

**CONTEND, LORD, WITH THOSE WHO CONTEND WITH ME;
 FIGHT AGAINST THOSE WHO FIGHT AGAINST ME.
 TAKE UP SHIELD AND ARMOR; ARISE AND COME TO MY AID.
 BRANDISH SPEAR AND JAVELIN AGAINST THOSE WHO PURSUE ME.
 SAY TO ME, "I AM YOUR SALVATION." MAY THOSE WHO SEEK MY LIFE
 BE DISGRACED AND PUT TO SHAME; MAY THOSE WHO PLOT MY RUIN
 BE TURNED BACK IN DISMAY. MAY THEY BE LIKE CHAFF BEFORE THE WIND,
 WITH THE ANGEL OF THE LORD DRIVING THEM AWAY; MAY THEIR PATH BE DARK AND SLIPPERY,
 WITH THE ANGEL OF THE LORD PURSUING THEM. SINCE THEY HID THEIR NET FOR ME WITHOUT CAUSE
 AND WITHOUT CAUSE DUG A PIT FOR ME, MAY RUIN OVERTAKE THEM BY SURPRISE—
 MAY THE NET THEY HID ENTANGLE THEM, MAY THEY FALL INTO THE PIT, TO THEIR RUIN.
 THEN MY SOUL WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD AND DELIGHT IN HIS SALVATION.
 My whole being will exclaim,
 "Who is like you, Lord? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them,
 the poor and needy from those who rob them. Ruthless witnesses come forward;
 they question me on things I know nothing about.
 They repay me evil for good and leave me like one bereaved.
 Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting.
 When my prayers returned to me unanswered, I went about mourning
 as though for my friend or brother. I bowed my head in grief
 as though weeping for my mother. But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee;
 assailants gathered against me without my knowledge.
 They slandered me without ceasing. Like the ungodly they maliciously mocked;
 they gnashed their teeth at me. How long, Lord, will you look on?
 Rescue me from their ravages, my precious life from these lions.
 I will give you thanks in the great assembly;
 among the throngs I will praise you. Do not let those gloat over me
 who are my enemies without cause;
 do not let those who hate me without reason
 maliciously wink the eye. They do not speak peaceably,
 but devise false accusations against those who live quietly in the land.
 They sneer at me and say, "Aha! Aha! With our own eyes we have seen it."
 Lord, you have seen this; do not be silent. Do not be far from me, Lord.
 Awake, and rise to my defense! Contend for me, my God and Lord.
 Vindicate me in your righteousness, Lord my God; do not let them gloat over me.
 Do not let them think, "Aha, just what we wanted!" or say, "We have swallowed him up."
 May all who gloat over my distress be put to shame and confusion;
 may all who exalt themselves over me be clothed with shame and disgrace.
 May those who delight in my vindication shout for joy and gladness;
 may they always say, "The Lord be exalted, who delights in the well-being of his servant."
 My tongue will proclaim your righteousness, your praises all day long.**

PSALM 35

