

There are times in our lives when we need to be vindicated. There are times when injustices are done against us and we have not done a thing to deserve it. This kind of thing can happen on a job, in a school, or even in church.

When these kinds of things happen, often there doesn't seem to be a thing you can do about the wrongs. The only thing a believer can do and always has the right to do is to go to God and ask God for His help. That is precisely what David does in **Psalm 35**.

Now there are some who say that no believer should ever pray a prayer like this. There are those who suggest that you always have to pray good things about people, even those who are doing terrible things against you. However, if we examine everything that God teaches us about prayer, including what Jesus Christ taught when He was here on earth, it becomes clear that there are times when this kind of prayer is the right kind of prayer (i.e. Luke 18:2-8).

From the superscription, we know that this is a Psalm of David. The background of the Psalm is uncertain. But what we may glean from the Psalm is that David was in trouble because many enemies were trying to destroy him.

Certainly it is possible that this Psalm came as a result of David being chased through the mountains by Saul and his forces. There were many who verbally assaulted David and wanted him gone. People banded together in their hatred against David and the only thing David could do was go to God. That is the lesson of this Psalm:

WHEN A FAITHFUL BELIEVER IS BEING VERBALLY ATTACKED BY OTHERS WHEN HE HASN'T DONE ANYTHING TO DESERVE IT, HE CAN ALWAYS PRAY TO GOD AND ASK GOD TO VINDICATE HIM AND EXPECT TO PRAISE GOD FOR HIS VINDICATION.

This is a prayer of David for vengeance against his enemies. One thing that often gets overlooked is that according to Revelation 19:1-2, there will come a day when God will actually be worshipped and joyfully praised because He has poured out His vengeance and wrath on this world. **The vengeance of God is a Biblical doctrine and prayer for vengeance is a Biblical prayer.**

J. Vernon McGee said, I have turned several people over to the Lord when what I really wanted to do was smack them in the mouth. Dr. McGee did the right thing because that is exactly what this Psalm teaches:

Now this Psalm breaks down nicely into four main segments:

SEGMENT #1 - David prays for God to defensively and offensively contend for him.
35:1-10

There are at least four aspects to this prayer:

Aspect #1 - There is the specific target of this prayer. **35:1-3**

David is praying to God, but he is specifically aiming this prayer against those who were against him. The word “contend” is one that speaks of a legal, forensic cause or contention (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 767).

The scene is not a courtroom but real life warfare. David is in the battle and he is specifically praying and asking God to be his legal defense. In **verse 2**, David says God is his buckler and shield, which means He is David’s defense. In **verse 3**, he says that God is his spear and battle axe, which means He is David’s offense.

He asks God to defend him and go on the offensive against his enemies (**35:3**). Plus he asks God to do one more thing - **to put into his soul the reality that God was in fact his salvation**. David just wanted to sense that God was near to him, so he asks God to work that out in his soul.

Look at how personal God was to David, and look at how sovereign God was in David’s theology. He believed God could not only take care of his enemies, but actually put hope within his own soul.

Aspect #2 - There are the specific requests of this prayer. **35:4-6, 8**

There are seven specific requests that David prays about. David wanted justice and he obviously had a tremendous belief in the sovereignty of God.

(Request #1) - Let my enemies be ashamed. **35:4a**

(Request #2) - Let my enemies be dishonored. **35:4b**

(Request #3) - Let my enemies be stopped. **35:4c**

(Request #4) - Let my enemies be humiliated. **35:4d**

(Request #5) - Let my enemies be scattered. **35:5**

(Request #6) - Let my enemies be driven and pursued. **35:5-6**

The angel of the LORD is none other than Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the authorizer and executer of judgment in any dispensation. David wanted the Lord to not only drive them away but pursue them.

(Request #7) - Let my enemies be trapped and destroyed. **35:8**

Charles Spurgeon said squeamish sentimentality may object to this strong prayer, but all hearts of those good and godly will wish this happens to mischief-makers.

Aspect #3 - There are the specific reasons for the prayer. **35:7**

David asks God to do this because he had not done anything to deserve any of this. In other words, the people had no cause against David. David had not wronged them. He had not done one thing to deserve his mistreatment, so he believed he had every right to go to God and ask for these things.

Laying a net and digging a pit requires planning, effort, and energy. These people had plotted and planned to overthrow David without any just cause.

This is important to see. This kind of vindication prayer is only valid if our cause is just and our enemies cause is unjust. If we did something to deserve the attack, this prayer is not valid. However, if we have not done anything to deserve the attack, this is a prayer we can make and expect God to answer.

Aspect #4 - There are the results of the prayer. **35:9-10**

If God would answer David's prayer and take care of his enemies, it would have a positive effect upon David: 1) He would worship God with the immaterial part of his person - his soul (**35:9**); 2) He would worship God with the material part of his person - his body (**35:10**).

SEGMENT #2 - The description of David's enemies treatment of him and his treatment of them. **35:11-16**

In this section, David describes what his enemies did to him and what he did to them:

Description #1 - The description of what David's enemies did to him. **35:11-12, 15-16**

Much of the emphasis here is on what David's enemies did to him verbally. They verbally ripped him to shreds:

- 1) David's enemies were verbally malicious against him. **35:11**
Invented charges he knew nothing about.
- 2) David's enemies repaid his good with their evil. **35:12**
David killed Goliath and Philistines.
- 3) David's enemies rejoiced at David's calamities. **35:15a**
Wicked people love to see a good man stumble.
- 4) David's enemies united together against David. **35:15b**
Birds of a feather do flock together.

- 5) David's enemies continued to slander David. **35:15c**
- 6) David's enemies made fun of David. **35:16a**
- 7) David's enemies verbally ripped David to shreds. **35:16b**
Much attack is by people running their mouths.

There are good things that God can accomplish through false accusations:

- 1) Produce within us an honest humility
- 2) Promote more prayer
- 3) Produce more purity
- 4) Produce wise judgment
- 5) Produce a dependency on God

Description #2 - The description of what David did to his enemies. **35:13-14**

We could sum up David's ministry to his enemies by saying David did everything he could do to minister to his enemies:

- 1) When they were hurting he prayed for them pastorally. **35:13**
- 2) When they were hurting he cared for them personally. **35:14a**
- 3) When they were hurting he ministered to them parentally. **35:14b**

It is obvious that he knew many of these enemies. He had been a good friend and a good pastor to these people, and they turned their backs on him and when that happens it hurts you deeply.

SEGMENT #3 - The prayer of David for God's immediate vindication and deliverance.
35:17-26

In this segment are a series of requests and reasons for the requests:

Request/Reason #1 - David asks God not to wait any longer to deliver him. **35:17-18**

David's enemies were vicious, ravaging lions. What they were doing was actually affecting the ability to corporately worship.

Request/Reason #2 - David asks God not to let his enemies rejoice any longer. **35:19-21**

David's enemies were influencing many people through their deceitful mockery (v. 20). Godly people love to be quiet, not chaotic. These people were telling people they had seen God's hand turn against David and they were tricking people into believing it.

Request/Reason #3 - David asks God to immediately judge him and judge them. **35:22-26**

The reasons David prays this are:

- 1) God has seen everything. **35:22**
- 2) God knows David's cause. **35:23**
- 3) God knows David's righteousness. **35:24**
- 4) God has the sovereign ability to:
 - A. Prevent their plan. **35:25**
 - B. Produce their shame and humiliation. **35:26**

SEGMENT #4 - The prayer of David in behalf of those who were not his enemies. **35:27-28**

David asks God for people who did care about him and had not forsaken him.

- 1) He asks that they would rejoice at his vindication. **35:27a**
- 2) He asks that they would continually glorify and magnify God. **35:27b**

One thing that certainly comes from this text is that we do have the right to pray for those who are against us. It is never wrong to turn issues of vengeance over to God. In the end, there will always be deliverance for one faithful to the Lord.