

Psalm 7 “When a Righteous Man is Accused of Doing Wrong” [**](#)

Main Idea: In Psalm 7 David wrote a prayer-song that teaches us how to pray when we’ve been accused of wrong-doing. In his prayer David expresses five things to the Lord.

I. David takes his problem to the Lord (1-2).

II. David takes inventory to make sure he isn’t the cause of the problem (3-5).

A. David didn’t have a victim’s mindset.

B. David had a victor’s mindset.

1. If I am guilty, then I deserve the consequences.

2. If I am not guilty, then I can pray with assurance.

III. David asks God to judge (6-13).

A. He asks for this because God is righteous.

1. God is the source of righteousness and justice (6-8).

2. God always does what is right (9).

3. God exhibits anger towards what is wrong (6, 11).

B. He asks for this because he himself is righteous (8, 9, 10).

1. He is not claiming perfection.

2. He is claiming that by God’s help he has done right towards man.

C. He asks for this because he knows that righteousness matters.

IV. David affirms the boomerang effect of sin (14-16).

A. A person who sows evil reaps a harvest of evil.

B. A person who causes trouble experiences trouble.

V. David resolves to praise the One who makes things right (17).

A. We have reason to thank Him.

B. We have reason to sing to Him.

The Bottom Line: Psalm 7 points us to Jesus.

1. He always did right.

2. He was treated wrongly.

3. Through His wrong treatment, we are made right.

Sometimes it gets nasty in the real world. In the real world crazy drivers cut you off in traffic. In the real world your work associate takes the credit and gets the reward for *your* work. In the real world your classmate betrays you and spreads personal information you shared in confidence. In the real world, it gets messy, confusing, and twisted at times.

What happens then? Does Christianity work *then*? Not only does it work, but *real* Christianity shows up best in the *real* world!

How should we respond when we've tried to do what's right but are accused of doing wrong? Psalm 7 shows us the answer. Quite frankly, you may not feel like you need Psalm 7 *now*. But if you are serious about living a righteous life for Christ, *you will*.

Sometimes I think we view learning the Bible like learning Algebra. I can still remember the feeling I had as a freshman in high school wondering, "What's the point of learning about these x's and y's?" And hearing our teacher and others say, "Oh, this is important information! You'll need this some day!" And so I took four years of math in high school, three quarters of Calculus and a quarter of linear algebra in college. I actually enjoyed studying higher math, but quite frankly I'm still waiting to *need this*.

I realize if I'd gone into medicine or engineering I might be using those theorems and formulas, but they don't provide much help for a pastor. Is that the way the Bible works? Are parts of it only for certain folks? No. *All* Scripture is God-breathed and profitable (2 Tim. 3:16). That includes Psalm 7.

Psalm 7 is one of the psalms that David wrote which include a heading that shows us the historical setting that prompted the writing of the psalm. We've looked in previous weeks at Psalms 52, 54, 56, 59, and 34. All of these psalms, as well as Psalm 7 have something in common. David wrote them when he was experiencing intense trials and hardships in his life.

Last week I shared with you about David Brainerd, a missionary to the Indians in the mid-1700's who selflessly poured out his life for Christ and died of tuberculosis at the young age of 29. In the following excerpt from his journal young Brainerd speaks openly about the hardships he faced:

"My circumstances are such, that I have no comfort of any kind, but what I have in God. I live in the most lonesome wilderness; have but one single person to converse with that can speak English. Most of talk I hear, is either Highland Scotch, or Indian. I have no fellow-Christian to whom I may...lay open my spiritual sorrows; with whom I may take sweet counsel in conversation about heavenly things, and join in social prayer. I live poorly with regard to the comforts of life; most of my diets consists of boiled corn, hasty-pudding, &c. I lodge on a bundle of straw, my labour is...extremely difficult, and I have little appearance of success, to comfort me. The Indians have no land to live on, but what the Dutch people lay claim to; and these threaten to drive them off. They have no regard to the souls of the poor Indians; and by what I can learn, they hate me because I come to preach to them. But that which makes all my difficulties grievous to be borne, is, that God hides his face from me."[\[1\]](#)

Where can we turn when life gets hard and God seems distant? Throughout the ages God's people have found solace in the Psalms. How should a righteous man respond when he's accused of doing wrong? We find the answer in Psalm 7. Notice the heading.

A shiggaion of David which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush, a Benjamite. David wrote this psalm and sang it, we're told. He wrote it with a man named Cush in mind. The problem is, there is no biblical account of a man named Cush involved in David's life. Bible scholars suggest David wrote this psalm in one of two situations, either during the time he was fleeing from King Saul, or years later when running from his own son, Absalom.

It seems that Cush was an otherwise unknown contemporary of Saul who slandered David, probably to Saul's

delight. He came from the Saul's own tribe, the tribe of Benjamin. Remember, David was from the lineage of Judah .

Eric Lane proposes a slightly different view, “ *Cush* may be Saul, whose father was Kish , or it may refer to Saul's character, since *Cush* implies ‘perfidious’.”^[2] The word ‘perfidious’ comes from the noun ‘perfidy’ meaning “treachery or deceit.” We know Saul maligned David and sought to kill him.

Perhaps Cush entered David's life *after* David became king. The Bible does tell us there were bad feelings in the tribe of Benjamin towards David that surfaced years later when Absalom, David's son, tried to usurp the throne. During the coup attempt, as David fled the city, 2 Samuel 16:5 indicates a man named Shimei, a man from Saul's own clan in the tribe of Benjamin, pelted David with stones and curses.

So who was Cush , and what specifically did he do to David? The facts are, we don't know and apparently don't need to know to appreciate the psalm (or God would have told us), for in His Word God has given us everything we need to know (2 Pet. 1:3).

But then again, we do know Cush . We see him from time to time in our own lives, slandering us, attacking us. The fact is, *every David has a Cush* . That is, every child of God who is serious about pleasing God will probably have a Cush in his life. For Abel it was Cain. For Moses it was Korah. For Mordecai it was Haman. For Daniel it was his jealous co-workers who misrepresented him and got him thrown into the lion's den. For Paul it was Alexander the metalworker (2 Tim. 4:14).

The question is, *then what?* What can you do when a Cush knocks the wind out of your sails? David shows us in Psalm 7. Psalm 7 is called a *shiggaion* of David.

What's a *shiggaion*? No one is sure. Charles Spurgeon suggests the title means ‘variable songs,’ and explains, “Truly our life-psalm is composed of variable verses; one stanza rolls along with the sublime meter of triumph, but another limps with the broken rhythm of complaint.”^[3]

Eric Lane offers a different perspective, “*Shiggaion* probably describes the passionate nature of the composition or the type of tune to which he wanted it set – one with a strong and wild rhythm. Notwithstanding this the thought of the psalm is very God-centered.”^[4]

Yes, it's a very God-centered psalm. In fact, as I've mentioned previously, one of the main purposes of the Psalter is to help us make God *the gravitational center of our lives*. The Psalms show us how real people made God the center of their lives in real situations.

For instance, what should I do when I've blown it? Psalm 51 shows me. What should I do when it hurts too much to sing? Psalm 137 shows me. When I don't feel God's presence? Psalm 13. When I feel blessed? Psalm 103. When I'm in the desert? Psalm 63. The psalms are “take home theology” for God's people, just like our church songs should be, songs that help us put God at the center of our lives.

In Psalm 7 David wrote a prayer-song that teaches us how to pray when we've been accused of wrong-doing. In his prayer David expresses five things to the Lord.

I. David takes his problem to the Lord (1-2).

“O LORD my God, I take refuge in you; save and deliver me from all who pursue me, or they will tear me like a lion and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue me.”

David asks the Lord to save him from Cush . If you don't, Lord, he'll tear me to pieces like a lion. David has battled a lion before, literally, and killed one that threatened his father's flock. But this opponent is different. He fights with words, deceitful words, caustic words, reputation-ruining words.

The problem with problem-people like Cush is that *they don't fight fair*. Charles Spurgeon observed, "Our enemies will not meet us to the face, for they fear us as much as they pretend to despise us."^[5] It's worth noting that the Jews later associated Psalm 7 with the feast of Purim which is connected to the story of Esther.^[6]

What do you do when someone's attacking you? The first thing David does is take his problem to the Lord, to make the Lord his refuge.

II. David takes inventory to make sure he isn't the cause of the problem (3-5).

"O LORD my God, if I have done this and there is guilt on my hands— if I have done evil to him who is at peace with me or without cause have robbed my foe— then let my enemy pursue and overtake me; let him trample my life to the ground and make me sleep in the dust. *Selah*"

The easiest thing to do when someone criticizes you is to blow off the person immediately. "Well that guy's got a lot of nerve, accusing *me* of being wrong!" But David didn't respond that way, nor should we. He took inventory of the criticism. Is it true? he asked himself *and* the Lord. Don't miss this...

A. David didn't have a victim's mindset. Beware of the victim's mindset popularized by modern-day psychology that says that bad things in my life are always the responsibility of *someone else*. No! Quite often, they are the consequences of my own sins.

For instance, if a policeman pulls me over my first thought ought not be, "What's that guy's problem? I wasn't doing anything wrong!" Nor if I get a poor job evaluation should my initial thought be, "My boss is so unfair! This evaluation is bogus!" And if a friend shares a criticism with me, God is not honored when my *immediate* reaction is, "No way! I don't have a problem. You're just too sensitive!"

Watch how David responded. The first thing he did was to take a hard look at his own life to see if Cush's criticism was legit. In fact, he took it a step further. He invited *God* to take a hard look at his life and see if the criticism was legit. Notice the if/then structure...

If I have done this, and if there is guilt on my hands, and if I have done evil, then let my enemy pursue me, overtake me, and trample me. In other words, rather than living with a victim's mindset where the blame is always someone *else's*...

B. David had a victor's mindset. Insecure people blame others when there's tension. But a person who finds his identity not in his performance but in his grace-based relationship with God, is open to criticism. In fact, he regularly practices self-evaluation anyway because he wants to please God, and he knows that God often uses people to help us see sinful patterns and practices in our lives we're prone to miss.

Here is David's perspective, and it's one we should exhibit...

1. *If I am guilty, then I deserve the consequences.* And I accept them. On the other hand...

2. *If I am not guilty, then I can pray with assurance.* That's what David is doing here. He has taken a hard look at his own life and doesn't see an ounce of validity in Cush's criticism and certainly no warrant for Cush's caustic attack. So consequently, he is praying with confidence. He knows that God knows the truth about Cush and about him, and so he comes to God's throne of grace with boldness and assurance.

Spurgeon called Psalm 7, "The Song of the Slandered Saint," and rightly observed, "If we would live without being slandered we must wait till we get to heaven."^[7]

Here's a great way to turn trials into blessings. Do what David did. *Sing*. Write a song about your trial and sing it to the Lord. Spurgeon explains, "Even this sorest of evils may furnish occasion for a Psalm. What a blessing would it

be if we could turn even the most disastrous event into a theme for a song, and so turn the tables upon our great enemy.”^[8]

Now put yourself in David’s shoes. It’s one thing to be criticized when you deserve it, and as painful as valid criticism is, a godly person looks for the benefit in it. But few things hurt worse than *false accusation*. When someone attacks you without justifiable cause, particularly if they attack you publicly, that pain is hard to bear.

Part of the reason is that, as Craigie suggests, “We cannot repent of something we have not done, nor can we make restoration...”^[9] What then *can* we do? What David did thirdly in the psalm. After taking his problem to the Lord, and after taking inventory to make sure he isn’t the cause of the problem...

III. David asks God to judge (6-13).

His request is the meat of the psalm, from verses 6-13. Take note particularly of David’s use of the words *righteous*, *righteousness*, and *upright*:

“Arise, O LORD, in your anger; rise up against the rage of my enemies. Awake, my God; decree justice. Let the assembled peoples gather around you. Rule over them from on high; let the LORD judge the peoples. Judge me, O LORD, according to my **righteousness**, according to my integrity, O Most High. O **righteous** God, who searches minds and hearts, bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the **righteous** secure. My shield is God Most High, who saves the **upright** in heart. God is a **righteous** judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day. If he does not relent, he will sharpen his sword; he will bend and string his bow. He has prepared his deadly weapons; he makes ready his flaming arrows.”

David refuses to retaliate against Cush. Instead he asks God to judge. On what basis does he invoke God’s judgment? He mentions three reasons, all related to *righteousness*.

A. He asks for this because God is righteous. “O righteous God,” David says in verse 9. The Hebrew word *tsadiq* means “innocent, guiltless, pertaining to not having sin or wrongdoing according to a just standard.”^[10] When used of God it indicates His perfection. There is no error with God, no mistakes, no accidents. When God does something it is always *right*.

What are the implications of the fact that God is *righteous*? David mentions three...

1. *God is the source of righteousness and justice (6-8).* In verse 8 David says, “Let the LORD judge the peoples.” Why would David ask God to judge? It’s because God is righteous. God doesn’t simply do what is right. He Himself is inherently righteous. Something is right because God wills and does it. He doesn’t respond to a standard. He *is* the righteous standard.

2. *God always does what is right (9).* In verse 9 David affirms that God is the “righteous God, who searches minds and hearts,” and who will “bring to an end the violence of the wicked.” God who is always right is also the One who makes things right.

Think about the accusation, “I don’t think God is fair. How could a just God send good people to hell? That isn’t right!” Well, for starters, God doesn’t send *good* people to hell. He sends sinners there, sinners who are guilty of breaking His law, and he does so because it is the *right* thing to do.

How would you respond if the following happened in a court of law? Suppose a jury found a man guilty of rape—the evidence was impeccable. But at the time of sentencing the rapist began to sob and plead with the judge, “I’m so sorry for what I did! Please, have mercy on me!” How would the courtroom respond if the judge at that moment declared, “Okay, I see your sorrow. I think you’ve learned your lesson. You may go free.”? The courtroom would erupt, wouldn’t it, with cries of, “No, your honor! You can’t do that! That’s not *right*!” When the law is violated we know instinctively a penalty must be paid. It’s the *right* thing to do.

In verse 11 David affirms that “God is a righteous judge,” which indicates He must do what is right. Yes, He is loving but He does not demonstrate His love in violation of His righteousness and justice. His is a righteous love. In fact, David affirms in verse 11 that “God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.” Ponder this third implication of God’s righteousness...

3. *God exhibits anger towards what is wrong (6, 11).* Does it surprise you to know that God demonstrates anger? How often? *Every day.* Romans 1:18 says, “The *wrath of God is being revealed* from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.”

You ask, “If God’s wrath *is being revealed*, then why can’t we see it?” We *are* seeing it. Romans 1 says that God right now is revealing His wrath against sinners by *giving them over* to their own lusts (a phrase that appears in verses 24, 26, & 28). In other words, God is presently expressing His wrath against sin by giving sinners exactly what they want, a life without Him, a self-destructing life.^[11]

Eric Lane puts it this way, “Sin contains within it the seed of its own undoing... Most of the time therefore God does not need to intervene directly but reveals his wrath simply by ‘giving us up’ to our own chosen ways.”^[12]

Here’s why David asked God to judge, first because God is righteous. Secondly...

B. He asks for this because he himself is righteous (8, 9, 10). That’s right. David claims to be righteous. Hear him in verse 8, “Judge me, O LORD, according to *my righteousness.*” And in verse 9, “Bring to an end the violence of the wicked [that’s Cush and others like him] and make *the righteous* secure [that’s *me*, David implies, and others like me].” We see it again in verse 10, “My shield is God Most High who saves *the upright in heart* [again, that’s *me*, David is saying].”

Wait a minute. Doesn’t David’s claim contradict Romans 3:10 which says, “There is no one righteous, not even one.”? No, there’s no contradiction, and here’s why...

1. *He is not claiming perfection.* David’s not talking about being *righteous* in God’s eyes (as he affirms in Psalm 51:5, “Surely I was sinful at birth...”). Rather...

2. *He is claiming that by God’s help he has done right towards man.* In other words, “Cush can accuse me of sin all he wants,” David is saying, “but the accusations won’t stick. I am *righteous*. I have tried to *do what’s right* towards Cush. And I ask You, Lord, to deal with me according to my *righteousness.*”

There’s a third reason David asks God to judge, not only because God is righteous and he is righteous, but also...

C. He asks for this because he knows that righteousness matters. We may wonder at times, for it seems that the one who *does the right thing* in this world gets stepped on and left in the dust, while the one who *mocks and abuses righteousness* moves ahead and climbs the ladder. But know this. Righteousness matters, and here’s why. God does see. And God is going to judge based on the standard of *righteousness*.

Did you notice how David’s perspective seems to expand in the middle of the psalm? Derek Kidner observes, “The psalm moves from the intensely personal plea of a man who is betrayed and hounded, to the conviction that God is judge of all the earth.”^[13] David looks ahead not only to the day when God judges wicked Cush but when God judges all the wicked people of the world.

That day is coming, my friend. Paul preached about it to the men of Athens in Acts 17:31, “For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.” Who is *the man* who will judge the world with justice? It’s the man God raised from the dead, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

Willem VanGemeren remarks, “Christians can join with the spirit of the psalm as they look forward to the rule of Christ over the nations and the execution of justice and righteousness on earth.”^[14] You say, “What’s going to happen at that judgment? Listen to 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10:

“God is **just**: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed...”

Back to our courtroom illustration. A just judge will not let a rapist or any other lawbreaker go free. He must punish unrighteousness. Since God is *just*, He must punish our unrighteousness. He cannot let us go free without the just penalty being administered. But here’s the unimaginably good news. In His mercy God provided a substitute to take the penalty. He sent His own Son into the world as a man to experience the punishment due to sinful man. On the cross the righteous Son of God took upon Himself the unrighteousness and wickedness of rebel sinners, and in the place of those rebels He took their due punishment. He exhausted the wrath of God in their behalf. And God accepted His payment, as evidenced by raising His Son from the dead on the third day.

Dear friend, this is the fact of the matter. Because God is righteous He must punish our sin. Yet because He is gracious He provided a substitute sin-bearer. Those who receive His Son will experience eternal life, but those who reject His Son will experience His eternal wrath in the lake of fire (John 3:36).

How did David respond to Cush ’s attack? He took his problem to the Lord, then took inventory to make sure he’s not the cause of the problem, then asked God to judge.

IV. David affirms the boomerang effect of sin (14-16).

“He who is pregnant with evil and conceives trouble gives birth to disillusionment. He who digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit he has made. The trouble he causes recoils on himself; his violence comes down on his own head.”

What’s David saying? He’s talking about the cause and effect nature of sin.

A. A person who sows evil reaps a harvest of evil. And...

B. A person who causes trouble experiences trouble. Maybe not today, maybe not even in this lifetime. But it’s coming. The wages of sin *is death*.

When somebody takes advantage of you it’s a great time to stop and reflect on the *boomerang effect* of sin. Sin, like a boomerang, always comes back. And if you’re not hiding behind the cross of Jesus, that boomerang will knock you right between the eyes.

Charles Spurgeon offers this insight, “Evil for good is devil-like, evil for evil is beast-like, good for good is man-like, good for evil is God-like.”^[15] So when wronged, don’t retaliate. Instead, turn the person over to God. Make sure you’re not part of the problem. Ask God to judge. Affirm the boomerang effect of sin. And take one more step with David...

V. David resolves to praise the One who makes things right (17).

“I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High^[16].”

We often thank God for His love, grace, patience, and faithfulness. But His *righteousness*? When was the last time you resolved to thank God specifically because of His *righteousness*? David says...

A. We have reason to thank Him. And reason #1 when you're being attacked and maligned by the Cush 's of the world is God's *righteousness*. God who is righteous sees when unrighteous people do unrighteous things to His children, and the day is coming when He will make things right. That's ample reason to *thank Him*. What's more...

B. We have reason to sing to Him. "I will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High." Spurgeon said it well, "Praise is the occupation of the godly, their eternal work, and their present pleasure."^[17]

Let's learn from David. In a sin-cursed world we're going to experience mistreatment. Sooner or later a Cush will enter our lives, and when he does let's follow in David's footsteps. But don't stop with David. Look beyond David to the Son of David...

The Bottom Line: Psalm 7 points us to Jesus.

Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures, including Psalm 7. David said he was righteous but only in a limited sense, for he was a sinner in God's eyes. Not so the Son of David...

1. *He always did right.* Not only did He never sin, but He always did the right thing in the right way motivated by a right heart. What's more, like David...

2. *He was treated wrongly.* The prophet Isaiah prophesied of Him, "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering (Isa. 53:3)." You say, "Why did God allow wicked men to abuse His precious Son? Why didn't He do something?" Oh, my friend, He was doing something! There was a purpose for this mistreatment, an outcome He had in mind, an outcome He revealed in Isaiah's prophecy a few verses later...

Isaiah 53:11 "After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my *righteous* servant [that's Jesus] will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." You see, there is only one way a sinner can become righteous. He cannot make himself righteous, not in God's eyes. He must receive righteousness. It is a gift that God gives to those who admit their sin and accept His Son as their Savior and Lord. Yes indeed, God had a purpose in the maltreatment of His Son...

3. *Through His wrong treatment, we are made right.* Praise Him!

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church . It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

^[1] Richard Hasler, *Journey with David Brainerd*, p. 62.

^[2] Eric Lane , p. 49.

^[3] Charles Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, p. 67.

^[4] Eric Lane , p. 49.

^[5] Charles Spurgeon, p. 70.

^[6] Peter Craigie, p. 100.

^[7] Spurgeon, pp. 67, 68.

^[8] Charles Spurgeon, p. 67.

^[9] Peter Craigie, p. 101.

[\[10\]](#) *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semitic Domains*

[\[11\]](#) And how do sinners respond? Romans 1:31-32 says, “They are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God’s **righteous** decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.”

[\[12\]](#) Eric Lane , p. 51.

[\[13\]](#) Derek Kidner, p. 63.

[\[14\]](#) Willem VanGemeren, p. 100.

[\[15\]](#) Charles Spurgeon, p. 77.

[\[16\]](#) The title *Most High* is seldom found outside the Psalms.

[\[17\]](#) Spurgeon, p. 71.