

PSALMS OF PRAYER AND PRAISE

Psalm 17:1-15 (NASB)

¹ Hear a just cause, O LORD, give heed to my cry; Give ear to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips.

² Let my judgment come forth from Your presence; Let Your eyes look with equity.

³ You have tried my heart; You have visited *me* by night; You have tested me and You find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.

⁴ As for the deeds of men, by the word of Your lips I have kept from the paths of the violent.

⁵ My steps have held fast to Your paths. My feet have not slipped.

⁶ I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God; Incline Your ear to me, hear my speech.

⁷ Wondrously show Your lovingkindness, O Savior of those who take refuge at Your right hand From those who rise up *against them*.

⁸ Keep me as the apple of the eye; Hide me in the shadow of Your wings

⁹ From the wicked who despoil me, My deadly enemies who surround me.

¹⁰ They have closed their unfeeling *heart*, With their mouth they speak proudly.

¹¹ They have now surrounded us in our steps; They set their eyes to cast *us* down to the ground.

¹² He is like a lion that is eager to tear, And as a young lion lurking in hiding places.

¹³ Arise, O LORD, confront him, bring him low; Deliver my soul from the wicked with Your sword,

¹⁴ From men with Your hand, O LORD, From men of the world, whose portion is in *this* life, And whose belly You fill with Your treasure; They are satisfied with children, And leave their abundance to their babes.

¹⁵ As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.

Psalm 17: A Prayer of David

This prayer could have been written at the time of Saul's persecution of David. David commenced his prayer with a plea for the Lord to look at his heart and life; to see a servant who was honest and upright before Him. David then told the Lord about his enemies. He prayed to be kept from the evil world and evil men who were persecuting him. Then from the present circumstances he looked beyond the darkness to a joyous and bright future.

The prayer is divided into **three parts**:

1. The psalmist's confidence in his appeal to God (**verses 1–5**). This was based on the righteousness of his cause and freedom from hypocrisy in his prayer. His heart and life were free from reproach.
2. David prayed for protection in the evil world (**verses 6–12**). He appealed to God's lovingkindness to protect him against his enemies. He then described their bitterness, their pride and their cruel persecution.
3. David prayed that the sword of the Lord would overtake his enemies (**verse 13**). The next two verses contrast the hopelessness of the wicked with the reward of the righteous. The portion of the wicked is for this life only and then he perishes. David's hope is to live in the presence of God forever (**verses 14–15**).

As you read and study the Psalms, consider using David's words as your own prayer to God. As a believer in Christ, you are righteous in God's sight and can ask the Holy Spirit's help in examining your heart for sin (**verse 3**). Your enemies (**verse 9**) may not be armies of men as David's were, but Satan's armies including doubt, fear, temptation, pride, or a critical spirit. **1 Peter 5:8** reminds us that the devil is a lion, seeking to devour us (**verse 12**). We can combat the devil's lies with God's truth, especially verses like **Psalm 17:13**.