

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith

LVI: The Godly Response To Many Proud, Slanderous, Relentless Persecutors (Psalm 56:1-13)

I. Introduction

- A. David on occasion faced many, proud, slanderous foes who aggressively, constantly persecuted him.
- B. Psalm 56:1-13 describes such a situation and how David effectively handled it, so we view it for our insight:

II. The Godly Response To Many Proud, Slanderous, Relentless Persecutors, Psalm 56:1-13.

- A. The introductory remarks in the English Bible comprise the first verse in the Hebrew text (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1023), so we stay with the verse numbering system of the English Bible for clarity with this lesson.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 56:1-13 as follows:
 - 1. "O Elohim, be merciful to me, because men hotly pursue me; all day long they press their attack," v. 1.
 - 2. "My slanderers pursue me all day long, for many are attacking me in their pride," Psalm 56:2.
 - 3. "In the time that I am afraid, I myself (emph. pron.) will fully trust in You," Psalm 56:3.
 - 4. "In Elohim, Whose word I praise, in Elohim I fully trust; I will not be afraid. What can [mere] flesh (*basar*, Ibid., Kittel; B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 142; used of mortals) do to me?" (v. 4)
 - 5. "All day long they painfully twist my words; they are always plotting to harm me," Psalm 56:5.
 - 6. "They conspire, they lurk, they (emph. pron.) watch my steps, eager to take my life principle," Psa. 56:6.
 - 7. "Upon no account let them escape; in Your anger, O Elohim, bring down the peoples," Psalm 56:7.
 - 8. "Record my lament; list my tears in Your scroll; are they not in Your record? (Psalm 56:8)
 - 9. "Then my enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this I will know that Elohim is for me," v. 9.
 - 10. "In Elohim, Whose word I praise; in Jahweh, Whose word I praise;" Psalm 56:10.
 - 11. "In Elohim, in Whom I fully trust. I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 56:11)
 - 12. "I am under vows to You, O Elohim; I will present my thank offerings to You," Psalm 56:12.
 - 13. "Because You have delivered my life principle from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before Elohim in the light of life," Psalm 56:13.
- C. We note significant observations and applications of this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. The historical context, presented in the psalm's introductory notes, reveals this psalm was authored when David had fled from Saul by leaving Israel for Gath in Philistine territory, only there to see the servants of the Philistine ruler at Gath complain to him that David had been praised by his Hebrew countrymen for slaying his tens of thousands of Philistines, that he was thus not to be trusted, 1 Samuel 21:10-15; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Psalm 56. David had thus pretended to be insane before the Philistines, leading the ruler of Gath not worried about David's presence, but neither letting him enter his palace.
 - 2. Since David experienced great fear at this time, his handling of such fear by repeat expressions of trust in God (v. 3, 4, 11) examples for us our need to handle great fear of harmful foes by constantly offsetting the fear by reminding ourselves to keep a complete trust in the Lord.
 - 3. David relied on the omniscience of God to know all about his every lament, about his every shed tear as the basis for God's coming to his aid, Psalm 56:8-9. If we face the same trial, we should do likewise.
 - 4. It is helpful to note that David's human enemies were but mere mortal men, termed figuratively as "flesh" in verse 4 and "common man" (*'adam*, Ibid., Kittel; Robert B. Girdlestone, Synonyms of the O. T., 1973, p. 45-48) in verse 11, in contrast to the Creator-God, Elohim Whose help he sought for solace. Recalling the glaring weakness of all of one's foes before the infinitely greater Creator God is helpful in such crises.
 - 5. David once used the covenant-keeping name for God in this psalm, the name "Jahweh" (v. 10), the "I AM" of Exodus 3 Who revealed Himself as the timeless Lord Who rescued Israel from Egyptian bondage after hundreds of years of servitude. We also must recall our God is **faithful**, and so always trust Him to help!

Lesson: When feeling frightfully cornered by many proud, slanderous, relentless persecutors, David eventually trusted in Almighty God, his omniscient, faithful Lord, for deliverance from his opponents.

Application: (1) When feeling frightfully cornered by many proud, slanderous, relentless persecutors, may we like David recall our Lord is Almighty God opposite our foes, and look to His omniscience and faithfulness to equip Him to deliver us from our enemies. (2) God may let us face formidable foes to deepen our trust in Him and His infinite greatness as He did in David's case in this psalm, so, if facing such foes, may we focus on God's attributes.