

## Psalm 35

**Title:** Prayer for Rescue from Enemies

**Author and Date:** David

**Key Verses:** Psalm 35:19

**Type:** Imprecatory

### **Outline**

- A. The destruction of his enemies, followed by praise (verses 1-10).
- B. The description of his enemies, followed by praise (verses 11-18).
- C. The degradation of his enemies, followed by praise (verses 19-28).

### **Notes**

Title: “A Psalm of David.” See the notes on Psalm 3.

Summary: Psalm 35 is an imprecatory psalm in which the psalmist prays to the Lord for divine judgment upon his enemies (verses 1, 17, 22, 23, and 24). Injustices have been carried out against him so he cries to the Lord for vindication. His enemies may have been those who were once his friends, like Saul (1 Sam. 24), Shimei (2 Sam. 16), Absalom (2 Sam. 15), or Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17). The psalmist is characterized by deep emotion, grief, hurt, and complaint. He wants his enemies to get the punishment they deserve. However, he also promises to praise God when the divine judgment has been carried out (verses 9-10, 18, and 27-28). Psalm 35 is a three-fold lament. Each of the three cries for deliverance (verses 1-8, 11-17, and 19-26) ends with a vow to praise God for his divine help (verses 9-10, 18, and 27-28).

Verses 1-3: Note the image of the Lord as a military soldier who fights a battle on behalf of the psalmist.

Verses 4-8: Note the use of “let them”, “let their”, and “let him” in these verses. This is the language of an imprecatory prayer in which the psalmist calls down curses upon his enemies. Another series of “let them” curses is found in verses 19, 24, 25, and 26. For more on imprecatory psalms, see the notes on Psalm 7.

Verses 5-6: For “chaff”, see Psalm 1:4. For the “angel of the Lord”, see the notes on Psalm 34:7.

Verse 7: The “without cause” language (see also verse 19) is used by Jeremiah (18:20-22).

Verse 10: “All my bones” means “with my entire being”.

Verses 13-14: In the middle of a description about his enemies, the psalmist recounts his own innocence and gracious spirit toward his enemies. He took “the high road” and did not return evil for evil, but good for evil. He treated them as a “friend” or a “brother”. This righteous behavior is amazing!

Verse 15: The “abjects” (ASV, KJV) are smiters who attacked the psalmist.

Verse 17: For “My darling from the lions,” see Psalm 22:20-21.

Verse 19: “Wink with the eye” is a sign of malicious planning (Prov. 6:13-14; 10:10). The words “hate me without a cause” are quoted by Jesus in John 15:25 and “fulfilled” by those in the world who hated Jesus and his Father. These words are also found in Psalm 69:4.

Verse 21: The words “Aha, aha” (see also verse 25) are words of mocking (Psa. 40:15; 70:3)..

Verse 27: The “let them” expression here is different from the previous uses in this psalm. It refers to friends who are supportive of the psalmist and who magnify the Lord.

## **Questions**

1. Who does the psalmist want the Lord to strive against and fight against (verse 1)?
2. What image does the psalmist use to describe the Lord (verses 2-3)?
3. What things does the psalmist wish for his enemies (verses 4-6, 8)? (Look for all the “let” statements in these verses.)
4. How do the psalmist’s enemies act toward him (verse 7)?
5. What does the psalmist promise to do in the face of his enemies (verses 9-10)?
6. How do the psalmist’s enemies act toward him (verses 11-12)?

7. How did the psalmist act toward his enemies (verses 13-14)?
8. What further description of the enemies is given (verses 15-16)?
9. What question does the psalmist ask the Lord in the face of his enemies (verse 17)?
10. What does the psalmist promise to do in the face of his enemies (verse 18)?
11. How do these enemies act and speak (verses 19-21)?
12. What does the psalmist want the Lord to do for him (verses 22-24)?
13. What further things does the psalmist wish for his enemies (verses 25-26)? (Look for the “let” statements in these verses.)
14. What does the psalmist call upon his friends to do (verse 27)?
15. What does the psalmist promise to do in the face of his enemies (verse 28)?

### **Applications for Today**

1. The Lord will punish all enemies and evil-doers (verses 1-8, 11-17, and 19-26). What confidence did Paul have regarding his enemies (2 Tim. 4:14)? What did the 24 elders (Rev. 11:16-18) and the great multitude (Rev. 19:1-2) praise God for regarding their enemies?

2. The Lord is our salvation from enemies (verse 3 and 9). What did Zacharias prophesy would happen to Israel (Lk. 1:71, 74)? What deliverance did Paul believe he would receive from the Lord (2 Tim. 4:18)?
  
3. The Lord is unique: “Who is like unto thee?” (verse 10). What question did Moses and Israel ask in Exodus 15:11? What question does the psalmist ask in Psalm 71:19 and 113:5? What questions does the Lord ask in Jeremiah 49:19 and 50:44?
  
4. Some evil people can be very cruel and vicious (verses 11-12, 15-17, 19-21, and 25-26). What prayers did Paul ask for in Romans 15:31 and 2 Thessalonians 3:2? What warning did Paul give in 2 Timothy 3:13 and Titus 1:12?
  
5. The psalmist grieved for his enemies even when they were sick (verses 13-14). What did Jesus say to do regarding one’s enemies (Mt. 5:43-44; Lk. 6:27, 35)? What did Paul say to do toward those who practice evil (Rom. 12:17-21; 1 Thess. 5:15)? How did Jesus act in the presence of his enemies (1 Pet. 2:21-23)? How did Peter say to react to evil (1 Peter 3:9)?
  
6. When the righteous suffer, they ask “How long, Lord?” (verse 17). What question did Habakkuk ask in Habakkuk 1:2? What question did the persecuted Christians ask in Revelation 6:10? Why do Christians suffer (2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:4, 16)?
  
7. We need to rejoice, give thanks, praise, and magnify the Lord even when we are attacked by enemies and evil-doers (verses 9-10, 18, and 27-28). What did Jesus and Stephen say at the hands of their enemies (Lk. 23:34; Acts 7:60)? What did Paul and Silas do when they were unjustly beaten and put in jail (Acts 16:25)? How did Paul and the other apostles choose to live in the face of many enemies and afflictions (2 Cor. 6:4-10)?