

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

L. Lamed - Handling Prolonged Ungodly Opposition

(Psalm 119:89-96)

I. Introduction

- A. Psalm 119 is about the profitable use of God's written Word, the Scriptures, with the psalm being formed as an acrostic where each section has a Hebrew letter that begins each of the eight verses in its respective section.
- B. Section "Lamed" in Psalm 119:89-96 explains how the believer is to respond constructively to prolonged ungodly opposition, and we view this section for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. Handling Prolonged, Ungodly Opposition, Psalm 119:89-96.

- A. The verse numbering system in the Hebrew text matches that of the English Bible (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1083), so we stay with the English Bible's numbering system for this lesson.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 119:89-96 (as follows):
 - 1. "O Jahweh, Your word is eternal; in the heavens it stands firm," Psalm 119:89.
 - 2. "Your faithfulness is from generation to generation; You established the earth and it stands firm," v. 90.
 - 3. "Your judgment verdicts remain standing to this day, because all things serve You," Psalm 119:91.
 - 4. "Unless Your law had been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction," Psalm 119:92.
 - 5. "Eternally I will not forget Your precepts, because by them You have revived me," Psalm 119:93.
 - 6. "I myself (emph. pron.) am Yours -- save me, because I have sought out Your precepts," Psalm 119:94.
 - 7. "The wicked are lying in wait to destroy me, but Your statutes I make myself diligently consider," v. 95.
 - 8. "To all perfection I see a limit; but Your commandment is exceedingly broad [boundless NIV]," v. 96.
- C. We consider significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. The psalmist identified a trial of facing secret, prolonged efforts by evil foes to bring him down, v. 95a.
 - 2. To handle this strong, persistent opposition, the psalmist caused himself diligently to consider the truths expressed in God's Word, Psalm 119:95b.
 - 3. In making this consideration, the psalmist focused on how his great God's promises to him in Scripture far exceeded the limited powers used by his evil opponents against him (as follows), v. 89a,b, 90a,b, 91, 96:
 - a. The psalmist considered how God's Word is eternal, that it stands from time immemorial and will stand after all events of this life are past, Psalm 119:89a.
 - b. He considered how God's Word is unaffected by what occurs on this sin-infected world, for the Word of God is forever firmly settled in the holy heavens separate from this sinful world, Psalm 119:89b.
 - c. The psalmist then considered how God's past judgment verdicts had remained standing to his current day because everything in the universe serves God's interests as the Creator God, Psalm 119:91; Genesis 1.
 - d. Though generations of men come and go, God's faithfulness in keeping the promises of His Word outlasts them all, including (by implication) the wicked who afflict the psalmist, Psalm 119:90a,b.
 - e. Indeed, the psalmist realized that everything, including his wicked foes, was limited regardless how perfect they might strive to be, but that God's Word is infinitely boundless in contrast to all creation, v. 96.
 - 4. In view of these considerations, the psalmist gained encouragement to remain loyal to God's righteous stands that he was to maintain in the face of strong, persistent opposition by wicked foes, Psa. 119:92-94:
 - a. He recognized that delighting in Scripture had sustained him in his trial thus far, Psalm 119:92.
 - b. Based on this realization, the psalmist pledged never to forget God's Word in his trial, Psalm 119:93.
 - c. He finally asked for a solution to the trial based on his commitment of believing God's Word, v. 94.

Lesson: *When facing evil persecutors where his foes seemed humanly stronger than he was, the psalmist focused on the contrast between his mortal foes and the immutable, unchanging, eternal, all-powerful God and His promises regarding the psalmist's trial. He thus shifted from relying on his own mortal human strength to rely on God's infinite resources in His Person and Word that he might outlast the limited power of his mortal foes!*

Application: *If we face evil opposition from others, especially if they are strong, persistent and prolonged in their opposition, may we shift from trying to withstand those foes in our own power and instead permanently cling to our infinite, righteous, sovereign God and His unalterable Word's promises that outlast our foes. In doing so, we truly live by faith in God and not in ourselves, the evident reason why God lets us face such formidable foes!*