings forth iniquity ... conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood”
  - Evil doers are depicted as pregnant with evil.
  
- **v. 16** Chiasm emphasizing retribution:
  - a** shall return
  - b** His trouble
  - c** upon his own head
  - c’** on his own crown
  - b’** And his violent
  - a’** dealing shall come down.

- See, also, Proverbs 26:27 and Ecclesiastes 10:9-10 on the recompense that stems from the evildoer's own deeds.
- “Learn from this Psalm
  - that God's people are often sorely slandered;
  - that false accusation is very hard to bear;
  - that in such event it is best to go to God about it;
  - that He assuredly will judge the wicked and vindicate the righteous sooner or later;
  - that the law of retribution works with exactness (15, 16);
  - and that in spite of trouble we should sing (17).”

— W. Graham Scroggie, *The Psalms*, 72
- “It was precisely because psalmists had to take evil seriously in their personal experience and in the world at large that they had to take God seriously.” (Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship*, 35)

#### 4.0 Singing Psalm 7 (to the tune of “Immortal, Invisible”)

*Jehovah, my God, on Thy help I depend;  
From all that pursue me O save and defend;  
Lest they like a lion should rend me at will:  
While no one is near me their raging to still.*



*When wronged without cause I have  
Kindness returned;  
But if I my neighbor maltreated and spurned,  
My soul let the enemy seize for his prey,  
My life and mine honor in dust let him lay.*

*O Lord, in Thy wrath stay the rage of my foes;  
Awake, and Thy judgment ordained interpose.  
Let peoples surround Thee and wait at Thy feet,  
While o'er them for judgment Thou takest Thy seat.*

*All nations of men shall be judged by the Lord;  
To me, O Jehovah, just judgment accord,  
As faithful and righteous in life I have been,  
And ever integrity cherished within.*

*Establish the righteous, let evil depart,  
For God, Who is just, tries the thoughts of the heart.*

*In God for defense I have placed all my trust;  
The upright He saves and He judges the just.*

*The Lord with the wicked is wroth every day,  
And if they repent not is ready to slay;  
By manifold ruin for others prepared  
They surely at last shall themselves be ensnared.*

*Because He is righteous His praise will I sing,  
Thanksgiving and honor to Him will I bring,  
Will sing to the Lord on Whose grace I rely,  
Extolling the Name of Jehovah Most High.*

Words: Unknown  
Music: John Roberts, 1839

## 5.0 Praying Psalm 7

- The basis of prayer: our righteousness or God's righteousness?



- Prayers like Psalm 7 “are not intended to be a litany of self-righteousness before God. The psalms know that there is no autonomous independent righteousness on the basis of which human beings can deal with God (130:3; 143:2). ... They are the expression of a good conscience before hostility and opposition.” (James L. Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation, 63-64)

- “Let us thank with this psalm “the Lord for his justice,” by putting the emphasis on *his* justice which is all too often not *ours*.” (Stanley L. Jaki, *Praying the Psalms*, 45)
- Lord, save me from those who would persecute me. [v. 1]
- Father, examine my life and help me to live with integrity. [v. 8]
- O God, deal with the wicked according to Your righteousness. [v. 9]

## 6.0 Applying Psalm 7

- When we are slandered, it is best to let God take care of the matter.
- The Lord knows the motives of both the just and the unjust.
- No matter what we face in the way of persecution, we ought to continue to sing praise to God.