

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS
Psalm Fifty-Three: Handling A Dread Of Dreading Wicked Oppressors
(Psalm 53:1-6)

I. Introduction

- A. Right after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt told the Congress of the United States that we had "nothing to fear but fear itself."
- B. That kind of dread is a particular burden for many who have experienced abuse, for victims of ongoing abuse often learn to become apprehensive of **encounters** with those who regularly abuse them.
- C. However, this **fear of fearing** the oppressor cannot be overcome apart from overcoming it **while** having to **face** the oppressor, for **fleeing** trouble **never** produces **triumph**. This victory is addressed in Psalm 53:

II. Handling A Dread Of Dreading Wicked Oppressors, Psalm Fifty-three.

- A. Psalm Fifty-three is almost identical to psalm Fourteen. The **major** difference is found in Psalm 14:5-6 which is altered in Psalm 53 to form a single verse, Psalm 53:5. We compare the translations as follows:
 1. Psalm 14:5-6: "There they are who are in dread of dread, **because Elohim is in the company of the righteous.** (6) You put to shame **the designed aims of the afflicted, but Jahweh is their refuge.**"
 2. Psalm 53:5: "There they are, those who are in dread of dread **when there was nothing to dread, for Elohim scattered the bones of those who attacked you; you put them to shame, for Elohim despised him.**"
- B. The differences between the two renditions are clear as follows:
 1. In Psalm **Fourteen**, those in dread of dread are the **wicked**, and God is putting them to shame.
 2. In Psalm **Fifty-three**, those in dread of dread are the **righteous** who should not have to dread as these **righteous ones** later put their oppressors to shame by God's enabling, overcoming triumph.
- C. This **DIFFERENCE** is an intentional switch of thought on the part of David, the author of both psalms because he saw the need for encouraging people who suffer **fear of facing** their oppressors:
 1. In verse 4 of both psalms, David lamented that the ungodly never seemed to learn their need to stop oppressing the godly, and devouring them.
 2. Though the psalm is on the wickedness of man in general, in writing Psalm Fifty-Three, David focused on the **suffering** the godly often experience and the ceaseless **oppression** of the wicked and addressed their **dread of dreading** such abuse.
 3. Accordingly, Psalm Fifty-Three takes an entirely different slant to the problem introduced in Psalm Fourteen, addressing the dismay of the **oppressed** who **fear FACING** afflictors as follows:
 - a. Those who are unjustly oppressed should learn to avoid the pain of **dreading** abusive treatment by noting that when God finishes judging their oppressors, there will be nothing left of them, Ps. 53:5b.
 - b. In fact, God will turn the tables in such a way that the **oppressed** find **CLOSURE** to the distress they experience in the oppression: in David's case, he pointed out how God had equipped the oppressed to administer judgment on the oppressors, enabling them to find closure to the abuse, 5c.
 - c. Consequently, God's people who are oppressed can afford even to rejoice in view of God's present or future deliverances from such oppression, Ps. 53:6.

Lesson: (1) *Those who suffer a dread of facing ongoing oppression need to trust that the Supreme God of JUSTICE will so administer justice out to wrongdoers that the resulting END of the oppressors will more than balance out the pains of their afflictions!* (2) *Besides, God's goodness will provide closure to the injustices so that the effects of suffering will be terminated. Thus, they should follow Peter's recommendation in 1 Peter 4:19 and commit the keeping of their souls unto their reliable Creator to deal with the emotional, mental and physical COSTS of suffering!* (3) *This equips them to overcome fearing to FACE oppression because they overcome WHEN it occurs!*

Application: *If an oppressed person DREAMS FACING ongoing oppressors, that DREAD only plays into the hands of the oppressor, allowing him to inflict more mental DAMAGE on his victims! GOD calls the sufferer to overcome that DREAD while under FIRE by trusting His sovereign, future vengeance! That gives the sufferer VICTORY he otherwise could not enjoy!*