

# Psalms 31:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee:  
let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the  
grave.

## Analysis

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**Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.** Prayer for vindication through contrast between righteous who call upon God and wicked who will be silenced. This addresses theodicy—God's justice in distinguishing between His people and enemies.

Let me not be ashamed (Hebrew bosh—put to shame, disappointed, confounded) asks that trust not be proven foolish. Petition assumes shame is natural outcome if God doesn't intervene—David will appear to have trusted God who doesn't deliver. Prayer appeals to God's reputation: if His servants are shamed, His name is dishonored.

For I have called upon thee provides basis. David hasn't trusted false gods or relied on own strength; he's called upon YHWH. Hebrew qara means to call, proclaim, summon. Calling on God's name is covenant language—invoking relationship, appealing to promises. Reformed theology identifies calling on Lord's name as mark of true faith (Joel 2:32, Romans 10:13).

Let the wicked be ashamed creates contrast. Theodicy requires distinguishing outcomes. David doesn't pray from vindictiveness but from desire for God's justice to be manifest. Let them be silent in the grave (Hebrew damam—be silent, still,

cease) provides ultimate silencing. This anticipates final judgment when all God's enemies will be silenced, accusations answered, rebellion crushed.

## Historical Context

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Prayer to not be ashamed echoes other psalms (25:2-3, 69:6, 71:1). This repeated theme addresses Israel's oppression by more powerful nations. If God's people are conquered, observers conclude their God is weak. David's prayer concerns God's reputation—let Your people not be shamed, lest Your name be blasphemed.

Jesus experienced shame David feared. Mocked on cross: He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now (Matthew 27:43). Trust appeared foolish. But resurrection vindicated faith and shamed enemies. Every knee will bow—those who mocked will be silenced.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does fearing shame for trusting God reveal concern for His reputation as well as own?
2. What does calling upon Lord's name as mark of true faith mean practically?
3. How should believers respond when trust in God appears foolish to observers?
4. Is praying for wicked to be ashamed vindictive, or proper desire for God's justice?
5. How does Christ's temporary shame and ultimate vindication provide confidence for believers?

## Interlinear Text

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יְהוָה	אֵל	יְבֹשֶׁה	כִּי	קָרָאתִי יְיָ	יְבֹשֶׁה
O LORD	H408	Let me not be ashamed	H3588	for I have called	Let me not be ashamed
H3068		H954		H7121	H954
עַל	שָׁמַיְךָ יְיָ	וְעַל	יְדֵי	לְשָׁאוֹל:	
upon thee	let the wicked	and let them be silent	in the grave		
H7563		H1826		H7585	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 20:11** (References Lord): But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.

**Psalms 115:17** (References Lord): The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.

**Psalms 34:5** (Parallel theme): They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.

**Psalms 35:26** (Parallel theme): Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.

**Psalms 35:4** (Parallel theme): 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.

**Psalms 71:24** (Parallel theme): My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

**Psalms 94:17** (References Lord): Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.

**1 Samuel 2:9** (Evil): He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

**Daniel 12:2** (Parallel theme): And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

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