

# Psalm 7

*The Song of the Slandered Saint*

August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## 1. Intro

- a. Webster's Dictionary defines the word "slander" as:
  - i. The utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation; or
  - ii. A false and defamatory oral statement about a person
    1. Some synonyms they give for "slander" are:
      - a. To smear, to malign, or to vilify
      - b. My favorite one is, to calumniate
        - i. That's one that you don't hear often!
  - iii. The reality is that our society has gone absolutely crazy when it comes to slandering others
    1. Thanks to social media, it's become very easy to slander your neighbor that gets on your nerves, the politician you can't stand, or even people in our very own families
      - a. Slander is running rampant throughout our world today
      - b. But sadly, this isn't anything new
- b. Psalm 7, one of the many Psalms of David, was written in response to a man named Cush, who had smeared David's name in the public eye
  - i. Charles Spurgeon's title for this Psalm in his commentary was, "The Song of the Slandered Saints"
    1. And as you saw on our sign outside, that will be our theme for this morning as well
  - ii. Let's look at this song together, and then we'll try to unpack some context and definitions
- c. Psalm 7
  - i. *(A Shiggaion of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning the words of Cush, a Benjamite.)* <sup>1</sup>O LORD my God, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and deliver me, <sup>2</sup>lest like a lion they tear my soul apart, rending it in pieces, with none to deliver. <sup>3</sup>O LORD my God, if I have done this, if there is wrong in my hands, <sup>4</sup>if I have repaid my friend with evil or plundered my enemy without cause, <sup>5</sup>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. *Selah* <sup>6</sup>Arise, O LORD, in your anger; lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies; awake for me; you have appointed a judgment. <sup>7</sup>Let the assembly of the peoples be gathered about you; over it return on high. <sup>8</sup>The LORD judges the peoples; judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me. <sup>9</sup>Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous – you who test the minds and hearts, O righteous God! <sup>10</sup>My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. <sup>11</sup>God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day. <sup>12</sup>If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow; <sup>13</sup>he has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts. <sup>14</sup>Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies. <sup>15</sup>He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made. <sup>16</sup>His mischief returns upon his own head, and on his own skull his violence descends. <sup>17</sup>I will give to the LORD the thanks due to his righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the LORD, the Most High.
- d. So first, let's try to define the word that we see there in the title, "Shiggaion"
  - i. There isn't really a strong consensus for what this word means
    1. It could be a type of instrument, or a name for a group of instruments
    2. It could also be describing the flow of the song, as this word is similar to another Hebrew word for "wandering"
      - a. So it could be a note saying this song is a type of "rambling" song with rapid changes in rhythm
    3. Or, it could be describing the time in which David wrote the song, when he was "wandering" throughout the land as he fled from Saul
  - ii. There are a few reasons why many commentators have landed on this as the preferred definition
    1. In verse 1, David prays to God to "Save me from all my pursuers..."

- a. There were different times when David was pursued by his enemies, but MOST of the stories we have are when David was fleeing from King Saul
  - 2. Also, if you look down at verses 4 and 5, David says, “If I have repaid my friend with evil or plundered my enemy without cause, let my enemy pursue my soul and overtake it...”
    - a. There is a bit of vagueness in the translation of verse 4, when it says, “or plundered my enemy without cause”
      - i. It could mean that David was being accused of plundering his enemy without cause, or without reason
      - ii. Or, it could be translated that he was being accused of, “plundering the one WHO HAS NO CAUSE to be my enemy”
  - 3. This would fit well with David and Saul’s relationship
    - a. If you know the backstory there, Saul had no cause to be David’s enemy
      - i. David had faithfully served Saul, and he had never attempted to overthrow Saul’s kingship
      - ii. Yet, as Saul was slowly given over to his madness, he repeatedly tried to kill David
        - 1. So this idea, that David was being accused of plundering his friend who had no reason to be his enemy, seems to add strength to the idea that this Psalm was written as David was fleeing from Saul
- e. There’s a second clue in the title, when it says that this song was written concerning the words of Cush, a Benjaminite
  - i. Some commentators think this is a slur against King Saul
    - 1. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin
    - 2. The Cushites in those days were considered barbaric and untrustworthy
      - a. Maybe this was David slandering Saul for acting in the same way, saying that Saul was behaving just like Cush in his actions?
        - i. But that’s not really characteristic of how David spoke about Saul
          - 1. Again, David’s words and actions toward Saul were almost always above reproach
    - ii. More likely, Cush was someone in the King’s counsel, who “gave birth to lies” about David, and wrongly slandered him before Saul
      - 1. And you can feel from the words of this Psalm that David is VERY upset about this slander
        - a. That’s pretty understandable, isn’t it?
          - i. David was on the run from a King who he had been trying REALLY hard to serve faithfully
          - ii. Even while he was on the run, he still treated Saul with honor and kindness and mercy, as he passed up multiple opportunities to take Saul’s life
          - iii. And as hard as he was trying to be humble and self-sacrificing toward his King, David still had men like Cush who were falsely slandering him
            - 1. And he could do nothing about it
      - iii. So, David vented his emotions by writing this Psalm
        - 1. And we should be so very thankful that he did so
          - a. For it serves as a great help to us, as WE ALSO face slander and lies and false accusations as followers of Christ
  - f. And so, from Psalm 7, we’ll look at four main points:
    - i. We must know the SOURCE of our righteousness
    - ii. We must be willing to TEST our righteousness
    - iii. We must take the slander against us TO THE LORD
    - iv. We must REST in HIS judgment of the unrighteous
  - 2. The first point we’ll look at is that we must know the SOURCE of our righteousness
    - a. When you read the Psalms, it’s easy to get the impression that David put a LOT of faith in HIS OWN righteousness
      - i. If you look down at verse 8, David writes,

1. *The LORD judges the peoples; judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me.*
- ii. As those who believe that we are saved by the grace of God, and that it is only CHRIST'S righteousness that enables us to stand before God, holy and blameless, verses like these make us a little uncomfortable, don't they?
  1. I don't know about you, but I DO NOT want God to judge me according to MY righteousness
  2. I DO NOT want God to judge me according to the integrity that is in ME
    - a. So, is David wrong in writing these things?
      - i. I don't think so... if we read this Psalm more closely, we can see WHERE David's source of righteousness TRULY comes from
- b. In this Psalm, David's true foundation is found in the very first verse, and the very last verse
  - i. In verse 1, David writes,
    1. *O Lord my God, IN YOU do I take refuge;*
      - a. David acknowledges from the very start that, apart from God, he is HOPELESS
        - i. Apart from God, his enemies would tear apart his soul
        - ii. Apart from God, he would have no deliverance
        - iii. Apart from God, David had no HOPE
    - ii. And then in verse 17, David writes,
      1. *I will give to the LORD the thanks due to HIS righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the LORD, the Most High.*
        - a. In this season of his life, David was striving HARD to maintain his own righteousness
          - i. He worked HARD to be a man of honor and integrity, especially in his dealings with King Saul
        - b. But it is clear from the way David framed this Psalm that he understood where his TRUE righteousness came from
          - i. His TRUE righteousness came from the Lord
            1. And therefore, in the midst of slander and false accusations, David could say in verse 10, *"My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart"*
  - c. My friends, this must be our foundation as well
    - i. When slander and false accusations come against us, which they most surely will if we are living our lives for the Lord, then our first step MUST be to remember WHO the source of our righteousness is!
    - ii. The Apostle Paul understood this principle
      1. After his incredible conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul very quickly experienced the slander and accusations of the Jewish religious leaders
        - a. These leaders were astounded that their prize student, a man who many had watched rise up faithfully in the religion of Judaism, suddenly turned and began preaching that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah
          - i. And Paul lost MUCH as he proclaimed this Gospel
    - iii. But in response to his great losses, and the slander he now faced from those who once held him in high regard, Paul wrote these words in Philippians 3:7-9,
      1. *<sup>7</sup>But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup>Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith...*
    - iv. Paul experienced CONSTANT slander, from the time of his conversion, all the way up to his execution
      1. How did he handle this relentless slander and persecution?
        - a. By reminding himself of the immeasurable gain he now had in the righteousness found IN CHRIST
        - b. Friends, if you do not have this same rock to stand upon, then you will not be able to stand when the slander comes
          - i. You will find no comfort, no peace, no refuge from the attacks of the world

- ii. For the source of your righteousness is NOT Christ, but yourself
        - 1. And your self is not a refuge that will weather the storms that will come when you claim to be a follower of Jesus Christ
  - v. This is the hard truth that Jesus teaches in Matthew 13:20-21, as he explains the Parable of the Sower to his disciples
    - 1. When he gets to the explanation of the seed thrown on rocky ground, he says this...
      - a. *<sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup>yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.*
      - b. Our source of righteousness MUST come from Christ
        - i. For tribulation and persecution on account of the Word IS coming
        - ii. Slander and reviling against those who bear the name of Jesus IS coming
          - 1. And if our root is not found in Christ and Christ alone, we also will fall away
      - c. We must know WHO the SOURCE of our righteousness is
3. Second, we must be willing to TEST our righteousness
- a. In verses 3-5 of Psalm 7, David puts his righteousness to the test
    - i. He writes,
      - 1. *<sup>3</sup>O LORD my God, if I have done this, if there is wrong in my hands, <sup>4</sup>if I have repaid my friend with evil or plundered my enemy without cause, <sup>5</sup>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.*
    - ii. As David faced the slander and false accusations of Cush, he was willing to stand before the Lord and put his righteousness to the test
      - 1. And he was willing to face the consequences if he was indeed found to be guilty
  - b. This is SUCH an important principle for us to practice today
    - i. The reality is, we'll all face slander of some form throughout our lives
      - 1. Sometimes that slander will come because we are pursuing the righteous life of a follower of Jesus
      - 2. But, sometimes that slander will come because we are NOT following Jesus, but instead following the ways of this world
    - ii. Peter reminds us of this truth in 1 Peter 2:18-20, as he speaks to the way servants should interact with their masters...
      - 1. *<sup>18</sup>Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. <sup>19</sup>For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup>For what credit is it if, WHEN YOU SIN and are beaten for it, you endure? But if WHEN YOU DO GOOD and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.*
        - a. Do you see the distinction Peter is making in these verses?
          - i. When we are living righteously, and we experience the sorrow of unjust persecution or slander, God sees this as a GRACIOUS thing
          - ii. BUT, when we experience persecution or slander, AS A RESULT OF OUR OWN SIN, well, Peter says that that kind of suffering has no credit before God
            - 1. In other words, God has no praise for THAT kind of suffering
  - c. So this question is absolutely vital when we encounter slander and false accusations:
    - i. Is this slander a result of my desire to live a righteous life in Jesus Christ?
    - ii. Or is this slander a result of my own foolish words or actions?
      - 1. David put his righteousness to the test
      - 2. Peter tells servants to put their righteousness to the test
      - 3. We also must put our righteousness to the test
        - a. And, if after examining our hearts and seeking the counsel of others, we find that we are guilty of sin on our part, we must confess these things before the Lord
          - i. AND we must ask for forgiveness from those we have wronged

- b. If we are not willing to put our righteousness to the test, HONESTLY, then it could very well be that the slander we encounter is a slander we have brought upon ourselves
  - d. When Jesus speaks of these things in his Beatitudes in Matthew 5:10-11, he didn't just say, "Blessed are those who are persecuted," and "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely..."
    - i. No, Jesus had very specific conditions attached to these blessings
      - 1. In verse 10, he said,
        - a. Blessed are those who are persecuted FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
      - 2. And in verse 11, Jesus said,
        - a. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely ON MY ACCOUNT.
    - ii. Have YOU experienced slander and false accusations?
      - 1. If so, you must honestly ask, is this slander because of my choice to live a righteous life? Is it because I faithfully bear the name of Jesus over my life?
        - a. If so, then Jesus would call you BLESSED
        - b. And God will see your suffering as a GRACIOUS thing
          - i. But we must be willing to put our righteousness TO THE TEST
4. Third, we must take the slander against us TO THE LORD
  - a. If you look in verses 6-7, you'll see that that is exactly what David does
    - i. *<sup>6</sup>Arise, O LORD, in your anger; lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies; awake for me; you have appointed a judgment. <sup>7</sup>Let the assembly of the peoples be gathered about you; over it return on high.*
    - ii. We need to again think about the context that David was in during these times
      - 1. When David initially fled from Saul, he was completely by himself
        - a. But that changed very quickly...
          - i. 1 Samuel 22:1-2 tells us,
            - 1. *<sup>1</sup>David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. <sup>2</sup>And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in soul, gathered to him. And he became commander over them. And there were with him about four hundred men.*
      - 2. So think about it... David very quickly had four hundred men under his command
        - a. But these weren't just any men – these were men that were in distress, and in debt, and bitter in soul
        - b. So, if David was going to have people around him that would join him in his complaint against being slandered, it would be these types of people, wouldn't it?
          - i. As the old saying goes, "misery loves company," right?
          - ii. If David would have vented to this band of distressed brothers, he would have had a lot of sympathetic ears
      - 3. But instead, David took his case before the Lord, and he trusted that THE LORD would arise in His anger
        - a. He trusted that THE LORD would lift Himself up against David's enemies
        - b. He trusted that THE LORD would awaken on his behalf, and bring his enemies to judgment
      - 4. When he could have vented all his grievances to his 400 buddies, David instead took the slander against him TO THE LORD
  - b. And a few centuries later, the TRUE King in the line of David, our Lord Jesus, would do the very same thing
    - i. Listen again to the words of 1 Peter 2, but this time we'll include verses 21-23...
      - 1. *<sup>20</sup>For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. <sup>21</sup>For to this you*

*have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup>He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup>When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*

- ii. That is an amazing passage, isn't it?!
    - 1. Peter reminds us that we are to test our righteousness, to make sure that the slandering and persecution we're facing isn't because of our own sin
      - a. And then he goes on to say that if we are suffering for DOING GOOD, then we are in good company!
        - i. For we are following the example of CHRIST!!
      - b. But, notice that Peter goes on to say that it isn't enough just to suffer for righteousness' sake
        - i. If we are going to TRULY suffer as Jesus did, we will keep our mouths SHUT
          - 1. When we are reviled, we are NOT to revile in return
          - 2. When we suffer, we are NOT to threaten to get even
          - 3. When we suffer, we are to entrust ourselves to Him who judges JUSTLY
      - c. This was what Christ did, when he refused to call down legions of angels to defend him when he was captured in the Garden of Gethsemane
        - i. He didn't fight back with power
        - ii. He didn't fight back with his words
          - 1. As Peter wrote, Jesus entrusted himself to Him who judges justly
          - 2. Just as David entrusted himself to the Lord who would lift Himself up against the fury of those who slandered him
  - iii. This is the example Christ laid before us
    - 1. And Peter says TO THIS you have been called
      - a. After we have found our righteousness in Christ...
      - b. After we have tested our own hearts to make sure it wasn't our own sin that brought this slander upon us
      - c. The Scriptures call us to follow the example of Christ, and take the slander against us to the Lord
        - i. And we are to leave it there!
          - 1. That's what it means to entrust yourself to God
            - a. You don't pick the offense back up and spread it all over social media
            - b. You don't grab that offense back and fire off that hateful text or email
            - c. You entrust it to God. PERIOD.
  - iv. For HE is the one who judges JUSTLY, which brings us to our final point...
5. We must rest in HIS judgment of the unrighteous
  - a. And we find that rest by looking at three truths found in the remainder of Psalm 7
  - b. Truth number one: God tests the minds and hearts of ALL men
    - i. David writes in verses 8-9
      - 1. *<sup>8</sup>The LORD judges the peoples; judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me. <sup>9</sup>Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous – you who test the minds and hearts, O righteous God!*
  - ii. It is REALLY hard when you are slandered or falsely accused to NOT want to shout the truth for all to hear, isn't it?
    - 1. When you know that everything being said against you are lies, and your reputation is being tarnished because of the secret sins of others, it's REALLY tough to not lash out and get even and expose them in their sin
    - 2. But the Scriptures show us that we can find rest, knowing that, even though the truth is being obscured by sinful men, God knows IT ALL

- a. He is the One who tests the minds and hearts of ALL men
    - i. And as he tests everyone's hearts and everyone's minds, He will judge JUSTLY
      - 1. And the evil of the wicked WILL come to an end
      - 2. And the righteous WILL be established, FOREVER!
  - 3. So rest in the truth that God sees and hears and knows EVERYTHING, and He will judge justly in the end
    - a. As Paul says in Romans 12:19,
      - i. *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."*
- c. Truth number two: God feels indignation every day
- i. In verses 10-11, David writes,
    - 1. *<sup>10</sup>My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. <sup>11</sup>God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day.*
  - ii. So, how is the fact that God feels indignation every day meant to comfort our hearts in the midst of slander?
    - 1. It reminds us that God is absolutely FAITHFUL in His hatred against sin
    - 2. And that He is absolutely FAITHFUL in defending the hearts of His children
      - a. He will never grow weary of fighting for our justice
      - b. He will never change His mind and say, "You know what, those slanderous lies spoken against my sons and daughters really weren't THAT bad..."
    - 3. NO! David says that God feels indignation against the wicked, EVERY DAY
      - a. This is an aspect of His righteousness that we are to praise Him for
        - i. And, while we are most certainly called to love our enemies and pray for their salvation, you can be sure of this:
          - 1. When the Day of Judgment comes, if they have not repented of their sins and surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ over their lives, then we will REJOICE over God's righteous judgment against them
  - iii. As Revelation 19:1-2 says, there will be a great multitude in heaven crying out,
    - 1. *<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, <sup>2</sup>for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.*
      - a. So rest, Christian, in the truth that God feels indignation EVERY day, and He will continue to do so until all judgment has been fulfilled
- d. And truth number three: God's weapons are prepared for judgment
- i. David writes in verses 12-16,
    - 1. *<sup>12</sup>If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow; <sup>13</sup>he has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts. <sup>14</sup>Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies. <sup>15</sup>He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made. <sup>16</sup>His mischief returns upon his own head, and on his own skull his violence descends.*
  - ii. I don't know if there is a more accurate description of our society today than verse 14...
    - 1. The wicked man conceives evil, and is pregnant with mischief, and he gives birth to lies
      - a. This has certainly been true from the moment that Adam and Eve fell in the Garden
      - b. But it is also certainly on the rise throughout the world today
        - i. The wicked conceive evil... they're pregnant with mischief... and they give birth to lies
          - 1. And as we hold true to the name of Jesus Christ, more and more of those lies will be directed against us
          - 2. So again, the question is, how will we respond?
    - 2. Will we fight back and lash out with verbal attacks of our own?
    - 3. Will we shout louder, so that the REAL truth can be heard?

- iii. Or, will we heed Paul's words in the rest of Romans 12, when he says in verses 19-21,
  - 1. *<sup>19</sup>Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." <sup>20</sup>To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*
- iv. How can we have the courage to adopt this completely counter-cultural mindset?
  - 1. By reminding ourselves that God's weapons are prepared for judgment
    - a. If those who slander us do not repent, then God WILL whet His sword
    - b. God WILL let loose of his bow, and let fly the fiery shafts of His arrows
      - i. And the wicked WILL fall in their unrepentance
      - ii. So do not overcome evil with more evil, friends
        - 1. Overcome evil WITH GOOD
- e. And as we rest in these truths, and entrust ourselves to our Father who judges justly, we can then sing this song of David, with a clear conscience
  - i. Even in the midst of lies and slander and false accusations against us, we can join with David and sing with him in verse 17,
    - 1. *I will give to the LORD the thanks due to his righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the LORD, the Most High!*
  - ii. If you know that the source of your righteousness is Jesus Christ, then you can endure slander with hope and peace
  - iii. If you have tested your righteousness, and you know that this slander has come about because you are living your life for the Lord, then you can endure slander without feeling the need to slander back
  - iv. If you choose to take your slander to the Lord, rather than airing all your grievances for all to hear, then you can endure that slander, knowing that the Lord will judge on your behalf
  - v. And if you can rest in the just and true judgments of the Father, then you will not only be able to endure slander, but you will also have the courage to overcome evil, WITH GOOD!
    - 1. In a society where slander is quickly on the rise, and even more so against the followers of Christ, may we be found to be a people who LOVE our enemies, just as Jesus Christ loved US!