

**A Call to Arms to the Heavenly Court
for Vindication against Unjust Persecutors**

Psalm 35

<p style="text-align: center;">The Context 1 Samuel 24-26</p> <p>On two occasions David pleaded his innocence before Saul (Israel's reigning king and supreme judge of the land). On both occasions Saul publicly confessed to David's innocence and vindicated his integrity. Despite Saul's admissions of his guilt, he persisted in plotting David's demise and intensified his efforts to have him killed. Having exhausted his efforts for justice in Israel's courts, David's only recourse is to appeal directly to the heavenly court, calling upon God to take up his case and judge his enemies. The Psalm is made up of three appeals, each increasing with intensity in documenting the pain and persevering in hope.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Outline</p> <p>I. First Appeal: The Enemy is Devising 1-10 A. Calls on the Divine Warrior to fight B. Calls on I AM to Judge with the basis for judgment C. Vow of praise</p> <p>II. Second Appeal: The Enemy is Mocking 11-18 A. The agony of the injustice done to him B. Calls on I AM to rescue him with confidence</p> <p>III. Third Appeal: The Enemy Gloating 19-28 A. Calls on I AM to vindicate him based on their evil character B. Calls on I AM to vindicate him based on his righteousness C. The aftermath of judgment on the wicked and the just</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">1 לָדוֹד אֲרִיבָה יְהוָה אֶת־יָרִיבֵי לָחֶם אֶת־לַחְמִי : 2 הַחֲזֵק מִגֶּן וְצַנְחָה וְקוּמָה בְּעֶזְרָתִי : 3 וְחָרַק חֲנִית וְסֹגֵר לְקַבֵּאת רֹדְפֵי אִמֹר לְנַפְשִׁי יִשְׁעֲתֵךְ אֲנִי :</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">By David.</p> <p>1 Contend, I AM, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me!</p> <p>2 Take hold of shield (<i>magen</i>) and buckler (<i>sinnah</i>) and arise for my help!</p> <p>3 Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers!</p> <p>Say to my soul, "Your salvation I am!"</p>	<p>I. The Enemy is Devising (1-10) A. Calls on divine Warrior to fight for him! "contend" (<i>rib</i>) – a legal term to take up his case as advocate and prosecutor. Since Saul violated his "oaths," "contend" escalates to "fight."</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take up defensive armor: the <i>magen</i> is the small round shield used in close combat; the <i>sinnah</i> is the large rectangular shield often carried by the shield-bearer (1 Sam 17:7). 2. Unleash offensive weapons: the spear (<i>hanit</i>) was Saul's weapon of choice, and which David lifted from his sleeping camp along with a jug of water to prove his innocence (1 Sam 27:7- 11) 3. Give a personal word to assure me you are committed to deliver me.

<p>4 וַיִּבְשׁוּ וַיִּכְלְמוּ מִבְקֶשֶׁי נַפְשִׁי יִסְגּוּ אַתְּחֹר וַיִּתְפָּרוּ הַשִּׁבִי רַעְתִּי :</p> <p>5 וַיְהִי כַמֶּיץ לַפְּנֵי-רוּחַ וּמִלְאָךְ יִתְּנָה דוֹחָה :</p> <p>6 וַיְהִי-דַרְכָם תִּשְׁךָ וַחֲלָקְלָקוֹת וּמִלְאָךְ יִהְיֶה רֶדְפָם :</p> <p>7 כִּי-תִנְּם טָמְנוּ-לִי שַׁחַת רִשְׁתָּם חֲנָם חָפְרוּ לְנַפְשִׁי :</p> <p>8 תְּבוֹאֵהוּ שׂוֹאָה לֹא-יָדַע לֹא-יָדַע וְרִשְׁתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-טָמַן תִּלְכְּדוּ כְּשׂוֹאָה יִפֹּל-בָּהּ :</p> <p>9 וְנַפְשִׁי תִגְיַל בִּיהוָה תְּשִׁישׁ בִּישׁוּעָתוֹ :</p> <p>10 כָּל עַצְמוֹתַי תֹּאמְרֶנָּה יְהוָה מִי כָמוֹךָ מִצִּיל עַנִּי מִחַזְקֵי מִמֶּנּוּ וְעַנִּי וְאֶבְיוֹן מִגְזָלוֹ :</p>	<p>4 Let them be put to shame and dishonor who seek after my life!</p> <p>Let them be turned back and be dismayed who are devising evil against me!</p> <p>5 Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of I AM driving them away!</p> <p>6 Let their way be dark and slippery, with the angel of I AM pursuing them!</p> <p>7 For without cause they hid their net for me; without cause they dug a pit for my life.</p> <p>8 Let destruction come upon him when he does not know it!</p> <p>And let the net that he hid ensnare him; let him fall into it—to his destruction!</p> <p>9 Then my soul will rejoice in I AM, exulting in his salvation.</p> <p>10 All my bones shall say, “I AM, who is like you, delivering the poor from those stronger than him, the poor and needy from him who robs him?”</p>	<p>B. Calls for judgment on enemies (7 wishes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public shame and disgrace for attacking God’s anointed (this was a capital offence) 2. May their attack force be repelled and take to one’s heels for plotting David’s ruin 3. In their retreat may they be like chaff before the wind (Ps 1:4) as the angel of I AM effortlessly thrusts them to the ground 4. In their retreat may their way be dark and “slippery” (<i>chalaqallot</i> = “smooth, deceptive, slippery” – 1 Sam 23:28), as the angel of I AM relentlessly pursues them. <p>Reason: “without cause” (<i>hinam</i>, lit. “for no reason” they set a trap to take his life.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. May his destruction come at a time “he does not know.” 6. May the trap he set entrap him 7. May his fall be fatal. <p>Note: Saul fell on his own sword (1 Sam 31:3-4)</p> <p>C. Vow of praise: the Joy of Triumph</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The call to praise 2. The reason for praise <p>“my bones”– The “bones” of the body, which elsewhere are mentioned as sharing only in the anguish of the soul (Pss 6:3; 31:11; 32:3; 51:10), are here made to share in the joy, into which the anxiety, that agitated even the marrow of the bones, is changed. (Keil and Delitzsch, <i>Psalms</i>)</p> <p>The theology of Hannah’s prayer (1 Sam 1:1-10) 2</p>
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<p>11 יְקוּמוּן עַדֵי הַמָּס אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתִּי יִשְׁאַלּוּנִי :</p> <p>12 וְשָׁלְמוּנִי רָעָה תַחַת טוֹבָה שָׂכֹל לְנַפְשִׁי :</p> <p>13 וְאֲנִי בַחֲלוֹתָם לְבוּשֵׁי שָׂק עָנִיתִי בְצוּם נַפְשִׁי וְתַפְלְתִי עַל־חִיקֵי תְּשׁוּב :</p> <p>14 כְּרַע־פָּאֵחַ לִי הִתְהַלַּקְתִּי כְּאֶבֶל־אֵם קָרַר שְׁחֹתִי :</p> <p>15 וּבְצִלְעֵי שְׂמֹחָו וְנֶאֱסָפוּ נֶאֱסָפוּ עָלַי גֵּיכִים וְלֹא יָדַעְתִּי קָרְעוּ וְלֹא־דָמּוּ :</p> <p>16 בְּחִנְפֵי לַעֲגֵי מְעוּג תָּרַק עָלַי שְׁנִימוּ :</p> <p>17 אֲדַנִּי כַפְמָה תִּרְאֶה הַשִּׁיבָה נַפְשִׁי מִשְׂאֵיהֶם מִמְּכַפְיָרִים יַחֲדָתִי :</p> <p>18 אֲוִדְךָ בְּקִתְלֵךָ רַב בְּעַם עֲצוּם אֶהְלֶלְךָ :</p>	<p>11 Malicious witnesses rise up; they ask me of things that I do not know.</p> <p>12 They repay me evil for good; my soul is bereft.</p> <p>13 But I, when they were sick—I wore sackcloth; I afflicted myself with fasting; I prayed with head bowed on my chest.</p> <p>14 I went about as though I grieved for my friend... or my brother; as one who laments his mother, I bowed down in mourning.</p> <p>15 But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered; they gathered together against me; wretches whom I did not know tore at me without ceasing;</p> <p>16 like profane mockers at a feast, they gnash at me with their teeth.</p> <p>17 How long, I AM, will you look on? Rescue me from their destruction, my precious life from the lions!</p> <p>18 I will thank you in the great congregation; in the mighty throng I will praise you.</p>	<p>II. The Enemy is Mocking (vv. 11-18) A. The injustice done to David: being repaid evil for good</p> <p>1. David’s loyal love in their weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indentified with their plight • applied every spiritual discipline • in the strongest familial bonds <p>2. Their violence and evil in return</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a united force in their gloating • strengthened by a rabble they became a raging mob <p>B. Petition with Confidence</p> <p>1. Petition for rescue from “destruction” reveals that David is close to death, yet he still has confidence that his life is precious in God’s eyes</p> <p>2. Vow of praise: David’s deliverance will strengthen the congregation</p>
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<p>19 אֶל־יִשְׂמְחוּ־לִי אֹיְבֵי שִׁקְרָה שְׂנְאָי חֲנֹם יִקְרְצוּ־עֵינַי׃</p> <p>20 כִּי לֹא שָׁלוֹם יְדַבְּרוּ וְעַל רְגַע־אָרֶץ דַּבְּרֵי מְרִמוֹת יַחְשְׁבוּן׃</p> <p>21 וַיִּתְּחוּבוּ עָלַי פִּיהֶם אָמְרוּ הֵאֱחָח הֵאֱחָח רְאֵתָה עֵינֵינוּ׃</p> <p>22 רְאֵיתָה יְהוָה אֶל־תִּתְחַרֵּשׁ אֲדֹנָי אֶל־תִּתְרַחַק מִמֶּנִּי׃</p> <p>23 הָעִירָה וְהִקְיֵצָה לְמִשְׁפָּטִי אֱלֹהֵי וְאֲדֹנָי לְרִיבֵי׃</p> <p>24 שִׁפְטֵנִי כְּצִדְקֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֶל־יִשְׂמְחוּ־לִי׃</p> <p>25 אֶל־יֹאמְרוּ בְּלִבָּם הֵאֱחָח נַפְשֵׁנוּ אֶל־יֹאמְרוּ בְּלַעְנוּהוּ׃</p>	<p>19 Let not those rejoice over me who are wrongfully my foes, and let not those wink the eye who hate me without cause.</p> <p>20 For they do not speak peace, but against those who are quiet in the land they devise words of deceit.</p> <p>21 They open wide their mouths against me; they say, “Aha, Aha! Our eyes have seen it!”</p> <p>22 You have seen, I AM; be not silent! O Lord, be not far from me!</p> <p>23 Awake and rouse yourself for my vindication! Contend for, my God and my Lord!</p> <p>24 Vindicate me according to your righteousness I AM, my God and let them not rejoice over me!</p> <p>25 Let them not say in their hearts, “Aha, our heart’s desire!” Let them not say, “We have swallowed him up.”</p>	<p>III. The Enemy is Gloating (vv. 19-28) A. Petition for vindication based on the evil character of his enemies</p> <p>B. Petition for vindication based on God’s righteous character</p>
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<p>26 יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּחְפְּרוּ יַחְדָּו שְׂמֵחֵי רָעָתִי יִלְבְּשׁוּ-בִשְׂת וּכְלָמָה הַמְגַדִּילִים עָלַי :</p> <p>27 יִרְנֹו וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ חַפְצֵי צְדָקָי וַיֹּאמְרוּ תָמִיד יִגְדַּל יְהוָה הַחֲפֹץ שְׁלוֹם עַבְדּוֹ :</p> <p>28 וְלִשׁוֹנִי תְהַלֵּל צְדָקָךְ כָּל-הַיּוֹם תְּהַלְתֶּךָ :</p>	<p>26 Let them be put to shame and disappointed altogether who rejoice at my calamity! Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor who magnify themselves against me!</p> <p>27 May they shout and rejoice those delighting in my righteousness and say evermore, "Great is I AM, who delights in the well being of his servant!"</p> <p>28 Then my tongue shall tell of your righteousness and of your praise all the day long.</p>	<p>C. The aftermath of judgment (Ps 1:5-6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the wicked • for the righteous – vows of praise
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