

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith LXXVI: Praising God For His Defeat Of His People's Great Foes (Psalm 76:1-12)

I. Introduction

- A. Biblical and Church History are filled with accounts of God's deliverances of His people from their great foes.
- B. The Lord is to be praised for such deliverances, and Psalm 76:1-12 offers lessons for us regarding the matter:

II. Praising God For His Defeat Of His People's Great Foes, Psalm 76:1-12.

- A. The introductory remarks of this psalm comprise the first verse in the Hebrew text (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1041), so we stay with the numbering system of the English Bible.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 76:1-12 as follows:
 - 1. "Elohim is known in Judah; His Name is great in Israel," Psalm 76:1.
 - 2. "His tent is in Salem (This name for Jerusalem appears elsewhere only in Genesis 14:18 and Hebrews 7:1-2; B. K. C., O. T., p. 849; Ryrie S. B., KJV, 1978, fn. to Ps. 76:2), His dwelling place in Zion," Psa. 76:2.
 - 3. "There He broke the flashing (flaming) arrows, the shield and sword and war [itself]," Psalm 76:3.
 - 4. "You (O Elohim; emph. pro.) are dazzling with light, more majestic than mountains rich with game," v. 4.
 - 5. "Valiant men lie plundered, they sleep their last sleep; not one of the warriors can lift his hands," Psa. 76:5.
 - 6. "At Your rebuke, O Elohim of Jacob, both horse and chariot lie still," Psalm 76:6.
 - 7. "You alone are to be revered. Who can stand before Your face when You are angry?" (Psalm 76:7)
 - 8. "From heaven You pronounced judgment, and the land feared and was quiet --" (Psalm 76:8)
 - 9. "when You (em. pr.), O Elohim, rose up to judge, to save all the afflicted of the land. Selah," Psalm 76:9.
 - 10. "Because (even) the wrath of man will praise You; the remainder of wraths You shall gird (about You as a warrior's sword belt which leads to Your expressions of warrior wrath to Your praise)," Psalm 76:10.
 - 11. "Make vows to Jahweh your Elohim and fulfill them; let all the neighboring lands bring gifts to the One to be revered," Psalm 76:11.
 - 12. "He cuts off the spirit of rulers; He is to be revered by the kings of the earth," Psalm 76:12.
- C. We note significant observations and applications of this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. Bible scholars hold that the descriptions in this psalm point to God's miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem from the armies of Assyria's king Sennacherib when the Angel of the Lord, the Preincarnate Jesus Christ, slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night, Isaiah 36-37; Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Psalm 76; Exodus 23:20-23.
 - 2. Accordingly, this psalm acts as a promise to all of God's people who are afflicted by oppressive overlords or foes (v. 9b) that when God judges them, they are brought down to the glory of God, v. 1, 5. The people of God must thus revere the Lord instead of fearing their oppressive foes (v. 7) as well as letting God counter their foes versus trying to battle them in one's own might and wisdom, v. 6, 8-9.
 - 3. Verse 10 offers the wonderful news that God uses even the wrath of the oppressors of God's people to His glory. Thus, God's people must realize that God may let oppressors make seemingly great headway in afflicting them before God levels these foes so that God gains greater glory to Himself in making the wicked suffer a greater fall. This is what occurred in the historical setting of this psalm: Sennacherib's spokesman with great boasting and blasphemy against Israel's God had publicly tried to get Israel's people to cease trusting that the Lord could deliver them from him (Isaiah 37:8-13). However, after God slew Sennacherib's army, the Assyrian king returned to his own city where he was slain by his own sons in the temple of his own god, Isa. 37:36-38. Sennacherib's charge that God could not save Israel from himself backfired to where his own god could not save him from Israel's God, all to the great glory of Israel's God!

Lesson and Application: (1) *God's sudden destruction of His people's humanly overwhelming foes in the Assyrian army revealed that when He acts to subdue their oppressors, He does so for His great glory that His people might revere Him alone, and so trust in Him for help versus handling such foes themselves.* (2) *God's people must learn that God might allow their foes to make great strides in oppressing them, but that it all plays into His plan to bring greater glory to Himself when He finally levels the great foes. God's people are thus to trust in Him even when all seems humanly hopeless.* (3) *If God's people face intense, unjust wrath from their foes, they must realize that God is allowing that wrath expression to expand so that when He deals out just judgment on the wrongdoers, it will bring even greater glory to Himself. Thus, instead of fearing the increasing wrath of their oppressive foes, God's people need to revere the Lord above their oppressors instead.*