

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

U. Sin and Shin - Overcoming Fear Of Harmful People

(Psalm 119:161-168)

I. Introduction

- A. Psalm 119 tells of the profitable use of God's written Word, the Scriptures, and the psalm is formed as an acrostic where each section has a Hebrew letter that begins each of the eight verses in its respective section.
- B. Section "Sin and Shin" in Psalm 119:161-168, comprised of both letters that were originally one letter (J. Weingreen, A Practical Gram. for Classical Heb., 1969, p. 3), explains how Scripture equips the believer to overcome fear of harmful people, and we view the passage for insight and edification (as follows):

II. Overcoming Fear Of Harmful People, Psalm 119:161-168.

- A. The verse numbering system in the Hebrew text matches that of the English Bible (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1086), so we stay with the English Bible's numbering system for this lesson.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 119:161-168 (as follows):
 1. "Military commanders persecute me without cause, but my heart trembles in awe of Your Word," v. 161.
 2. "I myself (emph. pron.) exult in Your promise as one who exults upon finding great war spoil," v. 162.
 3. "I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love Your law," Psalm 119:163.
 4. "I praise You seven times a day for Your righteous judgment verdicts," Psalm 119:164.
 5. "Great peace is for those who love Your law, and nothing that occasions their stumbling," Psalm 119:165.
 6. "I hope for Your salvation, O Jahweh, and I practice Your commands," Psalm 119:166.
 7. "My life principle keeps Your commandments, for I love them very much," Psalm 119:167.
 8. "I heed Your precepts and Your statutes because all of my ways are transparently seen to You," v. 168.
- C. We consider significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
 1. The psalmist revealed that he faced the trial of being persecuted without just cause by powerful, harmful military commanders, Psalm 119:161a.
 2. His response to this trial is instructive for us, Psalm 119:161, 163b, 166, 168: (a) With powerful, threatening leaders in pursuit, the psalmist was understandably unable to relax. (b) Accordingly, he compared being afraid of them to be afraid of God, and chose to fear Almighty God over his formidable foes so that he would obey God regardless of the actions by his persecutors, Psalm 119:161. (c) As a result, God blessed the psalmist for this obedience to Him, Psalm 119:163b, 166, 168: (i) He decided to practice what Scripture commanded him, v. 166. (ii) He then conscientiously heeded Scripture, v. 168. (iii) The psalmist came to love God's Word in the process, v. 163b.
 3. The result of this response by the psalmist to his powerful persecutors produced victory over his dread of the harmful, powerful foes, Psalm 119:162, 164-165, 167: (a) God blessed the psalmist for his obedience as if it gave him spoils of war, what his enemy military commander enemies wanted to obtain from him in attacking and defeating him, Psalm 119:162! (b) The psalmist then found himself so relieved and happy that his tension over his foes was released, and he praised God seven times a day, Psalm 119:164. (c) For the psalmist, there was granted peace without trouble from his formidable foes, v. 165. (d) Finally, the psalmist's former dread of his pursuing enemy commanders was turned into an appreciative love for God's invaluable Word, Psalm 119:167.

Lesson: *The psalmist discovered that the way to gain spiritual victory over dreading harmful, powerful enemies to become relaxed and joyful in the Lord was to revere God more than the enemies enough that he heeded Scripture. God then worked to bless the obedient psalmist to where he relaxed in joy and in praise of God and His Word, for the Lord protected him from his foes while also blessing him with peace of mind and heart.*

Application: *(1) If we face formidable foes whose pursuit of us to harm us does not let us relax, God wants us to revere HIM far MORE than we fear our FOES so that we OBEY His Word REGARDLESS of our FOES. (2) As we do this, GOD gets involved to protect us from our foes and to build up our inner man, giving us joy, peace and blessing and an ever-deepening appreciation and love for His Word. (3) The fact that God USES great ANXIETY we experience due to strong, hostile foes to get us to revere Him and heed His Word signals the GREAT IMPORTANCE in GOD'S view (a) of REVERING HIM (b) so as to HEED HIS WORD!*