

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XCIX: Praising God For His Holiness Amid An Evil World

(Psalm 99:1-9)

I. Introduction

- A. The pagan world of Ancient Israel's day viewed itself as slaves to fickle, despotic and combative gods who had to be appeased for the welfare of mankind, Bruce K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 1974, p. 58, 64-65. For this reason, paganism handed pagan man an insecure, unjust, loveless, hard way of life.
- B. In contrast, Israel's God was stable, sovereign, gracious and separate or "holy" (Ibid., p. 58), for which Israel owed Him great praise, for she enjoyed His blessings of security, justice, love and gracious nurture, Psalm 99.
- C. Our current wicked world is becoming ever more problematic like the troubled pagan world Ancient Israel faced, so we view Psalm 99:1-9 for its appropriate applications for us in this matter:

II. Praising God For His Holiness Amid An Evil World, Psalm 99:1-9.

- A. There is no introductory remark with this psalm (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1060), so we stay with the English Bible numbering system which is the same as that of the Hebrew text.
- B. Accordingly, we translate Psalm 99:1-9 (as follows):
 1. "Jahweh reigns, let the peoples tremble; He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake," v. 1.
 2. "Great is Jahweh in Zion; He (emph. pr.) is exalted over all the heavens," Psalm 99:2.
 3. "Let them praise Your great and awesome name; He (emph. pr.) is separate, holy (*qadosh*, Ibid.; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 872," Psalm 99:3.
 4. "The King is mighty, He loves justice -- You (emph. pr.) have established equity; in Jacob You (emph. pr.) have done what is just and righteous," Psalm 99:4.
 5. "Exalt Jahweh our Elohim, and worship at His footstool; He (emph. pr.) is separate, holy (*qadosh* again, cf. v. 3; Ibid., Kittel, p. 1061; Ibid., B. D. B.)," Psalm 99:5.
 6. "Moses and Aaron were among His priests, Samuel was among those who called on His name; they called on Jahweh and He (emph. pr.) answered them," Psalm 99:6.
 7. "He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud; they kept His statutes and the decrees He gave them," v. 7.
 8. "O Jahweh our Elohim, You (emph. pr.) answered them; You were to them a forgiving Elohim, an Avenger of the wrong deeds done against them," Psalm 99:8.
 9. "Exalt Jahweh, our Elohim, and worship at His holy mountain, for separate, holy (*qadosh* again, v. 5, 3) is Jahweh our Elohim," Psalm 99:9.
- C. We note important observations about this psalm (as follows):
 1. Opposite the fickle, despotic, combative pagan gods of Ancient Israel's pagan Gentile neighbors, and opposite our current godless insecure, unjust, loveless and harsh world, God is sovereign over the universe, and all peoples of the world should tremble beneath His sovereign rule, Psalm 99:1-2.
 2. Ancient Israel and we believers in Christ today owe God praise for His great and awesome sovereignty because He is holy, that is, He is separate from the dreadful wickedness of this world, Psalm 99:3.
 3. Wonderfully, opposite ancient paganism and our current evil world, the Bible's God, the King of the universe, is mighty, and He uses His might to forward justice and equity in His people, Psalm 99:4.
 4. Indeed, Ancient Israel and today's believers owe God worship in submission to Him, for He both was and still is utterly separate from the wicked world around them and around us, Psalm 99:5; 1 John 2:15-16.
 5. Unlike the gods of Ancient Israel's pagan Gentile neighbors, the Bible's God answered the prayers of priests and levites Moses, Aaron and Samuel (cf. Ex. 2:1-10; 4:14; 1 Chron. 6:1, 22-28) in their respective generations, and since they heeded God's Word, He was a forgiving God and an Avenger of those who wronged His people unlike the fickle despotic pagan gods around Israel, Psalm 99:6-8. We also owe God great praise for His gracious, equitable dealings with us in His grace amid an ungracious, unjust world.

Lesson: *The Psalmist praised God for His separateness from the fickle, despotic, combative pagan gods around Israel, for God was refreshingly and marvelously sovereign, predictable, stable, just, fair and gracious.*

Application: *May we today realize how separate, that is, how holy our great, sovereign, predictable, stable, just, fair and gracious God is from the wicked combative, unpredictable, unstable, unjust and biased world in which we live. May we also be just as "holy," that is, just as separate from the evil world as is our Lord! (1 Peter 1:15-16)*