

The Innocent Man

Jesus in the Psalms, Part VII

Psalm 7

Stuart W. Bryan

I. False Accusations (cf. 1 Sam 24:8ff; 26:17ff)

God hates false accusations and those who make them. God loves the truth and desires us to be men and women of the truth. Peter urges us to “put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander” (1 Pet 2:11). And the ninth commandment reads, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” God hates false accusations.

II. Responding to False Accusations

A. Save me and deliver me! (vv. 1-2)

Notice, first, that David once again cries out to God in the face of trouble. He has put his “trust” in God and asks God to deliver him from the plotting of his enemies.

B. Let him lay my honor in the dust! (vv. 3-5 cf. 1 Pet 2:19-23)

Second, David appeals to God because he knows that in this matter he is innocent. David is not, in these verses, claiming sinlessness. He is vigorously asserting his innocence in the face of false charges.

C. Arise, O Lord, in Your anger! (vv. 6-9)

So notice then, third, that David calls upon God to manifest that He is indeed the Righteous Judge who vindicates righteousness and punishes wickedness. He is calling upon God to *return on high* (v.7b) – that is to mount up into His judgment seat and manifest His justice.

God takes false accusations and misrepresentations seriously. In the face of them we can call upon God, as the just judge, to vindicate the truth; to uphold what is just. David does not fear God’s evaluation in this matter because he is conscious of his innocence.

D. God is a just judge. (vv. 10-16)

And so, fourth, David expresses absolute confidence that God will defend Him. The call for God to judge in vv. 6-9 is followed by David’s declaration of faith in vv. 10-16: God is a just Judge and so he shall do that which David has requested. *My defense is of God, who saves the upright in heart. God is a just judge. And God is angry with the wicked every day.*

E. I will praise the Lord (v. 17)

III. Praying this Psalm (cf. 1 Pet 2:19-25)

A. Entrust your cause to God

First, entrust yourself to God. Pray that He would uphold the truth and look to Him to do so. He often does it in this life and he most certainly shall do it in the final judgment. This is what we have seen in Psalm 7. Jesus, as the Innocent Man, entrusted Himself to the Father who judges righteously. So when we are falsely accused, the words of Psalm 7 should come to our lips. We cry out to God, maintain our innocence, invite Him to judge, rejoice in the knowledge that He will, and praise His Name.

B. Live for righteousness

Second, in the knowledge that God will vindicate you, live for righteousness. Do not use the wickedness of the enemy as an excuse to practice wickedness. Maintain a clear conscience.

Sometimes we ask how we can pray for God's judgment on the wicked and simultaneously love the wicked. How is Jesus' call for God to rise up *in anger against His enemies* consistent with Jesus' love for his enemies?

Peter's words give us a clue to sorting this out. In the face of the false accusations that were leveled against Him, Jesus practiced love. He did not mistreat His enemies but responded to their mistreatment with genuine love. Love is a settled determination to treat another person lawfully from the heart. And this type of love Jesus practiced. He treated his enemies well even when they treated him wrongly.

*"The foundation for Jesus' radical command of enemy-love in the present is the assurance of God's righteous judgment in the future. That is sure and that is then. But now is the time to love. Now is the moment of mercy. This answers the initial question, How are Christians to show 'real love' to an enemy? Love is demonstrated when wrath is left to God and kindness is shown in response to the enemy's need. Christians can love all so radically and indiscriminately because justice will be covered by the judgment of God. The assurance of God's ultimate justice (then) frees radical love (now)." (John C. Day, *Crying for Justice*, p. 99)*

"Imprecations of judgment on the wicked on the hypothesis of their continued impenitence are not inconsistent with simultaneous efforts to bring them to repentance; and Christian charity itself can do no more than labour for the sinner's conversion. The law of holiness requires us to pray for the fires of divine retribution: the law of love to seek meanwhile to rescue the brand from the burning." Joseph Francis Thrupp

IV. Conclusion