

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 G. Zayin - Responding To Scorners Who Replace Scripture As Their Own Authority (Psalm 119:49-56)

I. Introduction

- A. Psalm 119 is 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 its respective section.
- B. Section "Zayin" in Psalm 119:49-56 explains how to use Scripture to respond well to scorners who forsake Scripture's authority and thus scorn the godly who heed Scripture, and we view it for our edification:

II. Responding To Scorners Who Replace Scripture As Their Own Authority, Ps. 119:49-56.

- A. The verse numbering system in the Hebrew text matches that of the English Bible (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1081), so we stay with the English Bible's numbering system for this lesson.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 119:49-56 (as follows):
 - 1. "Remember the promise to Your servant because You have made me to hope;" (Psalm 119:49)
 - 2. "my comfort in my affliction is this: that Your promise has revived me," Psalm 119:50.
 - 3. "The presumptuously arrogant scorn me exceedingly, but from Your law I do not bend away," v. 51.
 - 4. "I remember Your ancient verdicts based on Your law, O Jahweh, and I am comforted in them," v. 52.
 - 5. "Raging heat [indignation] grips me because of the wicked who have forsaken Your law," Psalm 119:53.
 - 6. "Your decrees have been for me [the theme of] my song wherever I lodge," Psalm 119:54.
 - 7. "I remember in the night Your Name, O Jahweh, and I observe Your law," Psalm 119:55.
 - 8. "This [blessing] has been [come] to me because I have kept Your precepts," Psalm 119:56.
- C. We consider significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. The psalmist reveals he has a problem of suffering great affliction, Psalm 119:50a. The cause of this affliction is persecution he faces as (a) people who have rejected Scripture's authority (v. 53b) and (b) set themselves up in pride as authorities instead (v. 51a) and (c) who have then used their presumed authority to scorn the psalmist's righteous life that heeds the Scriptures (v. 51 b,c). (d) As a result, the unjust, brash, painful scorn faced from unrighteous foes causes the upright to experience great indignation (v. 53a).
 - 2. The solution to this problem is noted in Psalm 119:49-51, 53-56 (as follows): (a) the psalmist recalls God's proven record of past action for consolation, which record is that (i) God's Scripture promises, when trusted in past, similar circumstances, have always revived him when he was persecuted, v. 50. (ii) The psalmist's awareness of this past truth causes him to trust God in his current trial for balm, v. 49. (b) The psalmist thus refuses to bend away from doing that for which the unrighteous persecute him, no matter how great the pressure to the contrary because of the persecution, v. 51. (c) The psalmist's pent up fury is then wisely and productively vented through the expression of biblical music: (i) everywhere he faced emotional affliction from scorners (v. 54b), he recalls with songs God's decrees regarding Scriptural solutions to the problem faced, v. 54a. (ii) Even in the night in experiencing sleeplessness due to the duress to his emotions from the persecution, he recalls God's reputation ["Name"; Zon. Pict. Ency. Bible, v. Four, p. 364] of past help to others or to himself that testify to the reality of his blessing in the current trial regardless of the force of the arrogant scorners' current scorn, v. 55a. This recollection keeps the psalmist obedient to Scripture even under the pressure he currently faces, v. 55b. (d) The psalmist then testifies to his hearers that such a practice has been a workable one in his life as he heeds Scripture, v. 56.

Lesson: *Recalling God's past proven record of keeping His promises to help him under persecution pressure from scorners who reject Scripture's authority, and who persecute the godly for heeding God's Word, recalling God's power to help him in past similar trials, the psalmist finds use of appropriate, godly music wherever and whenever the need arises can be used of God to curb the emotional pain he experiences from persecution.*

Application: *(1) Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:18-19 direct that like the testimony of the psalmist at Psalm 119:49-56, relying on the Holy Spirit coupled with music that focuses on Scripture's words edify especially one's emotions when those emotions have been upset by persecution from parties who scorn in arrogant insubordination to the authority of God's Word. (2) When we trust Scripture and God's past record of using His Word to handle even arrogant verbal abuse from those who reject Scripture's authority, we will find emotional relief under trial!*