



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Psalms

Psalm 7

Bishop Youssef



Introduction

- This psalm, according to the title, was composed by David
- The title is, 'Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite'
- Some think that the word shiggayon comes from shagah, to wander, a wandering song
- A psalm composed by David in his wanderings, when he was obliged to hide from Saul's anger
- Some scholars believe there is similarity with the Assyrian term legu which means lament
- Others believe that 'Shiggaion' means "a loud cry"



Introduction

- The New King James Version translates the Hebrew word “shiggaion” as meditation
- This word, ‘Shiggaion’, is used only in Habakkuk 3:1
- As to Cush the Benjamite, he is an unknown person in the Jewish history
- According to some “Saul” is the person intended; and it has been supposed that the name “Cush” is given to him as a rebuke, and to denote the blackness of his character and heart, as the word “Cush” would mean an Ethiopian, or black man
- But it is not certain that this term “Cush” would, in the time of David, mean one of black complexion; nor is there any probability that it would be used as a term of rebuke at all



Introduction

- According to St. Athanasius and St. Basil the Great, "Cush" points to "Hushai," who discouraged Absalom from following the counsel of Ahithophel
- Hushai was called the son of Benjamite as he pretended to be Absalom's friend to convince him to refrain from opposing his father
- Hushai was a source of support to David, standing by his side and working on his behalf
- Cush defeated the counsel of Achitophal, the advisor of Absalom, and sent word to David (2 Kings 15-17), then David sang this song



Introduction

- Others think it is a name of someone from tribe of Benjamin, a follower of Saul and an enemy of David
- Regardless of what he meant by the word Cush, this psalm is of great value to the church and the world, for there are few people that are not on some occasions bitterly rebuked, and few who are not inclined to express their feelings in similar way
- St. Jerome sees that this psalm refers also to the time when Absalom rebelled against his father David
- The Psalm contains both David's cry of anguish and shout of confidence in God's deliverance



Introduction

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A Confidence-Filled Prayer 7:1-2



- The Psalm opens with an expression of strong confidence in God
- *O LORD my God*, This is the first instance in the Psalter where David addresses the Almighty by the united names Jehovah and my God
- *my God*, mine by a special covenant
- The words are expressive of the strongest confidence the soul can have in God the Lord
- Sometimes God's strength is evident in helping through a trial
- Other times it is evident in delivering us from trials
- David trusted that God wanted to deliver him from this trial

A Confidence-Filled Prayer 7:1-2



- In his troubles, David fled to God as a refuge, and felt safe under His protection
- *deliver me* - From the counsels which they have planned, and from the traps they have laid in his way
- Persecution is not a new thing to the people of God
- David had his persecutors, and many of them
- The believers, in the times of the apostles, and in all ages since, have had theirs
- Every one that will live godly in Jesus Christ must expect persecution in one shape or another

A Confidence-Filled Prayer 7:1-2



- And there is none can save and deliver them from it but God
- And He can and will in His own time (2 Corinthians 1:10)
- David was aware of this, and therefore make his claim to Him, and Him only
- And not to a human support, to his friends, or to neighboring princes and powers
- David believed there would be grave consequences if he were not delivered from these lion-like enemies; denoting the complete destruction which he feared would come upon him

A Confidence-Filled Prayer 7:1-2



- The psalmist compares his enemy to a lion for his majesty and greatness
- The lion being the king among beasts; and for his authority, power, and might, and for his wrath and cruelty, which David feared; and which would tear his soul, or himself, in pieces, *Rending me in pieces*
- The figure is that of a lonely man captured by a powerful lion, with no one at hand to rescue him
- So David felt that if God did not interfere, he would fall into the hands of this brutal and wrathful enemy

A Confidence-Filled Prayer 7:1-2



- The Apostle says, *“your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* 1 Peter 5:8
- Therefore when the psalmist said in the plural number, *Save me from all those who persecute me*, he afterwards introduced the singular, saying, *like a lion*
- He knew what enemy and violent adversary of the perfect soul remained who is behind all these enemies, Satan
- *while there is none to deliver*, nor to save
- For, if God does not redeem, nor save, he, Satan tears

David Affirms His Innocence

7:3-5



- Why could David be confident that God was going to deliver him from his enemies?
- That is where the next three verses come in; he is innocent
- St. Augustine says, “And that it might be clear that the already perfect soul, which is to be on her guard against the most insidious snares of the devil only, *O LORD my God, if I have done this*”
- David did not claim sinless perfection or lived without sinning
- But his sense is, that there was no *iniquity*, as not in his heart, purpose, so not in his hand, nor attempted by him, of the kind he was accused of

David Affirms His Innocence

7:3-5



- He is innocent of the crime of which he was charged and did not return evil with evil
- If David has done those kind of things, then he is openly confessing that he would be worthy of the kind of fate from which he was just asking God for deliverance
- Both he and the Lord know the truth that he did not sin against them
- In other word David is admitting that if he is guilty of the sin that he's being charged with, he would be worthy of death
- But he's innocent and he needs the Lord to defend him

David Affirms His Innocence

7:3-5



- St. Augustine stressed that David was speaking about Satan; he says, “By again naming the enemy in the singular number, he more and more clearly points out him whom he spoke of above as a lion. For he persecutes the soul, and if he has deceived it, will take it. For the limit of men’s rage is the destruction of the body; but the soul, after this visible death, they cannot keep in their power: whereas whatever souls the devil shall have taken by his persecutions, he will keep.”
- *lay my honor in the dust*, Humiliated, trampled on
- David is saying, “I will be an easy target for my enemies”
- If David had not had complete confidence in himself that he is innocent, he would not have raised these petitions

A Cry to God to Arise to Judgment 7:6-7



- And because of the falsehood that the enemy is spreading about David, he asks the Lord to *Arise ... Lift Yourself up ... Rise*
- Even though we know that God doesn't sleep, in times of stress, we think that evil has the upper hand and we consequently cry to the Lord in the same words of the psalmist
- The psalmist's prayer reveals his great need as well as his inability to save himself
- He therefore pleads God to rise and resolve the situation he is facing
- A Christian should always be above any malice and leave it to the Lord

A Cry to God to Arise to Judgment 7:6-7



- It is God who arises to judge men and the whole world with righteousness
- David is asking God to *Arise* and sit on the throne of His judgment on his behalf
- God's silence reveals His long-suffering, but if the wicked misinterpret that and tread upon His saints, then the Lord surely arises and brings them to judgment
- *in Your anger*, Holiness and Justice can only be manifested as anger in their judicial relation to sin and wrong
- He calls the anger of God against the devil and all his works

A Cry to God to Arise to Judgment 7:6-7



- *to the judgment You have commanded*, God had, in His law, commanded that justice should be done, and had proclaimed Himself a God of justice - requiring that right should be done on the earth, and declaring Himself in all cases the friend of right
- David now appeals to Him and calls on Him to manifest Himself as the friend of justice, and to show, in this case, the same principles, and the same regard to justice which He required in others
- It is an earnest petition that He would maintain and defend His own commandments

A Cry to God to Arise to Judgment 7:6-7



- David is picturing a gathering of all peoples
- And they're surrounding God's judgment throne
- God is pictured as a king – a high glorious exalted king
- His subjects – both those who are loyal and those who are traitors – are waiting for Him to return and judge them
- Another interpreted *the congregation* that it meant the nation of the Jews, the twelve tribes of Israel, called an assembly of people, and a company of nations (Genesis 28:3)
- And to be understood not in a hostile manner but of their surrounding the altar of God with songs of deliverance, upon David's victory on his enemies

A Cry to God to Arise to Judgment 7:6-7



- Or, it could mean that the psalmist prays that he might be established in his kingdom, as God had appointed and commanded
- When he would bring back the Ark of God, and encourage the worship of God, and correct all disorders in it
- David brings those believers who have sided with him, to the attention of the Lord
- He is saying, Lord, I am not the only one who is waiting to hear your judgement
- We see a pleading that the entire congregation will suffer until the Lord intervenes

A Cry to God to Arise to Judgment 7:6-7



- David's prayer for protection and justification was not fundamentally selfish
- He knew that his fate was vitally connected to the welfare of God's people
- It was in large measure for their sakes, the sake of the congregation
- In these two verses we can also see that the psalmist points to the Lord's crucifixion "lift up Yourself" and to His resurrection "Rise up" and to His ascension "return on high"
- St. Jerome, in his comment on the words, "Rise up, O lord my God", says that our Lord is glorified through His resurrection



David's Defense 7:8-10

- He is expressing here his confident belief that God would intervene, and that His judgment would not be delayed much longer
- The proposition is a general one - that God would see that justice would be done to all people; and on this base the psalmist pleads that He would now intervene and defend him from his enemies
- *The LORD shall judge the peoples*, There is no question about it
- It's going to happen
- To the innocent – to the righteous man, God's judgment is not a fearful thing



David's Defense 7:8-10

- Because when God judges, the innocent will be found blameless
- *Judge me, O LORD*, David honestly invited God's judgment and correction
- David the prophet who pleads God to vindicate him in this psalm, pleads in another psalm that God does not judge him, for no one can be righteous before God
- What he prays for here is justice on the earthly level, justice between him and his false accuser because he did not sin against them
- But God's judgment does not end so well for the wicked



David's Defense 7:8-10

- St. Jerome comments on these verses where the psalmist prays that God may judge him according to his righteousness by saying, (David could not have meant these words about himself: These words properly indicate the unblemished Savior who has never sinned)
- Truly they are the words of the Risen and Ascended Christ!
- *Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end*, David asks God to destroy the wickedness of the sinners and to establish the righteous
- Origen notes that David prays to God to destroy evil so that the sinner is liberated from the evil one and becomes a righteous



David's Defense 7:8-10

- In other words, David does not pray for the destruction of the wicked but for the destruction of the evil within them to end
- *But establish the just*, Meaning himself, and every other person who is made righteous, not by his own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ
- God alone knows people's internal thoughts and even our motives
- *My defense is of God*, God was his protector and in his troubles he entrusted Him
- The original word here, as in Psalm 3:3, Psalm 5:12, is *shield*
- God was his shield, his protector and defender



David's Defense 7:8-10

- *Who saves the upright in heart*, He will save me whom He knows to be sincere and upright in my conduct toward Him and toward others
- Believers should not fear all that their enemies can do or say against them, they are protected by God
- God does not judge by what we say, or from the appearances from the outside
- God judges the heart of man
- David knew he was at a significant disadvantage before his enemies and had to rely on the defense that is of God



God, The Just Judge 7:11-13

- *God is a just judge*, Many anticipate that they will one day stand before a God of great love, great mercy, great warmth, and great generosity
- They never imagine they will stand before a God who is perfectly *just* and who cannot ignore the crime of sin
- Some sins are worse than others and will receive a greater condemnation, (Matthew 23:14), but there are no small sins against a great God
- The psalmist who asks God to vindicate him according to his innocence, knows that he himself together with his enemies are in need of God's long-suffering



God, The Just Judge 7:11-13

- If He puts into effect or enforce punishment every day, nobody will be saved
- St. Augustine's comment on this verse states, "He does not collect His ministers for vengeance every day. For now the patience of God invites to repentance: but in the last time, when men "through their hardness and impenitent heart shall have treasured up for themselves anger in the day of anger, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, then He will brandish His sword."



God, The Just Judge 7:11-13

- David here in verse 12 considered the readiness of God to judge the sinner
- David saw the *sword* sharpened and the *bow* bent
- With God so ready to judge, the sinner should never presume that God will delay His judgment
- When God delays judgment out of mercy, many people make a dangerous mistake and think this mercy means that God is not concerned with justice
- If they would repent and *turn back*, they would avoid this and would be saved, a doctrine which is everywhere stated in the Scriptures



God, The Just Judge 7:11-13

- The real reason for any apparent delay in God's judgment is found in, *if he does not turn back*
- In His great mercy, God waits for the sinner to *turn back*, to repent
- The apparent delay is an expression of God's love for the sinner
- The description of the warrior-judge is continued in verse 13
- The instruments of punishment are already prepared, and God can use them when He wishes
- *His arrows into fiery shafts*, The word signifies "hot" or "burning"
- God has provided arrows of wrath and vengeance, fiery ones



God, The Just Judge 7:11-13

- And against the unrepentant will He bring them forth, direct them, and shoot the arrows at them
- The wrath of God may be slow, but it is always sure
- By God's sword, or by His Word, sin is destroyed, and the sinner becomes righteous by the divine grace
- St. Augustine states that the *bow* is the Word of God
- He says, "This bow apparent in the strength of the New Testament is similar to strings ... this bow has shot forth the disciples like arrows, or has sent forth preachers of the divine word. These arrows have been directed towards those who are aflame."



God, The Just Judge 7:11-13

- In other words, towards those who would be fired with the love of God when pierced by them
- “It is as if the psalmist says: "If you are pierced by these arrows and set on fire by these coals, you will burn by so great a love of the kingdom of heaven as to despise the tongues of all who resist you and would turn you back from your purpose.” St. Augustine

The End of the Wickedness

7:14-16



- This statement shows that a wicked heart will show itself in wicked deeds
- A person who is united with Jesus Christ conceives the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace ... (Galatians 5:22) and gives birth to truth
- But a person who is united with Satan conceives lies, deception, violence and anxiety
- As we read in James 1:14-15, *“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”*

The End of the Wickedness

7:14-16



- The source of sin is from within the sinner
- The sinner *conceives* and gives birth to sin as a mother gives birth to children – from within
- David pictures the wicked as a pregnant and delivering a child
- *He made a pit and dug it out*, The allusion here is to a method of hunting wild beasts which was common in past times
- It consists in digging a pit-fall and covering it over with leaves and grass so as to deceive the animals and make them fall into it
- Here it means that he has brought that evil upon himself which he intended against others

The End of the Wickedness

7:14-16



- The punishment of the wicked described from another point of view as the natural result of his own actions
- He falls into the trap which he laid for others
- This shows a common method of God's justice
- He often brings the same adversity on the wicked that they had planned for the righteous
- *his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown*, Two examples of this among many in the Holy Bible are the fate of Haman the enemy of Mordecai and the Jews (Esther 7:7-10), and the enemies of Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 6:24)

The End of the Wickedness

7:14-16



- The Lord has caused dogs to lick the blood of Ahab in the midst of the vineyard of Naboth
- Sooner or later the evil deeds of persecutors, *shall come down on his own crown.*

David Exults the Mercy and Lovingkindness of God 7:17



- This is the first place in the psalter where we find God called the *Most High*
- It is used for the first time in (Genesis 14:18), however, it occurs several times in the Pentateuch, and often in later books
- It is found more than twenty times in the Psalter
- The Psalm concludes with a song of joy and victory as well as praise
- Sadness is transferred into joy, and resistance of evil into an experience of God's work within us which prompts us to praise Him

David Exults the Mercy and Lovingkindness of God 7:17



- To thank and praise God for mercies is the way to increase them
- And to thank and praise Him for sufferings is the way to remove them
- And we can praise the Lord for His righteousness today as we meditate on that fact that *God Will Vindicate the Innocent*
- As David says, *I will praise the LORD according to His righteousness*, I shall celebrate both His justice and His mercy
- David ended this psalm – which began in gloom – on a high note of praise
- He could praise, because he took his trouble to God and in faith left it there



Discussion

- What personal name does David call God in verse 1?
- How do verses 1-2 set the tone of this psalm?
- What is David's desire to have done to him if he is guilty?
- What does he ask God to do?
- What enemies do we face today that help us identify with this psalm?



Discussion

- When will the sinner be judged and by whom?
- What are the Christians looking forward to hearing Jesus say on Judgement day to them?
- How often is God angry with the wicked?
- Who has the sinner to blame for his fate?