



Study Guide: Psalms – Chapter 35

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Psalms Chapter 35 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Psalms 35 is a heartfelt plea for divine intervention in the face of unjust persecution. It contributes to the flow of the Psalter by exemplifying the cry of the righteous who suffer at the hands of enemies, highlighting the tension between human injustice and God's ultimate justice. Readers should watch for the vivid imagery of spiritual warfare, the contrast between the psalmist's innocence and the malice of his adversaries, and the confident expectation of God's vindication.

Context

Psalms 35 is attributed to David and fits within the collection of Psalms expressing lament and trust in God amid persecution. The immediate literary context includes other imprecatory psalms where the psalmist calls upon God to act against enemies. Historically, David faced many threats from Saul and others who sought to harm him unjustly. The covenantal framework underscores God's role as defender of the innocent and protector of His anointed. The speaker is David, who appeals directly to God as his advocate and warrior, seeking deliverance from those who falsely accuse and attack him.

Outline

Psalms 35 can be divided into several movements. It begins with a direct appeal for God's defense and confrontation against enemies. This is followed by a description of the adversaries' malicious actions and the psalmist's innocence. The middle section expresses confidence that God will act on behalf of the righteous. The psalm then moves to a call for rejoicing and praise when God delivers. Finally, the psalmist commits to public thanksgiving and declares his trust in God's justice.

Verse-by-Verse Study



Verses 1-3: The psalmist opens by imploring God to contend with those who contend with him, using the metaphor of a warrior to describe God's intervention. The plea is for God to take up shield and buckler, symbolizing protection and defense.

Verses 4-6: David asks God to confuse and shame those who seek his life, turning their plots back upon them. This section reveals the intensity of the opposition and the desire for divine justice to reverse the situation.

Verses 7-8: The enemies are described as witnesses who speak lies and as men of violence who sharpen their tongues like swords. The psalmist portrays their deceit and aggression vividly.

Verses 9-10: In contrast, the psalmist expresses joy and praise for God's righteousness and salvation. This shift highlights the psalmist's trust amid adversity.

Verses 11-16: The psalmist recounts the unjust attacks and false accusations he has endured. He emphasizes his innocence and the cruelty of his enemies, appealing to God's sense of justice.

Verses 17-18: David calls upon God to arise and vindicate him, promising to publicly praise God's name in the congregation. This expresses confidence that God's deliverance will be evident to all.

Verses 19-21: The psalmist describes the enemies' malicious delight in his suffering and their false accusations. Their hostility is personal and relentless.

Verses 22-26: David appeals again for God's intervention, asking that the enemies be put to shame and confusion. He prays that those who seek his harm be turned back in disgrace.

Verses 27-28: The psalm concludes with a vow of praise and thanksgiving in the great assembly, celebrating God's justice and deliverance. The psalmist commits to honoring God publicly for His salvation.

Key Themes

The theme of divine justice is central, portraying God as the righteous warrior who defends the innocent. The psalm also explores the experience of unjust suffering, emphasizing the psalmist's integrity amid false accusations. Another key theme is the power of prayer to invoke God's intervention and the confidence that God will vindicate His people. The



tension between human hostility and divine protection underscores the covenantal relationship where God acts on behalf of His anointed.

Cross-References

Psalm 35 resonates with Psalm 7, where David also appeals for God's judgment against enemies, highlighting the motif of God as a righteous judge. Psalm 109 shares the imprecatory tone, reflecting the psalmist's cry for justice amid betrayal. The New Testament echoes the theme of unjust suffering in 1 Peter 3:14, encouraging believers to endure persecution with trust in God's justice. Additionally, Romans 12:19 instructs believers not to avenge themselves but to leave room for God's wrath, aligning with the psalm's call for divine vindication.

Application

Psalm 35 challenges modern disciples to bring their struggles and injustices before God with honesty and faith. It encourages believers to trust God as their defender rather than resorting to personal vengeance. The psalm also models how to maintain integrity and innocence in the face of false accusations, relying on God's justice rather than human vindication. Furthermore, it invites the church to publicly praise God for His deliverance, fostering a community that acknowledges God's sovereign protection amid trials.

Summary

Psalm 35 is a passionate prayer for God's intervention against unjust enemies, portraying God as a divine warrior who defends the innocent. The psalmist contrasts his own innocence with the malice of his adversaries and expresses confident trust that God will vindicate him. The structure moves from plea to description of suffering, then to confident expectation and public praise. This chapter highlights the covenantal assurance that God acts on behalf of His people, encouraging believers to seek divine justice while maintaining integrity and offering thanksgiving.