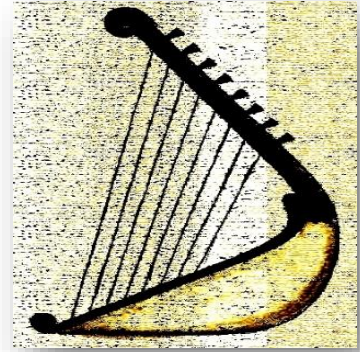


PSALM 17 vs 1

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Title and Subject: David would not have been a man after God's own heart, if he had not been a man of prayer. He was a master in the sacred art of request. He flies to prayer in all times of need, as a pilot speeds to the harbor in the stress of storm. So frequent were David's prayers that they could not all be dated and entitled; hence this simply bears the author's name, and nothing more. We have in this song, **AN APPEAL TO HEAVEN**.



Divisions: There are no clear lines of demarcation between the parts; David craves justice in the controversy between him and his oppressors (1-4); he requests of the Lord, grace to act rightly while under trial (5-6); he seeks protection from his foes, whom he graphically describes (7-12); and pleads that they may be disappointed (13-14); closing the whole in the most confidence that all will certainly be well at last (15) – Charles Spurgeon.

A Prayer of David

¹ Hear O LORD, a just cause; be attentive to my cry. Listen to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips.

² From Your presence let justice come; let Your eyes look on what is upright.

³ You examined my heart; You visited me in the night; You tried me, and found nothing; I determined my mouth will not transgress.

⁴ Concerning the works of men, by the word of Your lips I keep from the paths that destroy.

Pause, and think about it: In the night, the soul is free from the business of the world, and therefore freest for business with God. David would measure his response, he would not go too far; he will not step over the line. The paths of the destroyer have often tempted us; we have been prompted to become destroyers too, when we have been provoked, and resentment has grown warm.

⁵ Support my goings in Your paths, that my footsteps do not slip.

⁶ I called on You, for You will hear me, O God: stretch Your ear to me, and hear my speech.

Think about it: Lord, hold me up, that I may hold out. You set a crown at the end of the race; let me run the race, that I may wear the crown. It was Beza's prayer, and let it be ours, "Lord, perfect what You have begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven" – Thomas Watson.

⁷ Wonderful is Your compassion, O Savior, to those who take refuge in You, from the rebels against Your right hand.

⁸ Keep me as the apple of the eye; under the shadow of Your wings hide me,

⁹ from the wrong who oppress me, from my deadly enemies who surround me.

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¹⁰ **Their fat has imprisoned them:** with their mouth they speak boastfully.

¹¹ Now in my steps, they surround me: they see from their position, crouching on the ground,

¹² like a lion eager to tear his prey, and like a young lion lurking in secret places.

Think about it: These wrongdoers were imprisoned in their own fat heads, minds and hearts (they think they are prosperous) when all they are is puffed up, stupid and senseless, and devoid of the fear of God; whoever they were, they are just a bunch of over-inflated, swollen speechmakers -- most likely, but not exclusively... they are like pompous politicians; certainly like royal jackasses.

¹³ Arise, O LORD, confront him, throw him down: deliver my soul from the wrongdoer, with your sword:

¹⁴ from men with Your hand, O LORD, from men from the world, whose portion is this life, and whose belly is filled, hid with Your treasure: they indulge their children, and leave the remainder *of stuff* for their babies;

¹⁵ as for me, in rightness I will see Your face: and be satisfied, when I awaken in Your likeness.

Think about it: These troublemakers spent their time carefully hiding, hoarding and secretly guarding their pilfered stuff; what they valued most, including gold and silver hid from the public view. David knew the bigger picture: this very imperfect world is terminal, earth's trailer-trash isn't going to populate heaven; so he committed them to God's hands, knowing that one day he will awaken (over there) in His likeness.

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