
A meditation by David, which he sang to the LORD, concerning the words of Cush, the Benjamite.

PSALM 7: 1 LORD, my God, I take refuge in you. Save me from all those who pursue me, and deliver me,

The psalmist prays against the malice of his enemies, Psa 7:1, Psa 7:2; protests his own innocence, Psa 7:3-5; prays to God that he would vindicate him, for the edification of his people, Psa 7:6-8; prays against the wickedness of his enemies, Psa 7:9; expresses strong confidence in God, Psa 7:10; threatens transgressors with God's judgments, Psa 7:11-13; shows the conduct and end of the ungodly, Psa 7:14-16; and exults in the mercy and lovingkindness of his Maker, Psa 7:17.

This Psalm is entitled, Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite. The word שִׁגְיֹון shiggayon comes from שָׁגָה shagah, to wander, a wandering song; i.e., a Psalm composed by David in his wanderings, when he was obliged to hide himself from the fury of Saul.

Bishop Horsley thinks it may have its name, a wandering ode, from its being in different parts, taking up different subjects, in different styles of composition. But he has sometimes thought that shiggaion might be an unpremeditated song; an improviso.

As to Cush the Benjamite, he is a person unknown in the Jewish history; the name is probably a name of disguise; and by it he may covertly mean Saul himself, the son of Kish, who was of the tribe of Benjamin. The subject of the Psalm will better answer to Saul's unjust persecution and David's innocence, than to any other subject in the history of David.

Verse 1

O Lord my God - יהוה אלהי Yehovah Elohai, words expressive of the strongest confidence the soul can have in the Supreme Being. Thou self-existent, incomprehensible, almighty, and eternal Being, who neither needest nor hatest any thing that thou hast made; thou art my God: God in covenant with thy creature man; and my God and portion particularly. Therefore, in thee do I put thy trust - I repose all my confidence in thee, and expect all my good from thee.

Save me - Shield me from my persecutors; abate their pride, assuage their malice, and confound their devices!

Deliver me - From the counsels which they have devised, and from the snares and gins they have laid in my path.

PSALM 7: 2 lest they tear apart my soul like a lion, ripping it in pieces, while there is no one to deliver.

Verse 2

Lest he tear my soul like a lion - These words seem to answer well to Saul. As the lion is king in the forest; so was Saul king over the land. As the lion, in his fierceness, seizes at once, and tears his prey in pieces; so David expected to be seized and suddenly destroyed by Saul. He had already, in his

rage, thrown his javelin at him, intending to have pierced him to the wall with it. As from the power of the lion no beast in the forest could deliver any thing; so David knew that Saul's power was irresistible, and that none of his friends or well-wishers could save or deliver him out of such hands. "Lest he tear my soul (my life) like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver." All this answers to Saul, and to none else.

PSALM 7: 3 LORD, my God, if I have done this, if there is iniquity in my hands,

Verse 3

If I have done this - David was accused by Saul of affecting the kingdom; and of waiting for an opportunity to take away the life of his king, his patron, and his friend. In his application to God he refers to these charges; meets them with indignation; and clears himself of them by a strong appeal to his Judge; and an imprecation that, if he had meditated or designed any such thing, he might meet with nothing but curse and calamity either from God or man.

PSALM 7: 4 if I have rewarded evil to him who was at peace with me (yes, if I have delivered him who without cause was my adversary),

Verse 4

Yea, I have delivered him - When, in the course of thy providence, thou didst put his life in my hand in the cave, I contented myself with cutting off his skirt, merely to show him the danger he had been in, and the spirit of the man whom he accused of designs against his life; and yet even for this my heart smote me, because it appeared to be an indignity offered to him who was the Lord 's anointed. This fact, and my venturing my life frequently for his good and the safety of the state, sufficiently show the falsity of such accusations, and the innocence of my life.

PSALM 7: 5 let the enemy pursue my soul, and overtake it; yes, let him tread my life down to the earth, and lay my glory in the dust. Selah.

Verse 5

Let the enemy persecute my soul - If I have been guilty of the things laid to my charge, let the worst evils fall upon me.

PSALM 7: 6 Arise, LORD, in your anger. Lift up yourself against the rage of my adversaries. Awake for me. You have commanded judgement.

Verse 6

Arise, O Lord, in thine anger - To thee I commit my cause; arise, and sit on the throne of thy judgment in my behalf.

PSALM 7: 7 Let the congregation of the peoples surround you. Rule over them on high.

Verse 7

For their sakes therefore return thou on high - Thy own people who compass thy altar, the faithful of the land, are full of gloomy apprehensions. They hear the charges against me; and see how I am persecuted. Their minds are divided; they know not what to think. For their sakes, return thou on high - ascend the judgment-seat; and let them see, by the dispensations of thy providence, who is innocent and who is guilty. David feared not to make this appeal to God; for the consciousness of his innocence showed him at once how the discrimination would be made.

PSALM 7: 8 The LORD administers judgement to the peoples. Judge me, LORD, according to my righteousness, and to my integrity that is in me.

Verse 8

The Lord shall judge the people - He will execute justice and maintain truth among them. They shall not be as sheep without a shepherd.

Judge me, O Lord - Let my innocence be brought to the light, and my just dealing made clear as the noonday.

PSALM 7: 9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous; their minds and hearts are searched by the righteous God.

Verse 9

The wickedness of the wicked - The iniquity of Saul's conduct.

But establish the just - Show the people my uprightness.

PSALM 7: 10 My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart.

Verse 10

My defense is of God - I now leave my cause in the hands of my Judge. I have no uneasy or fearful apprehensions, because I know God will save the upright in heart.

PSALM 7: 11 God is a righteous judge, yes, a God who has indignation every day.

Verse 11

God is angry with the wicked every day - The Hebrew for this sentence is the following: ועל זעם בכל יום ועל זעם becol yom; which, according to the points, is, And God is angry every day. Our translation seems to have been borrowed from the Chaldee, where the whole verse is as follows: ואלהא דאייאנא זאכאח ובתקופ רגז אל רשיעי כל יומא yoma: "God is a righteous Judge; and in strength he is angry against the wicked every day."

The Vulgate: Deus Judex justus, fortis, et patiens; numquid irascitur per singulos dies? "God is a Judge righteous, strong, and patient; will he be angry every day?"

The Septuagint: Ὁ Θεὸς Κριτῆς δίκαιος, καὶ ἰσχυρὸς, καὶ μακροθυμὸς, μὴ ὀργὴν ἐπαγῶν καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν; "God is a righteous Judge, strong and longsuffering; not bringing forth his anger every day."

Syriac: "God is the Judge of righteousness; he is not angry every day."

The Arabic is the same as the Septuagint.

The Aethiopic: "God is a just Judge, and strong and longsuffering; he will not bring forth tribulation daily."

Coverdale: God is a righteous judge, and Gob is ever threateninge.

King Edward's Bible by Becke 1549, follows this reading.

Cardmarden: God is a righteous judge, [strong and patient] and God is provoked every day. Cardmarden has borrowed strong and patient from the Vulgate or Septuagint, but as he found nothing in the Hebrew to express them, he put the words in a smaller letter, and included them in brackets. This is followed by the prose version in our Prayer Book.

The Genevan version, printed by Barker, the king's printer, 1615, translates thus: "God judgeth the righteous, and him that contemneth God every day." On which there is this marginal note: "He doth continually call the wicked to repentance, by some signs of his judgments." My ancient Scotico - English MS. Psalter only begins with the conclusion of this Psalm.

I have judged it of consequence to trace this verse through all the ancient versions in order to be able to ascertain what is the true reading, where the evidence on one side amounts to a positive affirmation, "God is angry every day;" and, on the other side, to as positive a negation, "He is Not angry every day." The mass of evidence supports the latter reading. The Chaldee first corrupted the text by making the addition, with the wicked, which our translators have followed, though they have put the words into italics, as not being in the Hebrew text. In the MSS. collated by Kennicott and De Rossi there is no various reading on this text.

The true sense may be restored thus: - אל el, with the vowel point tsere, signifies God: אל al, the same letters, with the point pathach, signifies not. Several of the versions have read it in this way: "God judgeth the righteous, and is Not angry every day." He is not always chiding, nor is he daily punishing, notwithstanding the continual wickedness of men: hence, the ideas of patience and longsuffering which several of the versions introduce. Were I to take any of the translations in preference to the above, I should feel most inclined to adopt that of Coverdale.

PSALM 7: 12 If a man doesn't relent, he will sharpen his sword; he has bent and strung his bow.

Verse 12

If he turn not - This clause the Syriac adds to the preceding verse. Most of the versions read, "If ye return not." Some contend, and not without a great show of probability, that the two verses should be read in connection, thus: "God is a just Judge; a God who is provoked every day. If (the sinner) turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready." This, no doubt, gives the sense of both.

PSALM 7: 13 He has also prepared for himself the instruments of death. He makes ready his flaming arrows.

Verse 13

He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death - This appears to be all a prophecy of the tragical death of Saul. He was wounded by the arrows of the Philistines; and his own keen sword, on which he fell, terminated his woful days!

PSALM 7: 14 Behold, he travails with iniquity. Yes, he has conceived mischief, and brought out falsehood.

Verse 14

He travailleth with iniquity - All these terms show the pitch of envy, wrath, and malevolence, to which Saul had carried his opposition against David. He conceived mischief; he travailed with iniquity; he brought forth falsehood - all his expectations were blasted.

PSALM 7: 15 He has dug a hole, and has fallen into the pit which he made.

Verse 15

He made a pit - He determined the destruction of David. He laid his plans with much artifice; he executed them with zeal and diligence; and when he had, as he supposed, the grave of David digged, he fell into it himself! The metaphor is taken from pits dug in the earth, and slightly covered over with reeds &c. so as not to be discerned from the solid ground; but the animal steps on them, the surface breaks, and he falls into the pit and is taken. "All the world agrees to acknowledge the equity of that sentence, which inflicts upon the guilty the punishment intended by them for the innocent." - Horne.

PSALM 7: 16 The trouble he causes shall return to his own head. His violence shall come down on the crown of his own head.

Verse 16

Shall come down upon his own pate - Upon his scalp, דקדק kodkod, the top of the head. It may refer to knocking the criminal on the head, in order to deprive him of life. Had scalping been known in those days, I should have thought the reference might be to that barbarous custom.

PSALM 7: 17 I will give thanks to the LORD according to his righteousness, and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

Verse 17

I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness - I shall celebrate both his justice and his mercy. I will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High. The name of God is often put for his perfections. So here, שם יהוה עליון shem Yehovah Elyon; "The perfections of Jehovah, who is above all." My old Scotico - English MS., mentioned at the conclusion of the introduction, begins at this verse, where are the following words by way of paraphrase: Sang falles til ioy; and he that synges well that name, his ioy es mare than i kan tell. Those who are happy may sing; and he who can duly celebrate the name of God, who knows it to be a strong tower into which he can run and find safety, has inexpressible happiness. That is the sense of the above.