

Psalm 57

The setting: David is hiding from King Saul in a cave. (see **1 Samuel 22:1** and **1 Samuel 24:3**)

The corresponding Torah passage **Exodus 21-22** sets out the first guidelines for bringing an accusation before a judge - "the cause of both parties shall come before the judges" (Exodus 22:9).

In this Psalm, David is appealing to God for vindication, as before a judge.

Psalm 57:1 - "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast."

David sees himself sheltered with God who resides in the form of his Shekinah Glory on the mercy seat between the wings of the cherubim.

David says this phrase in other places:

-Psalm 61:4 - "Let me dwell in Your tent forever; Let me take refuge in the shelter of Your wings."

-Psalm 17:8 - "...hide me in the shadow of your wings"

-Psalm 91:4 - "He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark."

-Psalm 36:7 - "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings."

Psalm 57:2 - "I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me."

"God who will *complete* for me" - *gâmar* - i.e. plead my cause, vindicate me.

Psalm 57:3 - "He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth."

"Mercy" - to be delivered from the immediate danger.

"Truth" - to vindicate me from the lies and slander.

(Mercy and truth are repeated in verse 10)

Psalm 57:4 - "My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword."

Rashi - My soul is among lions: Abner and Amassa, who were "lions" [leaders] in the Torah, and who do not protest against Saul.

Psalm 57:6 - "They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah."

His soul - *nephesh* - is bowed down, bent under the frustration, fear, and discouragement of the circumstances. But somewhere hope arises. He sees that his enemies will fall into the pit they dug for him, as certainly as if it has already happened.

Therefore:

Psalm 57: 7-9 - "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations."

my heart - *leb* - is "fixed" - *kuwn* - prepared, ready, established, certain, confirmed, set in the right direction

Though his soul (*nephesh*, meaning his whole self as a living being - is bowed down, his heart (*leb* - his innermost understanding and mind) is fixed on God.

See Jesus in **Luke 9:51** - "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem."

This rouses David to praise God.

"I myself will awake early" - Instead of staying up late worrying about what the next day holds, David says, according to Rashi, "I awaken the dawn; the dawn does not awaken me." He rises before the dawn to thank and praise God.

Psalm 57:10 - "For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds." (see verse 3)

Psalm 57:11 - "Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth."

David is affirming that God's "glory" - *kabowd* - is not only present in the Tabernacle Holy of Holies, where the Shekinah Glory visibly rested on the mercy seat between the wings of the cherubim. It is above all the heavens and the earth, even residing with David in his dark cave, and indeed is everywhere.