



**The War of Words
Living in a World of Poisonous Words
Refuge in the Lord even from this!
Psalm 64**

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Psalm 64:title–10

“For the music director. A Psalm of David. Hear my voice, God, in my complaint; Protect my life from dread of the enemy. Hide me from the secret discussion of evildoers, From the restlessness of the workers of injustice, Who have sharpened their tongues like a sword. They aimed bitter speech as their arrows, To shoot from concealment at the innocent; Suddenly they shoot at him, and do not



fear. They make firm for themselves an evil purpose; They talk of setting snares secretly; They say, “Who can see them?” **They devise injustices, saying, “We are ready with a well-conceived plot”;** **For the inward thought and the heart of a person are deep. But God will shoot an arrow at them; Suddenly they will be wounded. So they will make him stumble; Their own tongue is against them; All who see them will shake their heads.** Then all people will fear, And they will declare the work of God, And will consider what He has done. The righteous person will be glad in the LORD and take refuge in Him; And all the upright in heart will boast.” (NASB 2020)

We do not know the circumstances surrounding the writing of this psalm. As we examine David's life, we know there are multiple times in his life that active conspiracies would be going on against him.

The first would have been the intentional actions of his own father to prevent him from seeing the Prophet Samuel. Saul, yes, multiple times. Saul began with the war of words before he ever threw the first spear. Absalom was all about conspiracy and verbal undermining as were many who were aligned with him. Then of course there are the random one offs of enemies who are trying to deal with Israel and with King David.

Then finally we must also remember that David is also a prophet.

Can this psalm be applicable at a future time in the life of the nation? Yes indeed, during the Tribulation obviously, but I would also throw the current situation we see today in the middle east onto the pile as well.

Also, as we examine this, we also see how those who are aligned with the enemy attack the work of Jesus Christ today. The sad fact is that we can observe many of the things referenced by David today in the press on a daily basis coming out from political forces that want to simply destroy all those who follow Jesus.

Not everything that David wrote about in the psalms was as the result of a physical attack, we learn here that the war of words that he dealt with and which has been around since Genesis 3 is one of those things he also desired refuge from the Lord for.

When others slander us and plot and scheme to destroy us with words, it is just as damaging as someone attacking us physically. David knows that and this psalm comes from his experience with that.

If you want to stop the public proclamation of the gospel, whether from a street preacher, an evangelistic outreach, or just the church being the church, where the enemy uses others to attack, usually it is verbally first and begins as an alleged innocent discussion of, “why do we tolerate Christian thought and activity in the marketplace at all.”

Have you noticed that for other groups, questions, but for followers of Jesus it begins as an existential argument at the very beginning as the world want us gone.

“The very fact that Christians share their faith is an affront to some with Christianophobia. If Christians are going to attempt to act in a way to please such individuals, they will have to agree not to tell others about their faith. For many, if not most, Christians, this is not an acceptable limitation to how they express their Christianity. In order to keep those with anti-Christian attitudes satisfied, Christians would have to compromise their faith as they understand it.” (Yancey 2015, 56) And there are those of us who will not do so.

And an increasingly apparent trend is now showing up in these last days, much of this comes from within the established “church.” Church is in parenthesis here because it is no longer the true body of believers



who are following Jesus, but rather the Laodicean feel good church we are seeing all throughout our culture, or the hopelessly dead progressive church and associated denominations that pander to the world.

And even worse, some of the Laodicean churches, through their own actions, are now inviting this action from the rest of the world by their own greed. It appears the world even knows the difference.

We see denominational organizations take very visible stands against the Bible as well as what is in it. And in some cases, even objecting to the preaching of the word of God. How bad is it? Abortion clinic blessings bad.

“Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Unitarian Universalists, United Church of Christ members, Disciples of Christ members and Reform and Reconstructionist Jews are among the people of faith who affirm individuals, free of others’ judgment, considering all options for responding to a pregnancy. While these progressive traditions differ on some matters of belief, they share a core set of values. They believe that each person is created in the divine image with the right and capability to make decisions about their own bodies and their own lives.” (Zeh 2019) Totally non-Biblical progressive centric gobbledygook.

When you have groups blessing those things which the Bible clearly teaches to be an abomination, literally advocating for the murder of unborn babies, then yes, we have a problem.

Anytime you see the phrase, “people of faith,” bells, alarms and whistles should be going off.

There may be nothing wrong at all, but the use of that phrase should be something we need to keep as a “be a Berean” trigger phrase. As for the most part, when that phrase is used, it has nothing to do with Biblical Christianity and has everything to do with Churchianity.

What we are seeing is those who are in the “church” working hard to marginalize those of us who are staying true to the word and to the call to make disciples. This has been going on for centuries and it is only accelerating. True Biblical believers are being marginalized and slandered by, “the church.”

What David is talking about is the attack verbally that is slanderous, false and meant to injure. *“Slander is not merely saying something negative about another person. Rather, it is saying something negative while knowing it is false (or at least having no basis to think it is true). In other words, slander involves a malicious intent to harm another person’s reputation by spreading lies about them (2 Sam. 10:3; 1 Kings 21:13; Prov. 6:16–19; 16:28; Ps. 50:19–20).*

Here we should pause and consider that slander is a very serious sin. To lie about another person is something the Lord hates (Prov. 6:16).

Such lies can destroy a person’s reputation and ministry. But telling the truth is not slander. To speak up about a pastor’s abusive behavior—in appropriate ways—is not slander.” (Kruger 2022, 86)

But what we are seeing come from the mainlines churches today is apostasy. And apostates are incredibly destructive.

“Dr. J. Vernon McGee, one of America’s most beloved Bible teachers of the past century, taught the same and clarified that these true biblical believers would ultimately be driven “underground” by none other than latter-day denominational churches.

Another of the twentieth century’s most perceptive writers was pastor and author A. W. Tozer (who was not usually given to prognostication), who likewise wrote: “Let me go out on a limb a little bit and



prophecy. I see the time coming when all the holy men whose eyes have been opened by the Holy Spirit will desert worldly Evangelicalism, one by one. The house [institutional Christianity] will be left desolate and there will not be a man of God, a man in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, left among them.” (Horn 2014, Kindle Location 120) Thus, the growth in non-denominational churches today and the spiritual warfare we see locally.

Yes, David is indeed prophetic as he writes this. This has been a problem for thousands of years and is driven primarily by the sin nature egged on by the enemy of course.

And all that does is further reinforce negative stereotypes many in the culture have of those who are followers of Jesus as well as those who are play acting at it. The world does not differentiate between Biblical and non-Biblical churches unless they are embracing and affirming the sin of the culture. And per George Yancey, the world can tell the difference. “They wish to promote science and rationality to help the world become a better place, whereas they believe Christians are dragging the world back to a primitive, ignorant, intolerant time. These Christians have been fooled by evil leaders misusing the superstitious beliefs of Christians to gain power and wealth. As one respondent put it, “I believe their beliefs are sincere, and most of them are misled by those who profit from their gullibility” (male, age 46-55). People with Christianophobia see themselves as saviors of our progressive, enlightened future. They are the vanguard of civil and human rights, protecting those rights from the Christians who would take our rights away from us. (Yancey 2015, 35)

I have had folks ask me if we should pray for our alleged brothers in Christ involved in progressive, prosperity or Laodicean churches.

Spoilers, they are not followers of Jesus Christ. They are wolves.

Jude 4

“For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” (ESV)

2 Peter 2:1 **“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.”** (ESV)

Acts 20:28–30

“Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them.” (NRSVue)

1 John 2:18–20

“Children, it is the last hour! As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. From this we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not belong to us, for if they had belonged to us they would have remained with us. But by going out they made it plain that none of them belongs to us. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and all of you have knowledge.” (NRSVue)

Yes, spiritual warfare is even involved in discerning if you are being lied to and subjected to verbal warfare from the enemy even in churches. And that is not new.



Psalm 64:1–2

“Hear my voice, God, in my complaint; Protect my life from dread of the enemy. **Hide me from the secret discussion of evildoers, From the restlessness of the workers of injustice,**” (NASB 2020)

Yes, Lord, us too here in the 21st century. David is asking the Lord to hide him from those who are conspiring against him. Have you noticed that for David, refuge always shows up as prayer for him? For him, there were times where that was indeed the only refuge he had. For those who have endured the persecution of the world as well as the “church” over the centuries, prayer is indeed “the” refuge of choice when all else is stripped away.

And for those who would state that the church has not been responsible for persecution of true believers, let me take you to the Inquisition. In one, the Papal Inquisition, “in 1252 Pope Innocent IV officially sanctioned torture as a way of extracting the “truth” from suspects. Prior to that time, this type of extreme punishment was foreign to church tradition and practice. During the Spanish Inquisition alone, as many as 2,000 people were burned at the stake within one decade after the Inquisition began.” (Got Questions Ministries 2014-2021)

And here is the really good news, the office within the Catholic Church remains even today. “In 1965, Pope Paul VI reorganized the Holy Office and renamed it as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and it remains in effect today.” (Got Questions Ministries 2014-2021)

All ready to go for the period of time immediately after the rapture of the church until the Beast walks into the Temple at the mid-point of the Tribulation and claims to be God. Prayer will be their refuge.

Revelation 6:9–11

“When he broke the fifth seal, **I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given; they cried out with a loud voice, “Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?”** They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow servants and of their brothers and sisters who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed.” (NRSVue)

And we get a hint, later in Revelation, as to whom partners with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to kill followers of Jesus post rapture of the church.

Revelation 20:4

“Then I saw thrones, and those seated on them were given authority to judge. **I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its brand on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.**” (NRSVue)

Today, we see a culture as well as “churches” turning more and more against the word. It is a blessing to have a respite at present from what we saw in the prior administration, but it will come back since the enemy, Satan, knows his time is short.

Prayer is indeed our refuge as well. In our area, there are three or four rather large “ministries” which are taking all the oxygen but producing very few disciples. This is where the Lord has called us to plant a church and when you are remaining faithful and not willing to “go with the flow” of the Laodicean model, then yes, there are indeed those who are whispering against you.

David here is also pointing to the remnant of Israel as they are fleeing from the beast. Prayer will be the only refuge they will have available to them as they head for the hills just as it is for Tribulation saints.



David is seeking refuge from those who are conspiring, spreading rumors about him. People do that today. Rumor mongering is not yet an Olympic sport, but who knows what is yet to come.

The natural reaction, when you find out there are those who are secretly conspiring against you, once you get over the betrayal and treachery aspect of it is, one of dread. What are they saying and what are they planning to do? And David wants refuge from that.

If you have ever been on the receiving end of that, you will want the same. You can literally lose sleep and destroy your health over second guessing and trying to figure things out.

Obviously, David is outnumbered and needs help. Ever feel like you are the only one making a stand for the Lord? It does indeed feel like at times. You want to know what they are talking about, yet you don't and at the end of the day, you want them to fail.

For David, the ones engaged in the conspiracy are most likely people that he knows and trusts. Slander is the weapon of choice to destroy others. David goes from secret discussions to planned words.

Psalm 64:2–4

“Hide me from the secret discussion of evildoers, From the restlessness of the **workers of injustice, Who have sharpened their tongues like a sword.** They aimed bitter speech as their arrows, To shoot from concealment at the innocent; Suddenly they shoot at him, and do not fear.” (NASB 2020)

This is slander. Practiced and rehearsed to make it sound as if it is real and genuine. Everyone knows their part of the lie to be proposed, and they have practiced their side to ensure believability.

We forget how destructive the tongue can actually be. And today, it includes social media.

James 3:5–8

“So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! **And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness.** The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but **no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.**” (ESV)

And for the attack to be effective, it must be persistent. A new revelation everyday is what will sell the story. You think what they did yesterday was bad, wait till you hear about today.

How do you know? The lie many times will be short on facts but heavy on the overuse of emotional language. The goal is to get by the lack of verifiable evidence by enflaming the emotions and eliciting an emotional response. And of course there are the arguments presented by those spreading the lies, they all support a one-sided narrative and completely ignores counter-arguments.

Whenever you hear or see someone arguing a position or telling you how bad someone or something is, and that is what their argument looks like, they are probably those who have sharpened their tongues like a sword and are lying like there is no tomorrow.

The situation that David is talking about is one of planned and premeditated character assassination.

It begins as a meeting to frame the argument, or in plain English, how do we make the lie believable. This is a difficult stage for those involved in the lie as there are those who are restless to get going and there are those who want to plan it all out.



Once the narrative is appropriately framed and worded to be as sharp and succinct as possible, then it's time to have the press conference or meeting to shoot down the unsuspecting victim. We would call those, "gotcha" moments.

A nice tied up lie with enough emotion tied to it to cloud the judgment of the hearer and assume that since it was delivered so well, there must be an element of truth to it. This is called propaganda, and it is being used almost daily in the media. And, unfortunately, propaganda is also used by some in the "church" to prove the worthiness of their cause. When you have left the Lord and the word, that really is all you have left.

Those who have left the Lord pull the God card as a support for what they do, but be a Berean and examine closely what they say. Many times it is now nothing more than propaganda.

Propaganda involves the dissemination of information—including biased and misleading information—to get someone to accept a particular agenda, often of a political nature. Propaganda is worse than well-intended indoctrination: where some teach a particular viewpoint uncritically and without regard for teaching how to think, propaganda intentionally seeks to manipulate a person into accepting a specific viewpoint or ideology. (Samples and Perez 2024, 126)

We see this taking place, unfortunately, in cults as well as those churches that have departed from truth. One of the terms it goes by, rather than propaganda, is love bombing. Some "churches" call it assimilation, they are already grooming you in the parking lot before you ever get to the door. They want your email and phone number so they can "love bomb" you. "Many cults use a technique informally known as "love bombing." They overwhelm a prospective member with attention, support, and affection. Yet it isn't really a sincere love for the prospect; it is really just a technique to gain another member." (Guzik 2013, Ga 4:17-18)

Psalm 64:5

"They make firm for themselves an evil purpose; They talk of setting snares secretly; They say, "Who can see them?"" (NASB 2020)

David is talking about speech in terms that equate to warfare. He recognizes that there was a war going on to color the attitude of others about him before any actual weapon was used. And it is incredibly hard to answer well-rehearsed loaded questions.

"Loaded questions embed an unproven assumption in the asking of the question. The usual goal of the implicit assumption in a loaded question is to trap or trick the hearer into confirming the assumption of the question as asked by the speaker. The rhetorical result is that if the addressee responds to the loaded question without addressing the implicit premise of the question, the addressee will either (a) appear guilty or (b) appear to be "protesting too much" (and therefore, appear guilty)." (Estes 2017, 262)

A loaded question, in order to qualify as such, makes an assumption and pushes the assumption onto the addressee for the benefit of the audience.

David, do you ever come to work on time sober? Yes, a loaded question.

Wow, don't you think David looks really tired? His crimes must be really wearing on him.

This is the style of the attack he is describing. The purpose is evil; it is intended to destroy and not much more than that. This is, per David, a well thought out plot to include verbal snares, the loaded questions, included in the overall verbal attack.



My favorite, you're a liar, just tell us the truth and we will believe you. But if truth is how you define truth and is subjective, then how can I do so?

Objective, true truth which we have in the Bible is challenged everyday by the world as not meeting their truth standard of subjective truth. Francis Schaeffer tells us "'Truth' for today lies only in a synthesis. And even that synthesis is not true forever, for tomorrow there will arise another thesis different from today's and out of the combination of these will come 'truth' for tomorrow. But in no case will any of these 'truths' be absolute. Truth in the classical sense, that which accurately represents what is real for all time and all places, does not exist—not even as an ideal." (Schaeffer 1982, 72-73)

So, what is the answer again? Who knows. Even the question is a snare per David. These are being propounded by those who are enemies of David, and enemies of believers. A common factor, they all believe they can do this without God intervening in any way as they either do not believe in God or think they can hide from Him. But the objective naked truth is not what they want to hear.

Hebrews 4:13

"And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." (ESV)

No, you will not get away with it at all.

Psalms 64:6

"They devise injustices, saying, 'We are ready with a well-conceived plot'; For the inward thought and the heart of a person are deep." (NASB 2020)

This is not a spur of the moment type of verbal attack. This has been planned and thought about by people who really believe they can get away with it. It has been gamed with answers and attacks on the answers. A well-conceived plot indeed.

David adds a comment to those who have conspired and believe they have a plan ready to go to verbally destroy him. It really is all about the sin nature, the flesh.

He says "for the inward thought of the heart of a person are deep." Yes, they are indeed lying to themselves and of course Satan will lead them down the path that they are self-assured of the success of their plan.

There are groups today operating in and around Israel who plot and scheme and are incredibly confident in their plans. Hamas was confident that their plan would work, but the Lord made sure it didn't. Hezbollah has been confident that their plans and schemes against Israel would work as well, and they didn't. The Houthis are still working on it and then there is Iran.

The mothership of slander today is the so-called axis of resistance. The reality, they are terrorists and David has prophetically here identified what they do and how they will indeed fail.

They wage a war of words. They depend on the element of surprise. They attack innocent people. (The psalmist identifies himself as "blameless" and completely undeserving of their assault.) They act without fear and arrogantly. They are inherently evil. All their devising and perfecting is born in the deepest, darkest part of the heart that can't even be mined by human understanding. (Platt, Mason and Shaddix 2020, 124)

Through their lies, they have induced others to also act against Israel, and antisemitism is one of the fruits of their efforts. Women and children strap on bombs and turn themselves into weapons based on the lies.



Nations take action to limit trade with Israel, and some go as far as to deny rights to those who come to their nation to visit.

After the rapture of the church, the lies will grow and a coalition of nations will move against Israel thinking their time has finally arrived. But God Himself will destroy them on the hills of Israel.

Their thoughts though have convinced them the lies they are busily following, are the truth. It will not end well for them, it never does.

Ezekiel 39:4–8

“You will fall dead on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the people who are with you. I give you as food to every kind of bird and every wild beast. You will fall dead in the open field; for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will send fire on Magog and those who live securely in the coastlands; then they will know that I am the LORD. I will make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. Realize that it is coming and it will be done, declares the Sovereign LORD. It is the day I have spoken about.” (NET 2nd ed.)

David had provided a very pointed analysis of those who lie to themselves and to others in an effort to destroy.

Psalms 5:9–10

“For there is no truth in their mouth; their inmost self is destruction; **their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue. Make them bear their guilt, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; because of the abundance of their transgressions cast them out, for they have rebelled against you.**” (ESV)

Going back to our discussion earlier how many today, under the guise of being “Christians,” believe it is appropriate to attack true followers of Jesus Christ, we discover that it is not the Spirit they are following.

Biblical truth died long ago for them and they have embraced contemporary attitudes to include affirming those who are involved in Biblically, what would be considered to be sinful lifestyles. “This rejection may be seen in H. Richard Niebuhr’s description of nineteenth-century American liberal theology: “A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.”” (Garrett Jr. 2014, 847)

Their scheming comes from the flesh; the enemy is in control.

Romans 8:5–8

“**For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh**, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. **For to be carnally minded is death**, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. **Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**” (NKJV)

David lets us know that folks who are operating in the flesh believe that their plans are way too deep for anyone to ever discover. In the book of Isaiah, there were those of the administration of King Hezekiah who believed no one would know about their unfaithfulness to the Lord they were expressing when they conspired with Egypt.



Isaiah 30:1–2

““Ah, stubborn children,” declares the LORD, “who carry out a plan, but not mine, and who make an alliance, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; who set out to go down to Egypt, without asking for my direction, to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!” (ESV)

God knows. Nothing is hidden from Him.

Jeremiah 17:10

“I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.” (ESV)

Psalms 64:7–8

“But God will shoot an arrow at them; Suddenly they will be wounded. So they will make him stumble; Their own tongue is against them; All who see them will shake their heads.” (NASB 2020)

In contrast to those who have rehearsed and rehearsed the lie to make it sound plausible and even then may not strike the intended target as well as they thought, there is one who never misses and hits His target first time every time. No rehearsing necessary.

Their intent was to have the attack be a surprise, but they are the ones surprised.

Deuteronomy 32:35

“I will take revenge; I will pay them back. In due time their feet will slip. Their day of disaster will arrive, and their destiny will overtake them.” (NLT)

Just as the enemies shot suddenly and fearlessly, so God will shoot the arrow of divine judgment and suddenly wound them. The irony continues with the divine use of “their tongues” as the means of judgment. These enemies who were so arrogant and self-assured with their verbal attacks will now be publicly humiliated. (Brueggemann and Bellinger Jr. 2014, 282)

One of the common things we have seen with the too frequent failures of those who say they are pastors, is that when they fall, no matter the level of care they took to make sure no one would ever find out, when they fall, it is blazingly sudden and incredibly public.

Galatians 6:7–8

“Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh, but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit.” (NRSVue)

In His love, the Lord warns those who allege to be His but are off on their own fantasies somewhere, damaging and abusing others.

Proverbs 1:24–31

“Because I have called and you refused, have stretched out my hand and no one heeded, and because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when panic strikes you, when panic strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way and be sated with their own devices.” (NRSVue)



David tells us the reversal will be so sudden, and it truly was with King Saul, that those who are watching on will just shake their heads.

We see things in our culture over and over again that leads to a fall of a politician, a judge, a business leader, and we too shake our heads.

We witness those who say they are followers of Jesus Christ but are instead busy creating false stories about others in the name of their empire. When they fall, we just shake our head. God's word is so incredibly clear about what will happen to those who make the decision to chase the flesh and self deception is so prevalent in our culture, that as we watch on from the side, we too shake our heads.

When Saul fell in battle, to the outsider, it seemed sudden. Yet observing as we do through the scriptures and seeing the ten plus year history of his manufacturing story after story about David, we realize he thought he was hiding out from God, yet God knew the entire time what he was doing.

The damage Saul created did not end with his death. He had poisoned the minds of many. That is what verbal warfare can do to the victim. For some, there is that cloud you never quite get away from. There was civil war in Israel for several years after the fact and David had to consolidate power militarily.

The warning in Proverbs 1 is clear and yet, we still hear the occasional story about a fallen pastor, one who engaged in being a verbal bully creating stories about others just as Saul did to David. The story usually begins with, "did you hear?"

The Holy God who defended David, defends us. And yes, when He does act, it tends to be sudden and overwhelming. That would be the fall, but the damage done could be extensive.

I have seen that in the business world more than once and unfortunately, in the church too. Verbal warfare, slander used as a weapon, happens wherever sinners gather.

Talking about those pastors or leaders who fall in the church, it looks like a sudden fall, but for those engaged in verbal warfare, it is most likely years in the making just as it was with David. Yes, just as Saul fell, and Absalom fell as did others who lied about David, it is indeed shocking to see, just as seeing some celebrity pastors fail, but the intent is not simply to shake our heads. The Lord is in this.

Psalm 64:9–10

"Then all people will fear, And they will declare the work of God, And will consider what He has done. The righteous person will be glad in the LORD and take refuge in Him; And all the upright in heart will boast." (NASB 2020)

God is the one who revealed the offender. God revealed Saul. He also revealed Absalom. The Lord has been behind the exposure of every single fallen abusive pastor or leader since Pentecost. And unfortunately, He is not done yet. Charles Spurgeon says the following.

The judgments of God are frequently so clear and manifest that men cannot mis-read them, and if they have any thought at all, they must extract the true teaching from them. Some of the divine judgments are a great deep, but in the case of malicious persecutors the matter is plain enough, and the most illiterate can understand. (Spurgeon n.d., 84)

The goal of judgment is to drive us to worship, to repentance, to self examination to make sure we are in the faith.



As we take refuge in the Lord in prayer, initially seeking His protection and then experiencing His deliverance by resolving the source of the verbal attack, we also find ourselves sitting back in awe and wonder of how the Lord answers our prayers and how He protects us.

Seeing and experiencing God's justice is a source of joy for the believer. Taking refuge in prayer in the Lord is never wrong and as we experience His justice on our behalf, worship and praise are indeed appropriate.

As we do life in the 21st century, we are under attack by the enemy and at times he does indeed energize someone to say things about us. Pray for those who are doing so that they repent and return to the Lord if believers, if not, that they will hear the word and be saved.

But there are those, like Saul, who will continue to their own destruction. Seek refuge in prayer in the Lord.

Let's pray.

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