

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

CXIX: Appreciating And Applying Scripture For Every Spiritual Need, Psalm 119

A. Aleph - Relying On God For The Right Attitudes To Heed Scripture For Blessing (Psalm 119:1-8)

I. Introduction

- A. Psalm 119 is all about the profitable use of God's written Scriptures, with the psalm being formed as an acrostic where each section contains a Hebrew letter that begins each of the eight verses in that section.
- B. Psalm 119:1-8 (Aleph) teaches our need to rely on God for the right attitudes to heed Scripture with blessing:

II. Relying On God For The Right Attitudes To Heed Scripture For Blessing, Psalm 119:1-8.

- A. The verse numbering system in the Hebrew text matches that of the English Bible (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1079), so we stay with the English Bible's numbering system for this lesson.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 119:1-8 (as follows):
1. "O the happinesses of those who have integrity (*tamim*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 1071) of the way, who walk in the Law of Jahweh," Psalm 119:1.
 2. "O the happinesses of the keepers of His solemn declarations, who seek Him with a whole heart," (v. 2)
 3. "who also (*'ap*, Ibid., Kittel, p. 1080; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 64-65) do not do perverted deeds, but who walk in His ways," Psalm 119:3.
 4. "You [Jahweh] have given in charge Your injunctions to be kept closely," Psalm 119:4.
 5. "O that my ways were steadfast, firm (*kun*, Ibid., p. 465-467) that I might observe Your decrees!" (v. 5)
 6. "Then I would not be shamed with my looking, paying attention to (*nabat*, Ibid., p. 613; Hiphil stem = causative) all of Your commandments," Psalm 119:6.
 7. "I will praise You with uprightness of heart in my learning the judgments of Your righteousness," v. 7.
 8. "I will observe Your decrees; do not forsake me utterly [because of my failings herein implied]," v. 8.
- C. We consider significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
1. God blesses those who obey His words with precision, Psalm 119:4.
 2. Accordingly, the psalm section describes several things that must occur for such precise obedience to occur en route to obtaining God's responsive, rich blessing (as follows):
 - a. The attitudes of the heart must be (1) that of perfect integrity (v. 1a), (2) whole-heartedness (v. 2b) and paying undivided attention to Scripture (v. 6b).
 - b. Such attitudes lead to productive study where one (1) keeps what he reads in his heart (v. 2a), (2) he consults the Word in life's circumstances of need (v. 2b) with the result that (3) he learns the Word (v. 7a).
 - c. Such productive study of Scripture in turn leads to (1) non-perverted applications of Scripture (v. 3a) that produce (2) a walk in God's ways (v. 1b, 3b) that (3) yield manifold divine blessings (v. 1a, 2a), including (a) honor (v. 6a implied) and (b) its resulting praise to the Lord (v. 7a).
 3. In contrast to all of this, if one lacks the integrity and whole-heartedness needed to view Scripture productively so as to gain God's blessing in life, he ends up experiencing shame in his life (v. 6).
 4. In reality, the psalmist realized his need for an improved attitude toward properly approaching Scripture so as to be blessed (v. 5-6), so he appealed to God's gracious provision to instill such an attitude in him! (v. 8)

Lesson: (1) *To heed Scripture well and thus gain God's rich blessing, one must have an attitude of perfect integrity, whole-hearted devotion to God and to heeding His Word along with a resulting undivided attention to Scripture. These attitudes lead to productive Bible study where one keeps what he reads in his heart, he consults the Word in times of need with the result that he learns its lessons well! Such a productive study leads to a life of non-perverted Scripture applications that produce a godly walk with resulting divine blessings of honor and praise to God. (2) However, failure to have such an upright attitude leads to failure to learn and thus to heed Scripture, resulting in shame. (3) Thus, we do well to rely on God and His gracious provisions to affect our attitude, to do what Galatians 5:16 directs us to do -- rely on the Holy Spirit for the right attitude to study Scripture productively!*

Application: (1) *There is a huge contrast in blessing or its lack due to how we even approach Scripture: if we rely on the Holy Spirit to have the right attitude, we will do well and be blessed, but if we function by means of our sin natures, we will not start with the right attitude, and our understanding of, learning of and application of Scripture will be perverted and shamefully unproductive! (2) May we thus start to study Scripture in reliance on the Lord!*