

Psalm 35

[A Psalm] of David.

Psalm 35: This cry of distress is the petition of a man falsely accused.

It may well date from the time when David was being pursued by Saul.

The psalm naturally divides itself into three parts, with each ending with a note of hope: first a petition for deliverance (verses 1-10), expression of lament (verses 11-18), and renewed petition (verses 19-28).

David's motives are not for revenge; he had opportunities to kill Saul but did not.

Rather, it is a plea for God's righteous judgment.

The motive is that David might once again thank God freely (verses 18, 28).

Verses 1-28:

Psalm 35, as to its form, is an individual lament.

Its context of literal and legal warfare is suggesting a scenario of the theocratic king being accused, and about to be attacked, by a foreign power with whom he had previously entered into a covenant.

David presents his "case" before the Divine Judge, moving from a complaint about the situation, to prayer about the situation, and finally, when the LORD would justly respond to the situation, praise for His righteous intervention.

So, 3 cycles of exasperation and expectation in Psalm 35 convey the psalmist's prayers about his opponents to God.

- I. First Cycle: The Attacks He Was Experiencing (35:1-10).
- II. Second Cycle: The Perjury He Was Experiencing (35:11-18).
 - A. He Prays that God Would Examine the Evidence (35:11-16);
 - B. He Prays that God Would Act without Delay (35:17);
 - C. He Pledges Praise (35:18).
- III. Third Cycle: The Mockery He Was Anticipating (35:19-28).
 - A. He Prays for Judgment concerning Them (35:19-21);
 - B. He Prays for Justice concerning Himself (35:22-26);
 - C. He Pledges Praise (35:27-28).

Psalm 35:1 "Plead [my cause], O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me."

"Plead ... fight":

The first bold prayer solicits the legal advocacy of God (compare Prov. 25:8-9; Isa. 3:13), while the second asks the Divine Warrior to fight his battles for him (e.g., Exodus 15:3; Deut. 32:41).

We see a troubled David whose enemy wants to utterly destroy him.

We know that the enemy of all believers is our adversary, the devil.

The devil may try to accuse us to the Father, but we have an advocate (Christ the Righteous).

Jesus pleads our case, every time the devil tries to accuse us.

We read in the previous lesson, how the LORD will send angels to encamp around us, and keep us safe from our enemies.

Psalm 35:2 "Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help."

Defensive weapons; not that the LORD stands in need of any of these to defend himself.

But the sense is, that he would be as these to David.

As he was to him, and is to all his people; namely, their shield and buckler.

He gives unto them the shield of salvation; he encompasses them about with his favor as with a shield, and keeps them by his power safe from all their enemies.

"And stand up for mine help":

For which the LORD arises, and stands by his people, and against their enemies, delivering them out of their hands.

The true meaning from this is that Almighty God stands between us and any danger.

He protects us.

He is our shield, and He builds a hedge around us to keep us from harm.

Psalm 35:3 "Draw out also the spear, and stop [the way] against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I [am] thy salvation."

An offensive weapon; expressive of the vengeance which God sometimes takes of the enemies of his people.

When he bends his bow, and shoots his arrows, whets his glittering sword, and his hand takes hold of judgment.

"And stop the way against them that persecute me":

That they might not overtake him.

God can hinder, and he sometimes does hinder persecutors from overtaking his people who are in their straits.

And as he hedges up their way with thorns, that they cannot proceed as they have begun, so he hedges up the way of their enemies.

Interposes himself and his power, and is a wall of fire about them.

A wall for the defense and security of his saints, and a wall of fire for the consumption of those that rise up against them.

The words may be rendered, "draw out the spear and sword, to meet those that persecute me".

"Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation": Say to "me," I will save you.

Meaning, I ask you to give me some assurance that thou wilt interpose, and that thou wilt guard me from my enemies.

Man only wants this assurance to be calm in respect to any danger.

When God says to us that he will be our salvation; that he will protect us; that he will deliver us from sin, from danger, from hell, the mind may and will be perfectly calm.

To a believer he gives this assurance; to all he is willing to give it.

The whole plan of salvation is arranged with a view to furnish such an assurance, and to give a pledge to the soul that God "will" save.

Death loses its terrors then.

The redeemed man moves on calmly, for in all the future and in all worlds, he has nothing now to fear.

David is longing for reassurance (compare Psalm 3:8a).

The salvation of our soul is in belief in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.

Draw out the spear, means that He will hold them at a far distance and not letting harm come to His own.

No harm will come nigh unto the chosen of God.

(In verses 4-8), compare the imprecations of (Psalms 7, 69, 109).

Verses 4-5:

To be put to shame is David's cry for judgment against his enemies.

The wicked being blown away like "chaff" is a common image in Scripture (83:13; Job 21:18; Isaiah 29:5).

Psalm 35:4 "Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt."

That is, "Let them", through Thy gracious interposition in my behalf.

Be so entirely overcome and subdued that they shall be "ashamed" that they ever made the effort to destroy me.

Let them see so manifestly that God is on my side that they will be covered with confusion for having opposed one who was so entirely the object of the divine protection and care (see notes on Psalms 6:10, 25:2-3, and compare the notes at Job 6:20).

"That seek after my soul":

It appears from this that David's life is being sought, which only happened at two periods in all of his career:

- (1) when he was a fugitive from Saul (1 Sam. 19:15; 26:4); and
- (2) during the rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam. 15:13 - 18:8).

"Let them be turned back":

In their attempts to pursue me.

Do thou interpose and turn them back.

"And brought to confusion":

Put to shame; or made ashamed, as they are who are disappointed and thwarted in their schemes.

This reminds me of the confusion that went on when Gideon with 300 choice servants of God confused, confounded, and actually drove away 185,000 of the enemy's troops in terror (2 Kings 19:35).

Psalm 35:5 "Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase [them]."

"Let them be as chaff before the wind":

(compare Psalm 1:4; Isa. 17:13; 29:5; Hosea 13:3).

Chaff is the type of whatever is light, vain, futile, and worthless.

Chaff driven before the wind represents the confused rout of a beaten army fleeing without any resistance before an enemy.

"And let the angel of the LORD chase them":

Rather, smite them.

The angel of the LORD, who protects the righteous (Psalm 34:7), is called on to complete the discomfiture of the wicked ones, who are David's enemies.

Ungodly men have no root withal, and any wind could blow them away.

We see an example within the following Scripture just what the angel of the LORD is able to do all by himself.

Isaiah 37:36 "Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they [were] all dead corpses."

You can see just how serious it would be for this angel of the LORD to be fighting against you.

David is asking in the verse above, for this angel of the LORD to chase his enemies.

Psalm 35:6 "Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them."

In which they run before the angel, chasing and pursuing them.

So that they know not where they are, at what they stumble, whither to flee, nor how to stand.

The ways of wicked men are as darkness, they know not in what condition they are, and where they are going.

And utter darkness, even blackness of darkness, is reserved for them.

But here it means a calamitous, uncomfortable, fickle, and unstable situation in this life (see Jeremiah 23:11).

The allusion is to some of the valleys in the land of Palestine, which were dark, and the roads in them very smooth and slippery, as travelers in those parts have observed.

"And let the angel of the LORD persecute them":

Pursue or follow them.

The word "persecute" we use now in the sense of subjecting one to pain, torture, or privation, on account of his religious opinions.

This is not the meaning of the word used here.

It is simply to "follow" or "pursue."

This image is that of this avenging angel following or pursuing them in this very dark and slippery way.

A flight in a dark and dangerous path, with a destroying angel close in the rear.

Not only will this angel of the LORD be persecuting them, but David is saying, make their path dark where they cannot see as well.

Psalm 35:7 "For without cause have they hid for me their net [in] a pit, [which] without cause they have digged for my soul."

"Without cause ... without cause": This adds to his defense; all their attacks, from a covenant or legal standpoint, have been unjustified.

David is saying, that without any provocation on his part, these evil people have tried to set a trap for him.

This undoubtedly is a hole in the ground with a net stretched over the top.

When Joseph went to see his brothers, they threw him into a pit.

Joseph had not really done anything bad to these half-brothers of his either.

You remember they sold Joseph to some merchants who were passing through.

Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt.

This sometimes is the way it is now.

The more you try to help some people, the more hurt they try to cause you.

The problem in all of these cases is, the devil is influencing these people and causing them to do evil things.

Psalm 35:8 "Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall."

I.e. let the evil happen to him that he designed against others.

As he sought to catch others in traps of which they knew nothing (verse 7), so let an unexpected destruction come upon him.

"And let his net that he hath hid catch himself":

(See notes at Psalm 7:15-16).

The psalmist prays here that the same thing may occur to his enemy which his enemy had designed for him.

It is simply a prayer that they might be treated as they purposed to treat him.

"Into that very destruction let him fall":

Which he had designed and contrived for others.

As Haman was hanged on the same gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

And so it often is in the course of Providence, that the wicked fall into the same calamity they have intended and endeavored to bring others into (see Psalm 7:15).

We know from the story that is in Genesis about Joseph that, this is just what happened to Joseph's brothers.

They were caught in their own net of deception.

They had told their dad that Joseph had been killed by wild animals, but in the end they had to tell Jacob of their lies.

To keep their families from starving to death, they had to go to Joseph for help.

When a person sets a trap for someone else, he usually gets caught in the trap himself.

Verses 9-10: "My soul" and "my bones" are two emphatic ways of saying "I" or "myself".

Psalm 35:9 "And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation."

That is, I shall be joyful, or will rejoice.

This is said in anticipation of the interposition of God in destroying his enemies, and in delivering him from danger.

It is not joy in the destruction of others; it is joy that he himself would be delivered.

Our own deliverance that comes from the hand of our enemies may involve the necessity of their being cut off.

What we rejoice in, in such a case, is not their ruin, but our own deliverance.

And for this it can never be improper to give thanks.

The psalmist says that he would rejoice "in the LORD."

It would not be in his own skill or valor, but in what God had done to save him (see notes at Psalm 34:2).

"It shall rejoice in his salvation":

That which Jehovah the Father has determined upon, provided for, and then has formed the scheme of.

That which Jehovah the Son undertook to accomplish, and now has finished.

And that which Jehovah the Spirit had made a discovery and application of unto the psalmist, in answer to his request (in Psalm 35:3).

This filled him with so much joy, as it does every believer that has a view of interest in it.

Seeing hereby the law is fulfilled, justice is satisfied.

Sin is atoned for, the pardon of it is procured, an everlasting righteousness is brought in, and a solid foundation laid for hope of eternal glory and happiness.

This is a complete change of thought from the previous verse.

David feels that God has rescued him, and he is rejoicing in his salvation.

Notice that David is not rejoicing at the destruction of his enemy, but is rejoicing in the fact that he had been saved.

We should not rejoice in the problems of others, even if they have tried to do us wrong.

Psalm 35:10 "All my bones shall say, LORD, who [is] like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?"

“LORD, who is like unto thee”:

This had become a canonized expression of awe at the uniqueness of Israel’s great God (compare Exodus 15:11; Micah 7:18).

David is saying that everything within me praises God, who delivered me from my enemies who were much stronger physically than me.

The LORD cares for those who are weak and poor.

Verses 11-14: A strong contrast is drawn between the psalmist’s attitude about the covenant agreement and that of his treaty partner.

Psalm 35:11 "False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge [things] that I knew not."

(Compare Psalm 27:12).

Literally, malicious, or unrighteous witnesses (see Exodus 23:1).

It is not probable that witnesses in a court are intended.

David's false witnesses accused him privately to Saul of "seeking his hurt" (1 Sam. 24:9).

And so stirred Saul up against him (1 Sam. 26:19).

By what is here said, they appear to have accused him to his face, and to have endeavored to exhort from him a confession of guilt.

"They laid to my charge things that I knew not":

Such as David was not conscious of, and never thought of doing, or much less attempted to do.

As the taking away of Saul's life, the contrary of which appeared by his cutting off his skirt only when he was in his hands, and taking away his spear from his bolster when he could have taken off his head.

And such were the things laid to the charge of the Messiah, David's son, who knew no sin, nor did any.

And the like is exhibited against his members, who go through good report and bad report, and whose good conversation is falsely accused by malicious men.

David was accused of trying to kill Saul, when in fact, David could have killed him and didn't.

This has been the same all through the ages.

The accusers of Jesus were false witnesses as well.

The same is true today.

If you are trying to live for God, there will be false accusers who will be trying to tear your reputation down.

We should rejoice when they accuse us falsely, because they did the same thing to Jesus.

Psalm 35:12 "They rewarded me evil for good [to] the spoiling of my soul."

(Compare verse 13).

Among those who slandered him were persons with whose troubles he had sympathized, and for whom he had prayed with fasting when they were sick.

His worst persecutor, Saul, admitted the charge here made.

"Thou art more righteous than I," he said; "for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil" (1 Sam. 24:17).

"To the spoiling of my soul":

Or, the desolating of my soul.

The result of his enemies' machinations against him was to make him a fugitive and a wanderer.

To separate him from the friend whom he tenderly loved, from his wife, his parents, and the greater part of his acquaintances.

David felt the hurt in his soul that had been done by these evil ones he had been loyal to.

The evil one has never changed his ways, it is the same now.

In many cases it seems the more you try to help someone, the more they try to do harm to you.

We need not worry about these things.

God will take care of it for us, just as He did for David.

Psalm 35:13 "But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing [was] sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom."

Or under any disorder or distress of body or mind, when any misfortune or infirmity was attended them.

Meaning Saul and his courtiers, before David was persecuted by them.

"My clothing was sackcloth":

That is, he was grieved, and mourned for them.

It being usual to put on sackcloth in time of mourning (see Gen. 37:34).

"I humbled my soul with fasting":

On the account of them, giving up himself to prayer for them, as follows.

"And my prayer returned into mine own bosom":

That is, he prayed privately and heartily for them, as for himself.

He was constant in it and also his heart was in it, as he took delight in it, and he was then heard and answered.

Unless the sense should be, that his prayer was slighted by them, and so returned back to himself, as a present despised is returned.

But however, it was not without its effect, the good for which he prayed for them was returned by the LORD unto him.

This again has not changed from David's time.

We fast and pray for them, and God heals them, and a week later they have forgotten and are telling terrible tales on you.

The devil's tactics never change; the players are just a different group.

Psalm 35:14 "I behaved myself as though [he had been] my friend [or] brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth [for his] mother."

In every such case I sympathized with the sufferer to such an extent, that my conduct was like that of an intimate friend or a brother.

"I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother":

Nay, I went further.

I took on all those outward signs of grief which are usual when a man has lost his mother.

I "bowed down heavily," as though I could scarcely stand.

The Orientals are extreme and exaggerated in their manifestations both of joy and grief.

Even though this was an enemy of David's, he prayed and cried before God in behalf of him.

Jesus told us to do just this thing in the following Scripture:

Matthew 5:44 "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

We see in the last Scripture, what we are to do.

Now look in the following Scripture, and see why we are to do it.

Matthew 5:45 "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

Psalm 35:15 "But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: [yea], the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew [it] not; they did tear [me], and ceased not:"

Rather, in my fall, or in my halting.

"When I halted" (Revised Version).

"The word implies a sudden slip and overthrow," such as is represented in (1 Sam. 18:8-29).

"Yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me":

Compare the case of Job (Job 30:1-14).

It is a matter of common experience that when men fall from a high position into misfortune, the base vulgar crowd always turns against them with scoffs and jeers, and also every sort of insulting language.

"And I knew it not":

David knew his enemies, or he could not have shown so much concern for them, as he did in the preceding verses.

But either he knew not of their gathering together against him; until he saw them in great numbers about him.

Or he was not conscious of any evil he had done them, that should be the reason of it.

And this was the case of his son the Messiah.

He knew who they were that gathered about him, even those that blindfolded him, and bid him prophesy who smote him.

But he knew that no sin he had done was the reason for his being treated as he was.

"They did tear me, and ceased not (compare Job 16:9)

Subjects in this verse, means attackers.

The world rejoices when a Christian falls.

In fact, it is front line news.

The television is full of it as well.

The sad thing is that the Christian brothers and sisters take no wounded, and also they kill their fallen brothers.

The wicked in David's time, and even now, they rejoice when those trying to live for God are having problems.

My own personal belief is; they believe, that when someone falls, that it makes them look better.

Psalm 35:16 "With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth."

That is, the subjects gathered, themselves together with such.

These may design Saul's courtiers, parasites and flatterers, and who were hypocrites in religion as well.

And made it their business at Saul's table, and in their banquets and revellings, to mock at David.

And who were "hypocritical mockers of" or "for a piece of bread", as it may be rendered.

And such sort of men were the enemies of Christ, the Scribes and Pharisees.

Hypocrites to God and flatterers of men, who loved feasts, and the uppermost places there, and whose god was their belly.

And who were mockers of Christ, deriding his doctrine, and scoffing at his person, especially when he hung upon the cross.

Oh the painful maiming's of mockery.

"They gnashed upon me with their teeth":

I.e. spoke fiercely and angrily against me, like dogs that snarl and show their teeth (compare Job 16:9; Psalms 37:12; 112:10; Lam. 2:16).

Jealousy causes this sort of thing.

These mockers knew that David was a better man than they were.

They felt they would look better in the eyes of Saul, if they said every ugly thing they could think of against David.

Some people have the idea that the way to the top is by pushing others down.

In reality, the best way to get to the top is by building others up.

Psalm 35:17 "Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions."

Like an idle spectator, without affording me any pity or help? On laments compare (Psalm 13:1; Hab. 1:2).

"Rescue my soul from their destructions?"

Be pleased, at length, to vindicate my innocence from those who have already despoiled me of my peace and good name.

"My darling":

Margin, "my only one."

The reference here is to "his own soul" or life.

It is the language of tenderness addressed to himself.

He had but one soul or life, and that was dear to him, as an only child is dear to its parent.

"From the lions":

Namely, my soul or life, as it is in the former clause. Enemies, described as lions; having the fierceness and savage fury of lions.

Hebrew, my only one, for I am left alone, and forsaken by my friends, and have none to trust in but thee (see Psalm 22:20-21).

And now they seek, like so many rapacious lions, to devour me.

Many times, it appears to us that God is slow in punishing someone for their evil deeds.

We will see in the following Scripture that God is giving them time to repent.

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Looking back we can be very thankful that the LORD gave us a few more days to repent.

Psalm 35:18 "I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people."

This is the resolution the psalmist came unto.

The promise he made, that should he be delivered from his enemies, he would give God thanks in the most public manner.

That is, he would acknowledge God to be the author of the mercy, and himself unworthy of it.

And would ascribe glory, honor, blessing, and thanksgiving to him, in the midst of the church and people of God.

They joining with him in praise to God for his answered prayer.

"I will praise thee among much people":

Meaning the same as before, the people of God meeting together for solemn worship.

The great congregation of all, and the many people, will be the saints in heaven, when they shall be gathered together, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

These words will be applied to the Messiah (see Psalm 22:22).

This is very similar to giving your testimony in church today.

When God has delivered us, or David, from a terrible situation, we need to go before the congregation and tell of the wonderful thing God has done.

To God be the glory!

Psalm 35:19 "Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: [neither] let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause."

The word "wrongfully" is to be joined not to the word "rejoice", but to the word "enemies".

And the sense is, that they were his enemies wrongfully.

For false reasons, unjust causes, or without any cause that was just; as follows.

“Wrongfully” (compare “without cause” twice in verse 7).

"Neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause":

I.e. let them not have cause to wink to each other in self-congratulation on their having triumphed over me completely.

This winking of the eye is a sign that you have tricked someone.

It also shows an arrogant satisfaction that you have defeated someone.

David does not want them bragging of a victory, they have not won.

Psalm 35:20 "For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against [them that are] quiet in the land."

For they speak not peace. Once more the language of complaint.

David's enemies, though they have driven him from the court, and made him a fugitive and a wanderer, were not yet satisfied.

They did not speak him peace but they continued to scheme against him.

"But they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land":

David, if let alone, was willing enough to have remained "quiet in the land."

He was a fugitive and an outlaw; but, could he have obtained a safe refuge, such as the cave of Adullam or any other, he would gladly have remained peacefully within it.

But his enemies would not allow him to remain quiet.

They stirred up the jealousy and hatred of Saul by false tales, and caused him to be "hunted upon the mountains" (1 Sam. 26:20).

Those who are under the influence of Satan, then or now, sow discord.

A person who is under the influence of Satan has no character himself and his greatest desire is to destroy someone else's character.

Verses 21-22: "Our eye hath seen it ... This thou hast seen, O LORD":

What David's enemy allegedly saw; the LORD has seen perfectly.

David knew that his God would vindicate him based upon the true evidence, all in his favor.

Psalm 35:21 "Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, [and] said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen [it]."

(See the notes at Psalm 22:13).

"And said, Aha, aha!":

(See Psalm 40:15; 70:3).

The language is that which we use when we "detect" another in doing wrong, in doing what he meant to conceal.

"Our eye hath seen it":

We are not dependent on the reports of others.

We have seen it with our own eyes.

We have found you out.

We cannot be mistaken in regard to it.

The reference is to some supposed "detection" of misconduct on the part of David, and the joy and triumph of such a supposed detection.

"Aha, aha":

This taunting chorus will return (in verse 25).

I know a church that is in a rural setting that had people who were amazed that anyone would come to such a remote area and start a church.

Without even knowing anything about this church, the rumors began to fly.

I really have to chuckle at one of the things that was said.

It was said that this church must not be the correct type of church, because services were held more than once a week.

Just as in the problem with David above, the tales they are opening their mouths wide to say, need not make good sense.

They are claiming to be an eye witness, and nothing really has been done wrong.

Psalm 35:22 "[This] thou hast seen, O LORD: keep not silence: O LORD, be not far from me."

The insults and derisions of these men, and the injuries they did to him, whom they hated.

God is omniscient, and sees all things.

All the evil wicked men do to him.

And he will repay them in his own time (see Psalm 10:14).

"Keep not silence":

Meaning at his prayers.

That he would not be as one deaf and dumb, turning his ears from his cries, and giving no answer to his requests (see Psalm 28:1).

"O LORD, be not far from me":

Meaning not as to his general presence, in which sense he is not far from any (Acts chapter 17):

But with respect to his gracious presence and appearance to him for help and deliverance (see Psalm 22:1).

David is feeling very alone.

He says: You know it is true what they are doing LORD, because you have seen it Yourself.

David needs very much to know the presence of the LORD at this point.

Psalm 35:23 "Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, [even] unto my cause, my God and my Lord."

Stir up thyself, and awake":

Who seemed to be asleep in the apprehensions of the psalmist, and to take no notice of his distresses, and the insults of his enemies (see Psalm 44:23). He adds;

"To my judgment, even unto my cause":

That is, to plead it and maintain it, and avenge him of his enemies (as in Psalm 35:1).

Making use of his covenant interest in him as a plea for it to engage him to do it, saying,

"Unto my cause":

He brings back the advocacy theme (of verse 1).

"My God and my Lord":

(See Psalm 22:1).

"Awake," i.e., "to judge my cause.

To acquit me, and condemn my enemies" (compare Psalm 9:4; 35:1; 43:1).

Psalm 35:24 "Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me."

Pronounce judgment, or judge between me and my enemies (compare notes at Psalm 26:1).

"According to thy righteousness":

That is, "rightly."

Let there be a righteous judgment.

The character of God, or the righteousness of God, is the highest standard of equity and justice.

And the psalmist asks that he would manifest his real character as judge in interposing in behalf of an injured and oppressed man, and doing justice to him.

When we are right in our own cause we may ask a just God to interpose and determine between us and our enemies according to his own nature.

As between ourselves and our fellowmen we may bring our cause with this plea before a righteous God.

As between ourselves and God, we can make no appeal to his "justice," but our only hope is in his "mercy."

"And let them not rejoice over me":

Let them not carry out their purposes.

Let them not be successful, so that they can appeal to the result as if they were right, and thus obtaining a triumph over me (compare Psalm 35:19).

I am so thankful that the world is not our judge.

I can say along with David, You Judge me LORD. I have been washed in the blood of the precious Lamb and am covered with His righteousness.

I have nothing to fear from the righteous Judge.

Psalm 35:25 "Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up."

Let them not congratulate themselves on the result.

Let them not feel that they have triumphed.

Let them not, under thy government, come off victorious in doing wrong.

"Ah, so would we have it":

Margin, as in Hebrew, "Ah, our soul."

That is, it is just as we thought it was.

Just as we desired it should be; that is exactly our mind in the case.

God has permitted us to triumph, and he has showed that we are right in the matter.

He has decided the thing in our favor, and it is just as it should be.

Let them not say, We have swallowed him up":

As roaring lions swallow down their prey, to which he had compared them (Psalm 35:17).

And as wicked men eat up the LORD's people as they eat bread (Psalm 14:4).

David is feeling the pain that the evil tongues around him have brought against him.

Psalm 35:26 "Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonor that magnify [themselves] against me."

In a body, as one man; as they gathered together against him (Psalm 35:15).

So, he entreats they might together be brought to shame and confusion, they not being able to execute their designs.

Their schemes being broken, their counsels defeated, and they exposed to contempt.

"That rejoice at mine hurt":

The same with his adversity, or halting (Psalm 35:15).

"Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor that magnify themselves against me.

Let them be covered with it, as a man is with a garment.

Who magnified themselves, opened their mouths in great swelling words of vanity against him.

Vaunted and bragged over him, as in their power, and at their will.

These evil people who accuse the brethren unjustly, will stand before the Judge of all the earth and they will be ashamed.

It is a very dangerous thing to come against God's anointed.

Psalm 35:27 "Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favor my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant."

That is, Let me be delivered.

Let my friends see that God is on my side, and that they have occasion to rejoice in his merciful interposition in my behalf.

"That favor my righteous cause":

Margin, as in Hebrew, "my righteousness."

The reference is to those who considered his cause a just one, and who were his friends.

"Yea, let them say continually":

Let this be a constant subject of grateful reflection, a perpetual source of joy to them, that God has interposed in my behalf, and has shown that my cause was a just one.

"Let the LORD be magnified":

Be regarded as great, exalted, and glorious.

Let the effect be to elevate their conceptions of the character of God by the fact that he has thus interposed in a righteous cause.

And has shown that he is the friend of the wronged and the oppressed.

"Which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant":

Who delights to make his friends prosperous and happy.

Let them see that this is the character of God, and let them be led to rejoice in him evermore.

"His servant":

Besides being a polite third person reference to the psalmist, the terminology was also used of an Old Testament disciple regarding himself as bound to the LORD.

Christians should rejoice at the success of others who are working for God.

No jealousy should exist between brothers and sisters in Christ.

Any minister will tell you that their ministry is just as successful as those who pray for them.

The success of David should be a rejoicing time for all of his followers.

We all benefit when one of God's children win a victory.

Psalm 35:28 "And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness [and] of thy praise all the day long."

In vindicating his cause, and bringing his enemies to shame and confusion, as well as of the glory and excellency of that righteousness of his.

By which he was justified in his sight, and from whence his inward peace and prosperity flowed.

"And of thy praise":

Of that which is a ground or reason for praise.

I will speak continually of that in God and in his Holy doings which make it proper that he should be praised.

"All the day long":

Continually; constantly.

Every new proof of the kindness of God to him would lead to new acts of praise.

And his life, as ours should be, would be a continual expression of thanksgiving.

The appropriate response to God's deliverance is public praise and testimony; see the following: (35:18; 122:4; 136:1).

David is saying that, he will praise God from morning to evening.

We are told to pray without ceasing.

There is no time more glorious for the believer than when he knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that God has won the victory for him.

We studied (in chapter 34), of this series that David said, "I will bless the LORD at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

Every Christian should join David and praise God all the day long, for He has done marvelous things for us.

Psalm 35 Questions

1. Who is the enemy of all believers?
2. Who is our advocate, if we are believers?
3. What is the salvation of our soul?
4. What does draw out the spear mean?
5. What does the confusion, spoken of in verse 4, remind the author of?
6. Why can ungodly men be easily blown away?
7. In the 37th chapter of Isaiah, how many of the enemy were killed by the angel of the LORD?
8. The pit in verse 7, is possibly what sort of a trap?
9. Who is a good example of someone who did no harm, being persecuted by his brothers?
10. When a person sets a trap for someone else, what usually happens?
11. In verse 9, what was David rejoicing of?
12. What kind of witnesses accused David?
13. How was this similar to the accusations made against Jesus?
14. What attitude did David have when his enemies were sick?

15. In verse 14 David said, he had treated them as if they were whom?
16. Why are we to pray for our enemies?
17. What does the word abjects mean?
18. Who rejoices when a Christian falls?
19. What usually causes hypocritical mockers?
20. Where does David promise to praise God?
21. What is the winking of the eye a sign of?
22. What have the followers of Satan always sown?
23. Who is David willing to have judge him?
24. Why do we believers in the Lord have no fear of being judged by Jesus?
25. How should Christians react to the success of other Christians?
26. When should we praise God?