

• *Tribal hostility – which is still with us today!*

The heading speaks of Cush whose tribe was often hostile to David. The Benjaminite tribe lost prestige when David replaced Saul. Often we oppose someone for tribal reasons - and all nations have tribes! There is the university-trained tribe, the business-people tribe, the posh-accent tribe, and so on. Cush attacked David with slander.

• *Structure A-B-C-D-C-B-A*

Note the A-B-C-D-C-B-A structure of this psalm. Verses 1-2 and 17 are prayer. Verses 3-5 and 14-16 deal with the rewards of sin. Verses 6-9a call upon God to arise as a mighty warrior and for judgement to begin; verses 10-13 go over the same ground. Verse 9b is the heart of the psalm - 'you who test the minds and hearts, O righteous God!'

1. Facing slander

• *God has his reasons for permitting this trouble*

1. **Every godly person sooner or later faces slander.** The slander was terribly painful. Verse 2 speaks of David's being torn apart. Jesus faced slander also, for his enemies accused him of all sorts of wickedness. They wanted Pilate to regard him as a political rebel, and found false witnesses to testify against him. The Christian is likely to face the same treatment. Why does God allow it?

(i) To test our willingness to do nothing but leave ourselves in God's hands! Jesus left himself entirely in the care of God at his trial.

(ii) It is a test of our willingness to lose glory, and to live for God alone.

(iii) It helps us to pray. David prays:

*Yahweh my God, in you do I take refuge;
save me from all my pursuers and deliver me [☩]¹,
lest like a lion they tear my soul apart,
rending it in pieces, with none to deliver [☩]²*

[☩]¹ 7:1

[☩]² 7:2

• *He relies on God's Name – Yahweh*

He relies on God's name. 'Yahweh' speaks of God's sympathy for those in bondage, his willingness to rescue them and take them to himself, his method of delivering them 'by the blood of a lamb'. David speaks of 'my God'. You can go through almost any trouble as long as you know God is there for you and you belong to him.

2. Prayer with a clear conscience

2. **It is wonderful when we can pray with a clear conscience.** This Benjaminite is accusing David of wickedness. But David's conscience was clear.

*Yahweh my God, if I have done this,
if there is wrong in my hands [☩]¹.
if I have done evil to him who is at peace with me
or without cause have robbed my foe [☩]²,
let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it,
and let him trample my life to the ground
and lay my glory in the dust [☩]³.*

[☩]¹ 7:3

[☩]² 7:4

[☩]³ 7:5

• David knows he is not guilty of the charge

David's 'glory' is his reputation, his honour as a leader and as a godly person. David prays in effect: 'God, if I am guilty of what Cush says, then I submit to your chastening and you may correct me and humble me. I am willing to be pursued as Cush is pursuing me. I am willing to be disgraced'. But actually David knows that he is not guilty of the charges Cush has brought against him.

3. Prayer for Judgement

3. **David - or is it Jesus? - prays for judgement.** In verses 6-9 David prays for God's judgement to come.

*Yahweh, arise in your anger;
lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies;
awake for me; you have appointed a judgment¹.
Let the assembly of the peoples be gathered about you;
over it return on high².
Yahweh judges the peoples;
Yahweh, judge me according to my righteousness
and according to the integrity that is in me³.
Let the evil of the wicked come to an end,
and may you establish the righteous —⁴.*

1 7:6

2 7:7

3 7:8

4 7:9a

• Question: Is this a pattern for us to follow?

Can we really pray like this?
(i) There are few people who have been as **unvindictive** as David was.

(ii) David has a concern for the glory of God.

(iii) David is realistic. If his enemy is defeated, he will be defeated because God will put him down.

(iv) David is willing to pray about himself in the same way - as we have just seen in Psalm 7:3-5. But more importantly –

(vi) **David is prophetic of Jesus.** Often in the Bible something is said about David that seems not to suit him. In Psalm 2 is it David who is the object of the enmity of all of the kings of the earth? Surely not!) Psalm 16 is similar (see the comment of Acts 2:29). It was not David whose body did not perish! David is prophetic of Jesus! It is Jesus who is the totally righteous One! It is Jesus who really can pray 'judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness'. He can pray in the name of his own righteousness. David could do it in a very limited way! He was not guilty of the accusation of Cush and he knew it. He could pray 'Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, **at this point**'. But he was not always able to pray in this way, and we cannot follow David at this point. We pray not in the name of our own righteousness but in the name of Jesus. Jesus can pray this way ('Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness') and we pray in the name of Jesus! Jesus the divine Son of David prays for the extermination of evil and the establishment of God's kingdom¹.

1 7:9a

• David is prophetic of Jesus here

• Answer – No - this is not a pattern for us

• We pray in the name of Jesus – not in our own righteousness

4. God tests our hearts

4. **God tests our hearts.** Verse 9b is the heart of the psalm —

*you who test the minds and hearts, righteous God!*¹

1 7:9b

God tolerates evil for a long time. While it is being tolerated God

is judging the hearts of men and women. He tests every part of our life, hearts and minds, thoughts, attitudes. He acts in perfect righteousness. He takes everything into account. He knows the details of all disputes and quarrels.

5. Heavenly weapons to our rescue

5. **Eventually heavenly weapons come to our rescue.** Verses 10-13 consider the weapons of God. He has a shield, a sword, a bow and fiery arrows.

6. The curse comes on God's enemies

6. **The curse we were willing to come on us comes upon the enemies of God's people.** Verses 14-16 connect to verses 3-5. David's clear conscience was such that he was ready to invite calamity upon himself. But finally it is the wicked whose actions return upon themselves.

*My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart ^{☒1} (7:10).
 God is a righteous judge,
 and a God who feels indignation every day ^{☒2}.
 If the wicked person does not change his ways,
 God will sharpen his sword;
 he will bend and string his bow ^{☒3}.
 He has prepared for himself his deadly weapons,
 he is making his arrows into burning missiles ^{☒4}.*

☒1 7:10

☒2 7:11

☒3 7:12



☒4 7:13

7. Prayer turns to praise

7. **Finally prayer turns to praise.** In verse 17 David comes back to prayer again, but now they are prayers of thanksgiving.

*I will give thanks to Yahweh because of his righteousness,
 and I will sing praise to the name of Yahweh Most High ^{☒1}.*

☒1 7:17

		<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p> 
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