

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith XXXIX. Finding God's Help In Overcoming Temptations To Sin (Psalm 39:1-13)

I. Introduction

- A. 1 John 1:10 teaches that we believers in Christ have all committed acts of sin as believers.
- B. However, 1 John 2:1 reveals that God does not want us to sin, and that implies that we can avoid committing acts of sin, and Psalm 39:1-13 offers insight on utilizing God's enabling to overcome the temptation to sin:

II. Finding God's Help In Overcoming Temptations To Sin, Psalm 39:1-13.

- A. The introductory remarks in the English Bible comprise verse one of the Hebrew text, (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1008), but we stay with the numbering system of the English Bible for clarification with this lesson.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 39:1-13 as follows:
 1. "I said, 'I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth while the wicked are in my presence,'" Psalm 39:1.
 2. "[Consequently] I was dumb with silence; I was silent from even saying what was good, and my mental pain (*ka'ab*, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 456) was stirred up!" (Psalm 39:2)
 3. "My heart grew hot within me; as I meditated, the fire burned; I spoke with my tongue [in sin]!" (v. 3)
 4. "[Accordingly] Make known to me, O Jahweh, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting (*hadel*, Ibid., p. 293) I am ('*ani*, Ibid., p. 58-59)," Psalm 39:4.
 5. "Behold! You have given my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before You. Each common man's (*adam*, Ibid., Kittel; R. B. Girdlestone, Syns. of the O.T., 1973, p. 45-50) life is but a vapor. Selah," Psalm 39:5.
 6. "[Even] a nobleman ('*ish*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., Girdlestone) is as a mere shadow as he goes about; he bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, but he does not know who will gather [it]," Psalm 39:6.
 7. "But now, O Adonai, for what do I wait? My hope is in You (emphatic pronoun)," Psalm 39:7.
 8. "Save me from all my transgressions; do not make me the object of the reproach of fools," Psalm 39:8.
 9. "[As the result] I was dumb; I would not open my mouth, because it was You who did it!" (Psalm 39:9)
 10. "Remove Your scourge [the discipline of seeing how transient I am as a motivation for me not to sin with my mouth in the presence of the wicked] from me; I am overcome by the blow of Your hand," Psa. 39:10.
 11. "You rebuke for iniquity -- You discipline a nobleman ('*ish* again, cf. v. 6); You consume his wealth like a moth -- each common man (*adam* again, cf. v. 5) is but a vapor. Selah." (Psalm 39:11)
 12. "Hear my prayer, O Jahweh, and listen to my cry for help; do not be deaf to my weeping, because I am a permanent alien with You, a temporary sojourner like all of my forefathers," Psalm 39:12.
 13. "Look away from me, that I may rejoice again before I depart and am no more [in death]!" (Psalm 39:13)
- C. We note significant observations of this psalm (as follows):
 1. David struggled with the temptation to say what was sinful due to irritations produced by the presence of wicked people. He thus asked God to remind him how transient he was that he might put the lure of the wicked into a proper perspective and not sin, and God obliged! Indeed, God so painfully made David see how transient he was that he became distraught over the revelation, and asked God to stop it lest he die!
 2. Thus, we can ask God to help us in times of temptation, and He will abundantly help avoid sinning.
 3. Also, recalling the brevity of our lives helps us to avoid yielding to sin, for we thus see that we do not have time to waste in sin, but only to use what little time we have in this life to heed and serve the Lord!
 4. Much temptation revolves around the world's lusts of the eyes, the flesh and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-16), but the world and its lusts are in the current process of always passing (*paragetai*, present tense of *parago*, "to be in a state of transition," U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 816; The Analyt. Grk. Lex., 1972, p. 301) away (1 John 2:17a), and only those who do God's will now have those works in His will last into eternity (1 John 2:17b), so we best love not the world!

Lesson: David easily sinned when in the presence of the wicked, so he asked God to make him recall how transient he was to counter the temptation, and God obliged, overwhelming David, so he asked that God stop the revelation!

Application: (1) If tempted to sin, we can ask God to help us overcome it and He will abundantly oblige! (2) A way to counter temptation is to view the brevity of this life in comparison to eternity to see how foolish it is to sin now.