

GOD IS JUST

Leader pages on pp. 110-113

THE POINT:
BECAUSE GOD IS
RIGHTEOUS, HE ALONE
ESTABLISHES JUSTICE.

PSALM 7:1-13

¹ LORD my God, I seek refuge in you; save me from all my pursuers and rescue me,

² or they will tear me like a lion, ripping me apart with no one to rescue me.

³ LORD my God, if I have done this, if there is injustice on my hands,

⁴ if I have done harm to one at peace with me or have plundered my adversary without cause,

⁵ may an enemy pursue and overtake me; may he trample me to the ground and leave my honor in the dust.

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⁶ Rise up, LORD, in your anger; lift yourself up against the fury of my adversaries; awake for me; you have ordained a judgment.

⁷ Let the assembly of peoples gather around you; take your seat on high over it.

⁸ The LORD judges the peoples; vindicate me, LORD, according to my righteousness and my integrity.

⁹ Let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous. The one who examines the thoughts and emotions is a righteous God.

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¹⁰ **My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart.**

¹¹ God is a righteous judge and a God who shows his wrath every day.

¹² If anyone does not repent, he will sharpen his sword; he has strung his bow and made it ready.

¹³ He has prepared his deadly weapons; he tips his arrows with fire.

MEMORY VERSE

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KEYWORDS

LORD my God (v. 1)—David relied upon his covenantal relationship with God, Yahweh, as a basis for God’s help in his time of trouble.

Injustice (v. 3)—As David spoke to the just God, he feared he was responsible for “injustice.” The Hebrew word (*awe/*) indicates a deviation from a right standard.

My shield (v. 10)—The Hebrew term (*magen*) for the smaller shield used by warriors. David viewed God in these verses as a warrior who acted in defense of the righteous.

Deadly weapons (v. 13)—The righteous God is a warrior God. He is not passive and removed from the battle of His people.

WHAT DOES GOD TEACH US ABOUT JUSTICE?

"...and justice for all."

For as long as any of us can remember, those four words signaled the start of the school day, the VBS opening assembly, and every Boy Scout or Girl Scout meeting. Chances are, even if those words weren't part of our Pledge of Allegiance, our desire for justice is still deeply ingrained.

- A car that sped by you gets pulled over by a state trooper — justice.
- The neighbor who never edges his sidewalk finally gets fined by the HOA — justice.
- Your boss pays attention to the extra hours you've been putting in, and you get the promotion — justice.

But what happens when you're the offender? You forget to return something you borrowed. You get caught driving solo in the HOV lane. There's an honest mistake on your tax return. Suddenly, your cry for justice becomes a plea for mercy.

How does God balance it all? Can the same God be both just and merciful? He can. He does. He has. He will. What may be an impossible balance of character for man is the true nature and essence of who God is.

He is Our Refuge // Psalm 7:1-5

When you read the Psalms, don't skip over the opening information (called a superscription). Each one can give you insights that will help you understand the psalm better. In the case of Psalm 7, we learn that it was written by David. It's categorized as a "Shiggaion," which is an unknown musical term. Since it's only found here and in Habakkuk 3, it's anyone's best guess what it means. Since both Habakkuk 3 and Psalm 7 express deep emotion, it could suggest a freer, passionate poetic form.⁵

So, what was David so deeply emotional about? The superscription says it was "concerning the words of Cush, a Benjaminite." There's no record in Scripture of a specific event David was referencing, but since David was of the tribe of Judah and his predecessor Saul was a Benjaminite, there were probably some harsh words spoken by the Benjaminites when David took the throne. And don't forget, this was not a peaceful transfer of power.

For eight years after David was anointed by Samuel, Saul kept trying to kill him, until Saul himself was killed in battle.⁶ This psalm was



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probably either written while David was on the run from Saul, or years later when he reflected back on that time.

David knew where to turn when his enemies were pursuing him. He sought refuge in God. Whenever the Bible spells the word "Lord" in small caps, it's the translator's indication that this was the Hebrew word for God's personal covenant name, usually transliterated "Yahweh." So not only did David use God's personal name, he added his personal relationship with God: "Yahweh my God" (v. 1).

David didn't merely seek refuge in God; he sought refuge in God alone. Notice in verse 2 David told God that if David's pursuers were able to overtake him, they would rip him apart "with no one to rescue me." David was all in with God. He didn't have a plan B. If God wasn't going to rescue him, he wasn't going to be rescued.

Part of the reason David had confidence is because he knew that God is a just God. God has shown us how to live the kind of lives that please Him, but He has also made it clear that He hates injustice and "will not leave the guilty unpunished" (Ex. 34:7). In Psalm 7:3-5, David took a personal moral inventory. In effect, he told God, "Look, if this is because of a wrong I've done to someone, or if I've hurt someone who was my friend, or even if I stole something from my enemy, then I deserve what's coming to me." But as far as David could tell, he had not done any of these things. He could call on the God of justice with a clear conscience, confident that he had not been the perpetrator of injustice.

WHAT DOES DAVID SHOW US ABOUT A RIGHT RESPONSE TO INJUSTICE?

This kind of personal inventory is an important first step when we seek refuge from God or call on God for justice. In another psalm, David gave us all a great outline for how to ask God for help with this time of reflection in Psalm 139:23-24:

"Search me, God, and know my heart;

test me and know my concerns.

See if there is any offensive way in me;

lead me in the everlasting way"

He is Our Vindicator // Psalm 7:6-9

According to the Reuters News Service, between 2008 and 2019, more than fifteen hundred judges either resigned, retired, or faced public discipline following accusations of misconduct.⁷ Yet, the same study showed that nine out of ten judges remained on the bench even after facing disciplinary action for misconduct.



DIGGING DEEPER GOD MY REFUGE

The word *refuge* can be defined as a place you go to for protection. Throughout the Psalms, God invites His people to take refuge in Him.

- Psalm 18:30
- Psalm 27:5
- Psalm 32:7
- Psalm 46:1
- Psalm 62:8

Believers can find refuge in God and trust Him for justice by believing that God is who He says He is, and He will do what He says He will do. This promise is present tense and ongoing; it does not have an expiration date! Psalm 91 is like a commentary on God being our refuge. Verses 9 and 10 highlight our safety in God. Our refuge is strong and greater than any opposing force. When you dwell under the shelter of God, you are covered by Him forever.

How does knowing that God is your refuge encourage you to trust Him during times of uncertainty?



Unrighteous judges are nothing new. Injustice is mentioned numerous times in the Old Testament. Jesus made an unrighteous judge the main character in one of His parables (Luke 18:1-8). If one verse could sum up the conflict between justice and injustice, it might be Romans 3:10: "There is no one righteous, not even one." If we are looking for a perfect judge, we will never find one sitting on a courtroom bench. Which is why we need to look above the bench. Literally. On the front wall of many American courtrooms, as well as in the chamber of the House of Representatives, is the phrase "In God We Trust." It is there as a reminder that God alone is the Righteous Judge.

In verse 7, David seems to have been picturing a courtroom: God is at the center of a great assembly of people, probably all the Israelites, since there is a different Hebrew word for people of other nations. God takes His seat high above them. From there, David pictures God judging David's adversaries and vindicating David.

David wasn't just expressing confidence that the Lord is the judge of all the earth and will do what is right, as Abraham did when he was bargaining with God over the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 18:23). Instead, David was expressing confidence that God, the only Righteous Judge, would do right by him. Like we talked about in the previous section, David had searched his own heart, and while he knew he wasn't sinless, he believed he was innocent of the accusations made by his enemies. And since God alone is able to judge the thoughts

and intentions of the heart, David was confident of his vindication. Human judges can't do that. They can't read your mind or see inside your heart. Judges can only consider the testimony of others and the physical evidence presented both for and against you, interpreting it through their own human perspective. But God sees your heart.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TRUST GOD FOR JUSTICE?

The good news is that despite all this, God still loves us! God sent His Son to be our great High Priest. That allows us to "approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). This is why David was so confident in verse 9 that the evil of the wicked would come to an end and the righteous would be established. God alone is the Righteous Judge.

He Requires Our Repentance // Psalm 7:10-13

So far, almost everything we've said about God's justice and righteousness has felt comforting and reassuring. God loves us. We can trust Him to render a right verdict. He has told us what it takes to please Him, and we can be confident that He knows the way of the righteous (Ps. 1).

Yet, for all that, there are two sides to God's righteous judgment. God grants pardons, but He also punishes.

Verse 11 takes a sharp turn. After David once again expressed his confidence that his shield was with God and that God saves the upright in heart, David dropped a stark warning: God shows His wrath every day. At this point in Psalm 7, David left the courtroom imagery behind and shifted to the battlefield. God is more than just a Righteous Judge; He is also a Valiant Warrior.

- God has sharpened His sword.
- God has restrung His bow.
- God has prepared His deadly weapons.
- God has tipped His arrows with fire.

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Today, we would say He is locked and loaded! Against whom? Those who do not repent. Repentance literally means to turn back or to turn away. For Christians, we associate it with turning away from sin specifically. But here, David was probably thinking about his earthly enemies. Remember what he called his adversaries in verse 1? "Pursuers." And what's the opposite of pursuing? Retreating.

God certainly protects us from earthly enemies. There are more than two hundred references to God delivering His people from their enemies in the Bible. But let's be honest. Most of us are more familiar with (and much less successful against) spiritual warfare. Not a day goes by that we aren't fighting against sin and temptation. Or worse, we don't fight it at all. I saw a shirt one time that said, "I don't struggle with sin. I enjoy every minute of it!" That's the picture of an unrepentant heart, and the warning of Psalm 7:12-13 is directed squarely toward those who don't turn away from their sin.

Without repentance, judgment awaits. There may still be earthly consequences to our sin, but the eternal consequences have been blotted out.

HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE HELP US UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary states that justice is "Order that God seeks to reestablish in His creation where all people receive the benefits of life with Him" (p. 947). God's perfect holiness demands consequences for sin. But through His love is forgiveness through the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus Christ. How should you understand justice when injustice seems to always succeed? Here are six truths about God's character found in His word:

God is just (Deut. 32:4).

God hates injustice (Isa. 59: 14-15).

God commands justice (Mic. 6: 8).

God loves justice (Ps. 37: 28).

Injustice is sin (2 Chron. 19: 7).

God will judge injustice (Rom. 12: 19).

Biblical Truth: "To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice" (Prov. 21: 3).

What does it mean to "do justice" as a believer in Jesus Christ?

LIVE IT

How does knowing that God "tests the minds and hearts" guide you to pure motives?

At first glance of Psalm 7, you might think David was being arrogant. A closer look will prove that thought wrong. It does prompt us to acknowledge how much we need God's divine gift of undeserved mercy and grace. David was not perfect. His life demonstrates God's justice against sin, no matter who commits it. But it also demonstrates God's forgiveness for those who repent. This week:

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- **Read.** Read Psalm 51 and Psalm 32. They both are believed to have been written by David after his sin with Bathsheba. Psalm 51 is a psalm of repentance. Psalm 32 is a psalm of praise for forgiveness.
- **Reflect.** Ask God to help you take the same moral inventory David did. If God brings someone specific to mind, write it down and plan to take action.
- **Repent.** Don't just be sorry for your sin; turn away from it. Confession is the first step to break sin's stronghold in your life.

DAILY READINGS

1. PROTECTION FOR THE INNOCENT // PSALM 7:1-5

When enemies seem to surround and devour us, God remains our unshakable refuge. In His perfect wisdom, He sees beyond our circumstances to the heart of every matter—discerning whether those who oppose us do so justly or unjustly. If we flee to God from legitimate correction, we find not a hiding place but a loving Father who gently exposes our need for repentance. If we run to Him from unjust persecution, we discover His fierce protection and comfort. In God's presence, we're stripped of self-deception and clothed in His truth, drawing us closer to His heart and deeper into authentic Christian maturity.

God's divine refuge isn't mere shelter—it's transformation.

2. PROTECTION FROM THE ENEMY // PSALM 7:6-10

The same God who tenderly calls us His beloved children burns with righteous wrath against those who would harm His own. This divine anger isn't petty or vindictive—it flows from perfect justice and fierce love. Understanding God's protective wrath reveals both His uncompromising holiness and His passionate devotion to us. This truth should humble us deeply—we belong to One whose justice is absolute and whose love is fierce enough to defend us at any cost. Knowing we're cherished by such a powerful God should inspire reverence, gratitude, and confidence, drawing us closer to His heart while reminding us to extend His same protective love to others.

God is our loving protector.

3. MERCY // PSALM 7:10-13; HEBREWS 4:16

God's heart is always open to genuine repentance, no matter how deep our failures or how long we've wandered. His mercy flows like a river toward the broken and contrite spirit, ready to forgive and restore completely. Yet this same God of love is also a God of perfect justice—those who harden their hearts against His grace will face His

righteous judgment. This dichotomy reveals God's holiness: He cannot ignore sin, yet He passionately desires our return. Draw closer into deeper dependence on His grace and faithfully walk in humility and obedience.

The choice between mercy and judgment lies before us daily. Choose mercy.

4. JUST POWER I // PSALM 145:17

In a world where justice often fails and power corrupts, God stands as the perfect union of both—absolutely just and infinitely powerful. His justice never wavers due to weakness, nor does His power act without perfect righteousness. Every decision flows from His flawless character, ensuring that what is right will ultimately prevail. This truth should both comfort and challenge us. Comfort because we can trust that our sovereign God will make all things right, and challenge because we're called to reflect His justice in our own lives. This only happens by and through His power. When we align ourselves with God's perfect standards, we discover that His power works through us to accomplish His righteous purposes.

Surrendering to God's just authority allows us to participate in His eternal kingdom.

5. JUST POWER II // 2 THESSALONIANS 1:6-7

Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7 reveal the perfect marriage of God's justice and omnipotence—He possesses both the righteous character to judge rightly and the unlimited power to execute judgment. When injustice seems to prevail, we can rest knowing that God sees everything and will ultimately vindicate the righteous. Such understanding calls us to patiently endure, trusting God's perfect timing. As we surrender our desire for immediate justice to His sovereign plan, we grow in faith and draw closer to the One who holds all power and exercises it with perfect righteousness.

Allow this truth to transform our perspective on current struggles and future hope.