

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

LVII: The Godly Response To A Foe One May Not Oppose

(Psalm 57:1-11)

I. Introduction

- A. David was murderously pursued by Saul, the anointed king of Israel whom David was not permitted of the Lord to oppose (cf. 1 Samuel 24:6), producing an unusually difficult trial for David to handle.
- B. Psalm 57:1-11 presents David's prayer from a cave where he hid from Saul, giving us insight into dealing with such destructive opponents whom we are not permitted of the Lord to combat (as follows):

II. The Godly Response To A Foe One May Not Oppose, Psalm 57:1-11.

- A. The introductory remarks in the English Bible comprise the first verse in the Hebrew text (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1024), so we stay with the verse numbering system of the English Bible for clarity with this lesson.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 57:1-11 as follows:
 - 1. "Have mercy upon me, O Elohim, have mercy upon me; for in You my life principle seeks refuge; I will seek refuge in the shadow of Your wings until the storm of ruin passes by," Psalm 57:1.
 - 2. "I cry out to Elohim, the Most High, to El(ohim), Who accomplishes (*gamar*, H. A. W. Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. I, p. 167-168) that which concerns me [namely, God's purposes]," Psalm 57:2.
 - 3. "He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me. Selah. Elohim will send out His loyal love and His faithfulness," Psalm 57:3.
 - 4. "My life principle is in the midst of lions; I lie among ravenous beasts, men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords," Psalm 57:4.
 - 5. "Be exalted above the heavens, O Elohim; let Your glory be over all of the earth," Psalm 57:5.
 - 6. "They spread a net for my feet -- I was bowed down in distress. They dug a pit in my path, but they have fallen in it themselves. Selah," Psalm 57:6.
 - 7. "My heart is steadfast, O Elohim; my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music," Psalm 57:7.
 - 8. "Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn," Psalm 57:8.
 - 9. "I will praise You among the peoples, O Adonai! I will sing of You among the tribal peoples," Psa. 57:9.
 - 10. "Because great is Your loyal love, reaching unto the heavens, and reaching to the skies is Your faithfulness," Psalm 57:10.
 - 11. "Be exalted above the heavens, O Elohim; let Your glory be over all the earth," Psalm 57:11.
- C. We note significant observations and applications of this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. The basis for David's confidence that God would rescue him from Saul whom God Biblically would not let David fight was that God would complete that which He had purposed for David, verse 2. God had sent Samuel to anoint David to be Israel's next king (1 Sam. 16:1, 12-13), so David knew God had to keep him alive long enough that he might rule Israel. We also can confidently rest in God's future plans for us.
 - 2. David was likely awakened before sunrise, concerned over the location of his pursuer, Saul, as is suggested by David's reference to awakening the dawn in verse 8. Though having an abbreviated sleep due to the pressure of Saul's threatening pursuit, David still hoped in God's plan for his life so as to awaken the dawn with optimistic songs of praise full of faith due to God's loyal love toward him, verse 9-10.
 - 3. When David expressed how he lived among dangerous foes (v. 4, 6a) but that his enemies had fallen into the trap they had made for him (v. 6b), he likely related his awareness of God's past actions to reverse the effects of his enemy's attempted entrapments as in 1 Samuel 18:20-29. God was training David to rely fully on the Lord, a lesson that would be essential for him once he gained the throne, cf. Deut. 17:15-20. Thus, if we are "cornered" in a trial like David was, we must learn the lesson involved for our later benefit!
 - 4. David drew confidence (v. 7a) from his awareness of God's currently at least partly checking his foes (v. 6b), so we need to focus on God's current partial helps for the motivation to keep on relying on Him.

Lesson: *When facing a murderous king Saul whom David was not allowed of God to fight, but only flee, David drew courage from realizing that God's purposes for his life would be fulfilled regardless of Saul's efforts to the contrary. Armed with this hope and with evidences of the Lord's encouragement of help in checking his foes in his past, David retained an optimistic faith in the Lord as he awaited God's final resolution to his trial with Saul.*

Application: *If we face difficult foes whom God does not let us fight, but only flee, may we heed David's example.*