

Bible Studies for Life Series for January 20: Breakthrough in justice

January 10, 2008

Posted: 1/10/08

Bible Studies for Life Series for January 20

Breakthrough in justice

- Psalm 7:1-17

[By Steve Dominy](#)

First Baptist Church, Gatesville

Small towns have the reputation of having a hot grapevine. They have the reputation of being the kind of places where everyone knows everyone else's business, and that is partly true.

But they are no different than large cities. Even the largest metropolitan areas are made up of smaller communities of people—work, church, school—just to name a few. The rumor mill can certainly grind hot and heavy in each of these places. A rumor can quickly run rampant, take on a life of its own and destroy the character and reputation of the target of that rumor. At one time or another, all of us have been on the receiving end of this kind of treatment.

[For a printer-friendly version, click on the printer icon at bottom of page.](#)

We can relate at least in part to David in Psalm 7. While David certainly had his share of battle and people physically pursuing him, this pursuit seems to be of a different sort. David is taking his case before God. The scene is that of a courtroom with God as the judge. False charges have been brought against David which could be his undoing if they can be substantiated. His enemies are not out to get him with swords, but with words.

I have been keeping up with the Roger Clemens saga recently. I don't know if Clemens is guilty or innocent of using steroids or other performance enhancing drugs. I don't know that it really matters; the damage has been done. Clemens has gone from being the greatest pitcher of this generation and perhaps one of the best of all time to a person of suspect character. No matter the outcome, there always will be questions about the manner in which he achieved his success. And it was all done with words.

David was in the same boat as Clemens, but the stakes were much higher. David takes the right steps in arguing his case. The first thing he does is go to God. The second thing he does is declare his innocence. He declares to God that if he has done these things then let him suffer the consequences.

This is not idle talk. David offers everything if he is not innocent. Verse 5 spells out the consequences of his guilt, one translation says, "... let him trample my life onto the earth, and let him lay my glory onto the dust." David offers in his defense not only the destruction of his body but his capacity to be in relationship with God.

David's call ultimately is one for justice. His call in verse 6 for God to arise, to rise up and awake lead to the culmination of David's desire—for God to enact his justice. Psalm 7 specifically is a cry for justice in this specific setting, but it is not the only time in the Psalms when the psalmists cry for justice—"Why do the wicked prosper and the innocent suffer?" While David calls on God for justice in this situation, God turns the tables on us and calls for us to do justice.

The call for God's people to be just and to do justice rings throughout the whole of the Bible. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident and pointed than in Amos and Micah. God says in Amos 5:23-24, "Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" He also asks in Micah 6:8, "... but what does the Lord require of you but do justice and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." Both of these passages are representative of God's call to justice for his people.

The question must be asked, "What does it mean to do justice?" Micah in particular gives us some indication of what that means. He gives several examples of the failure to do justice: the powerful oppress the powerless, laborers are exploited and the court system is corrupt.

Injustice particularly is centered upon the images of those who cannot help themselves being taken advantage of by those with power. It is the picture of the schoolyard bullies attacking those who cannot defend themselves, the only difference is that it is on a larger scale. To do justice means to work for the establishment of equity for all, especially the powerless.

This lesson coincides with the Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. It usually is focused on opposition to abortion which certainly is accurate. But sanctity means holiness; it means for us to recognize the worth of all people in all stages and places of life. To value the sanctity of human life involves focusing on the dignity of all people regardless of their place in society.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:16, “So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view ...” This gives us some insight into God’s desire for justice, to view people in the manner of who they can become in Christ rather than what we can get from them.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Baptist churches, in Texas, the BGCT, the nation and around the world.