

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### **Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith CXV: An Edifying Response To Criticism Of Our Biblical Faith (Psalm 115:1-18)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. Facing criticism for our faith from the world can be a daunting experience unless we know how to answer it.
- B. Psalm 115:1-18 offers an edifying response to mockery by Gentile idolaters of Israel's Biblical faith, and we view it for edifying insight in handling criticism of our faith today (as follows):

#### **II. An Edifying Response To Criticism Of Our Biblical Faith, Psalm 115:1-18.**

- A. The verse numbering system in the Hebrew text matches that of the English Bible (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1077), so we stay with the English Bible's numbering system for this lesson.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 115:1-18 (as follows):
  - 1. "Not to us, O Jahweh, not to us (but) to Your name be the glory because of Your loyal love and Your faithfulness," Psalm 115:1.
  - 2. "Why do the nations say, 'Where, now (*na'*, particle of entreaty or exhortation, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 32, 609; H. A. W., Th. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. II, p. 541) is your Elohim?" (v. 2)
  - 3. "But our Elohim is in the heavens; He does whatever pleases Him," Psalm 115:3.
  - 4. "But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men," Psalm 115:4.
  - 5. "They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see;" (Psalm 115:5)
  - 6. "they have ears but they cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell;" (Psalm 115:6)
  - 7. "they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk; they cannot utter a sound with their throats," v. 7.
  - 8. "Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who rely upon them," Psalm 115:8.
  - 9. "O Israel, rely on Jahweh -- He (emph. pron.) is their Help and Personal Handheld Shield (*magen*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 171; Roland DeVaux, Anc. Israel: Vol. 1: Social Insts., 1965, p. 244-245)," Psalm 115:9.
  - 10. "O house of Aaron, rely on Jahweh -- He (emph. pron.) is their Help and Personal Handheld Shield (cf. v. 9)," Psalm 115:10.
  - 11. "O you who revere Jahweh, rely on Jahweh -- He (emph. pron.) is their Help and Personal Handheld Shield (cf. v. 9, 10)," Psalm 115:11.
  - 12. "Jahweh remembers us and will bless us: He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron," Psalm 115:12.
  - 13. "He will bless those who revere Jahweh, the small with the great (NIV = "small and great alike")," v. 13.
  - 14. "May Jahweh make you increase and make your children increase," Psalm 115:14.
  - 15. "May you (emph. pron.) be blessed by Jahweh, Maker of heaven and earth," Psalm 115:15.
  - 16. "The highest of heavens belong to Jahweh, but the earth He has given to the sons of man," Psalm 115:16.
  - 17. "It is not the dead who praise Jahweh, those who go down to silence;" (Psalm 115:17)
  - 18. "but it is we who extol Jahweh, both now and evermore. Praise Jahweh," Psalm 115:18.
- C. We consider significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
  - 1. The question "Where?" asked of the Gentiles is emphasized by the particle *na'* as the Gentiles ask where Israel's Elohim is, for unlike all the pagan nations, Israel's God was an unseen spirit Who dwelt in the space between the cherubim over the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant! This question is evidently a mocking question intended to intimidate and critique Israel's Biblical faith in an **unseen** God! (v. 2)
  - 2. The psalmist responds by defending God as dwelling sovereignly in the heavens and doing whatever He pleases opposite the hapless pagan idols that were made by mere men, and that had mouths, eyes, ears, noses, hands, feet and throats that could not even function, v. 1, 3-7!
  - 3. Thus, all who make such idols and rely on them will be as hapless as their idols (v. 8) where Israel, the Aaronic priests and all who fear Jahweh will find God as a Help and Personal Handheld Shield, v. 9-11. Indeed, God will richly bless those who rely on them, v. 12-18.

***Lesson:*** *The psalmist met the pagan world's mocking critique of the Biblical faith by exposing the FACTS of the futility of the pagan world's faith, and explaining the unseen God as being utterly sovereign, good and protective for all who rely on Him. The psalmist especially encouraged the Aaronic priests who stood as leaders of the faith!*

***Application:*** *May we meet criticism of our faith by addressing the FACTS involved and thus defend our faith.*