

Series: Psalms

Title: Who is Like unto Thee?

Text: Psalm 35: 4-10

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We have a lot of enemies as we go through life as believers. We are helpless against these enemies, especially when it comes to folks who do not like the gospel we preach. They reproach us because of the gospel. They try to turn others against us because of the gospel. We are helpless before those who are our enemies because of our stand with Christ.

Therefore, it is good to know that Christ everlives to make intercession for his people. The same one who redeemed his people, who went into the tomb and carried our sins away into a land not inhabited, is now arisen to the right hand of God. He is reigning and ruling. He makes intercession for his people. God our Father hears his Son. So we can be assured that our enemies will never triumph over us nor over our brethren nor over any of God's church.

The title of the message is "Who is Like unto Thee?"

Psalm 35 is Christ praying to God the Father while he suffered at the hands of his enemies in this earth. That is why I remind you that Christ is our Intercessor. In this Psalm, Christ is interceding for himself and for all his people in him as he walked this earth and suffered at the hands of men.

Verse 7 says, "*For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit.*" Verse 11 says, "*False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.*" Those are things that were done to Christ when he walked this earth. So we behold Christ here as the Head and Surety of all God's people. All the indignity, reproach, and suffering that we merited and deserved, he endured on our behalf throughout his life and on the cross as our Substitute. So this is Christ's prayer to the Father for himself and his people.

As we hear Christ's prayer to the Father, we learn how dangerous it is for a sinner to be against Christ and how safe it is for the believer who puts all his care into Christ's hands.

PERSECUTORS PERSECUTED

Psalm 35: 4: Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt. 5: Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase *them*. 6: Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

Those who persecute Christ or his people shall be persecuted by our LORD. Christ prays that his enemies be brought to *confusion and shame*. He asks that they be *turned back as chaff before the wind*. Our Intercessor prays our enemies way be *dark and slippery*. We see a small example of this when the band of men came to arrest Christ.

John 18: 4: Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5: They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6: As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

Those soldiers were brought to confusion and shame when they fell backward at the declaration of Christ's name. All who oppose Christ shall be brought to worse confusion and shame than that band of soldiers in the Day of Judgment.

Philippians 2: 9: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; 11: And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Yet, those who rest in Christ, bowing to him and confessing him Lord now, shall never be confounded or brought to shame. Everything Christ prays against his persecutors, he prays the opposite for his people who he redeemed by his own blood.

Of his enemies he says, *“Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul”* But of his saints he prays, *“Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.”* (Ps 69: 6)

Of his enemies, Christ prays *“Let them be as chaff before the wind”*. But his people are his wheat. Scripture says, *“Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”* (Mt 3: 12)

He prays concerning his enemies *“Let their way be dark and slippery.”* We sing, *“On Christ the Solid Rock, I stand, all other ground is shifting sand.”* Every believer says, *“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.”* (Ps 40: 2)

So be sure to get this first point. Sinner, you will not prosper fighting against Christ. If you depart this world rejecting Christ then Christ himself will call for your destruction. But those who cast all their care on him now are secure in him. His prayer is the opposite for his people as it is for the enemy.

RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

Psalm 35: 7: For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul. 8: Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.

The reprobation and hardening of Christ’s enemies in this life and their punishment in the Day of Judgment shall be just due to man’s own sin and rejection of Christ.

After praying for them to be cast down, Christ gives the reason why it is just to turn them over to reprobation. Christ says, *“For...”* That word means “because.” Wherever you find the LORD hardening a sinner in reprobation in the scripture you find there is a cause signified by the word “for” or “therefore” or “because”. The cause is always the sinner’s own sin and rejection of God our Father and his Christ. The point is that God’s reprobation and damnation of sinners is always righteous. It is always just because it is due to the sinner’s own sin and rejection of Christ. God does not reprobate and damn sinners arbitrarily but BECAUSE it is just and right due to the wages earned by the sinner.

Isaiah 5: 1: Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: 2: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. 3: And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. 4: What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? 5: And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: 6: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7: FOR the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry. 8: Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth! 9: In mine ears said the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant. 10: Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah. 11: Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! 12: And the harp, and the viol, the

tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands. 13: THEREFORE my people are gone into captivity, BECAUSE *they have* no knowledge: and their honourable men *are* famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. 14: THEREFORE hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. 15: And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled: 16: But the LORD of hosts shall be EXALTED IN JUDGMENT, and God that is HOLY shall be sanctified in RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Isaiah 65: 2: I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way *that was* not good, after their own thoughts; 3: A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; 4: Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable *things is in* their vessels; 5: Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These *are* a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day. 6: Behold, *it is* written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, 7: Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: THEREFORE will I measure their former work into their bosom. 8: Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and *one* saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing *is* in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. 9: And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. 10: And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me. 11: But ye *are* they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number. 12: THEREFORE will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: BECAUSE when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose *that* wherein I delighted not. 13: THEREFORE thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: 14: Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. 15: And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name: 16: That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.

Likewise, in our Psalm, Christ says the reason he prays for the destruction of his enemies is just, "*FOR without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.*"

It was just for Christ to pray for the destruction of his enemies because there was no cause for them to seek his destruction. They were merely jealous and envious and angry because Christ's holiness and righteousness exceeded theirs in all his works. Christ said,

John 15: 24: If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25: But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

That word written in their law (word) is found in our text in Psalm 35 verse 7, "*For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.*" No one ever had a cause for rejecting Christ and his gospel then or now! He is the holy, harmless Lord Jesus, the Son of God. He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Every word in his gospel is true. Every promise of God is yes and amen in him. He went about doing only good and still does only good in the earth. His grace is free. His justification is free. His salvation is free. Christ has never caused one sinner to reject him. Sinners reject him on their own. They do so without a cause in Christ.

Men say, "I don't think it is fair that God won't give all men a chance!" By "chance" men mean they want it all left up to them. But if God left it up to sinners to come to Christ there is not one who would be saved. There is not one sinner who would ever call on Christ to save us. The one sinners are calling upon when they say that they called upon

him by their own will and power is not the true Lord Jesus Christ but another Jesus of their own vain imagination. Left to ourselves we will never call upon Christ! But Christ has never made one sinner reject him. He does not have to do anything to make sinners reject him. We rejected him because it is the sinful, God-hating nature in all natural born sinners to reject him. Left to ourselves we would have continued to reject him. The Spirit of God says, *“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”* (Rom 3: 11)

When men hear the scripture declared they say, “That is your interpretation!” If it was any other book men would not say that. Men do not read from other books and see the clear meaning written on the page and say, “That is your interpretation!” The bible is the word of God. The words are clear and the meaning plain. It is for that reason that men will not and cannot believe it.

1 Corinthians 2: 14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

Do you want to see what we will do if left to our own will? Look to the cross! God left us to our own will once and we nailed his Son to a tree! We spit in Christ’s face! Railed upon him! Dug a pit for him! Laid a net for him! Tried to entangle him in his words! That is us! That is me, you and every other sinner fallen in Adam. That is what we are and the only thing we will do if left to our own depraved will!

The point is when sinners reject Christ and his gospel and Christ calls for them to be hardened in reprobation and at last cast out into hell, it is just. It is because sinners rejected him. Our Lord Jesus and God our Father is the Righteous Judge. So when any sinner perishes under condemnation it is just. Christ says, *“For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.”*

The condemnation is not only just, it is sure because God the Father always hears his Righteous Son. Therefore, those who plot against Christ plot against themselves. Into their own net they become entangled. Into their own pit they fall. One example is seen in the Jews. They used the Romans to help them put Christ on the cross. They moved the Romans against him by accusing our Lord of speaking things against Caesar. Then they tried to gain the favor of the Romans by rejecting Christ the King as they cried, “We have no king but Caesar!” The Romans were the net they laid for Christ. Christ says, *“Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.”* So in 70AD the Lord sent the Romans who came upon the Jews without warning and destroyed Jerusalem. The very net they laid for Christ is the net they themselves were caught in and the very destruction by which they fell.

The same principle is declared when Christ said a man’s own mouth shall condemn him. Sinners say they do not like the doctrine of election because they say it is against them. They hate limited atonement which declares that Christ laid down his life and redeemed only his elect because they say it is against them. No, the gospel is not against you. The gospel saves! The one against you is you! The one against us is us! The gospel saves but it is a man’s own sin that condemns him! Christ said to the scribes and Pharisee’s,

Matthew 12: 34: O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 35: A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. 36: But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment. 37: For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

The man made good is the man in whom the Holy Spirit has created a new heart and makes to bring forth a confession of sin and a need for mercy from Christ. He confesses faith in Christ and rests in him from the heart. And by his own words, spoken from the abundance of the new heart, Christ justifies him.

But a man left to his depraved heart, brings forth words of reproach and shame upon the true Christ of the Bible. His own rejection from his own mouth from his own heart will be the just cause of his condemnation. It is not Christ that caused the man to be condemned, he was condemned already. It is the man’s own willful rejection of Christ that leaves him in his own condemnation. Christ said,

John 3: 14: And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18: He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, BECAUSE he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

He was condemned already. The only way not to be condemned is to believe on Christ. But BECAUSE he did not believe on Christ he remained in his condemnation. The fault is a man's own fault.

John 3:36: He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Mark 16:16: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

The point is a man's condemnation and reprobation and everlasting damnation is not God's fault. The fault is mans. God did not bring sin into the world, man did! It did not surprise God; it fulfilled God's purpose; it is what God determined before to be done. But man is the one who sinned and brought sin and death into the world. God sent his Son to save some from among our fallen race, not to condemn us. We were condemned already because of our own sin. So we need to stop getting mad at God and his gospel; we need to get mad at ourselves. The man who refuses Christ refuses salvation that he might remain in his own condemnation. Therefore, when God turns a sinner over in reprobation and damns him at last, it is just because the sinner himself would not receive the gospel!

2 Thessalonians 2: 10: And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; BECAUSE they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11: And FOR THIS CAUSE God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Here is a great place to see the difference that God's grace makes. In verses 10-12 we see it is due to a man's own willful rejection of the Truth that he shall suffer God's just reprobation and damnation. But it is God's own sovereign grace choosing his people freely in Christ that is the cause for our salvation.

2 Thessalonians 2: 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, BECAUSE God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Election is not reprobation: election is God choosing his people in Christ by whom we are made the righteousness of God and called through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, not based on anything in us or done by us. Reprobation is God hardening a man in his sin justly because it is the wage earned by a man's own sin and willful rejection of Christ and the gospel. A man perishes because of his own works but a man is saved by God's works. Both are just because our God is the righteous God of heaven and earth!

THE REJOICING OF CHRIST AND HIS BODY

Psalm 35: 9: And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation. 10: All my bones shall say, LORD, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?

Both now and for all eternity, Christ and each one he redeemed and called rejoice in God's righteousness who saved us from all our enemies. Christ our Head says, "*My soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.*" And Christ speaks of his body, the church, each believing member in particular, when he says, "*All my bones shall say, LORD, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and needy from him that spoileth him?*"

We rejoice, saying, “*LORD, who is like unto thee?*” There is none like our great LORD. What makes the true and living God different from all other gods that men create in their vain imaginations? Only the true and living God “*delivers the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?*”

“*The poor and the needy*” are true sinners ruined by the fall. We are so ruined that we were unrighteous and unholy, guilty before the law of God and dead in trespasses and in sins. We could not justify ourselves from our sins and we were bound by our fallen nature to sin and reject Christ. That is what it is to be poor and needy.

“*Him that is too strong for us*” from whom the LORD delivered us and continues to deliver us includes many things.

Our sinful flesh was too strong for us. By Adam’s corrupt seed, we came into this world slaves to sin unable to deliver ourselves, unable to make ourselves holy, and unable to come to Christ that we might be saved. But Christ entered into us and quickened us to newness of life by his Spirit within us. He continues to renew us in knowledge after his image day by day.

Ephesians 1: 22: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, 23: Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. 1: And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Colossians 3:10: And [we] have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

The curse of the law was too strong for us. But Christ gave the law perfect obedience and Christ gave the law perfect death. Now the law is fulfilled and can ask for no more from any for whom Christ died.

Galatians 3:13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Romans 8: 1: *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit... 10: And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

The devil was too strong for us. So Christ crushed the devils head on the cross. He binds the strongman when he calls his child out of darkness into his light. Soon he shall cast the old serpent into hell forever.

This present evil world and all our enemies are too strong for us. But every sinner that opposes one of Christ’s people, opposes Christ. He said, “*Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*” (Mt 25: 40) So when one of his brethren is persecuted in this world, he himself at God’s right hand is persecuted. While the enemy is seeking after the soul of one of his saints in the earth, from his throne in glory Christ intercedes with the Father, saying “*Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after MY SOUL!*” For the sake of Christ our Righteousness, the Father delivers us from our present enemies.

An American tourist in Paris purchased an amber necklace in a trinket shop for pennies. He was shocked that he had to pay a high duty on the neckless to clear customs in New York. Curious to know why, he had the necklace appraised. After looking at the object under a powerful magnifying glass, the jeweler said, "I'll give you \$25, 000 for it!" The man had a second expert examine it. This time he was offered even more. The astonished man asked, "What do you see that makes this old necklace so valuable?" The jeweler gave him his glass and there before his eyes was an inscription: "*From Napoleon Bonaparte to Josephine.*" The value of the necklace came from its identification with a famous person.

God our Father's children are precious to him due to our everlasting union with the most famous person ever, Christ Jesus, God's only begotten Son! For the sake of Christ our Righteousness, God our Father will not let one for whom he gave his Son perish. He has and he shall continue to deliver us from him that is too strong for us. And the last enemy that is too strong for us from whom he shall deliver us shall be death.

Do you see why the rejoicing of every believer is "*Who is like unto thee?*" According to religious men all over the world, their gods do not deliver them from him that is too strong for them because according to deceived men, their enemies have not totally spoiled them: they say their *will* must deliver them, their *righteousness* must deliver them, their *holiness* must deliver them, or their *wisdom* must deliver them. But their gods only deliver them partly and only from enemies that gave them only a little trouble.

Only the true and living God does all the delivering. And the true and living God only delivers those that are so spoiled by our enemies that we are utterly ungodly and without strength. All our enemies are too strong for us.

Does that describe you, sinner? With the true and living God, unless a man is totally helpless before all his enemies, he cannot be saved by Christ. For whom did Christ die? "*When we were yet WITHOUT STRENGTH, in due time Christ died for THE UNGODLY.*" (Rom 5: 6) Who does Christ call to repentance? Christ said, "*They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but SINNERS to repentance.*" (Mr 2:17)

Are you totally ruined in sin? As we hear Christ's prayer to the Father, we learn how dangerous it is for a sinner to be against Christ. Sinner, surrender to Christ now and Christ shall intercede and save you from all your enemies.

We see from Christ's intercession how safe it is for the believer who puts all his care into Christ's hands. The true God only saves totally helpless sinners. Therefore, those he saves give him all the glory, rejoicing in his salvation, saying, "*LORD, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?*"

Amen!