

What does the Old Testament say about persecution? – Psalm 7



The Old Testament records the story of the people of Israel, which was often marked by persecution. For example, the book of Exodus describes how the Israelites were made slaves in Egypt, until Moses helped to lead them to freedom. In slavery, they had been abused and devalued as people. The story of how God had rescued them from slavery brought hope in the challenging times that the Israelites lived in.

The book of Psalms is a collection of hymns and prayers about people's experiences of God and life. Psalm 7, on the opposite page, has persecution as its theme. The writer, who is speaking to God, seems to have suffered persecution, and he makes his emotions and strong reactions to it clear.

Where in the Psalm are the writer's strong emotions evident? Which emotions does he have?

What does he compare the people who are persecuting him to? (Look for a simile)

Is there anywhere where the writer exaggerates?

Where does he give God human characteristics?

Where, do you think, is he at his most honest?

What can we tell about the writer from the Psalm?

Psalms often use imaginary language to express strong emotions. If you had to choose one picture to illustrate this Psalm, what would you choose?

Write a tweet of 280 characters to highlight its key ideas about persecution.

To betray someone is to have let them down or turned against them

You, LORD God, are my protector.
Rescue me and keep me safe from all who chase me.
Or else they will rip me apart like lions attacking a victim.
and no-one will save me.

I am innocent, LORD God!
I have not **betrayed** a friend or had pity on an enemy who attacks for no reason.
If I have done any of this, then let my enemies chase and capture me.
Let them trample me to death and leave me in the dirt.

Get angry, LORD God! Do something!
Attack my furious enemies.
See that justice is done.
Make the nations come to you, as you sit on your throne above them all.

Our LORD, judge the nations!
Judge me and show that I am honest and innocent.
You know every heart and mind, and you always do right.
Now make violent people stop, but protect all of us who obey you.

You, God, are my shield, the protector of everyone whose heart is right.
You see that justice is done, and each day you take revenge.
Whenever your enemies refuse to change their ways, you sharpen your sword and string your bow.
Your deadly arrows are ready with flaming tips.

Psalm 7 verses 1 - 13 (CEV)

Draw lines to match up these themes with the part(s) of the Psalm where they appear.

A cry for safety

Wanting the persecutors to change their ways

A call for justice

A claim of innocence

A call for revenge