

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Fifty-Six - Learning To Apply Past Scripture Teaching To Meet Current Needs (Psalm 56:1-13)

I. Introduction

- A. We learn from Romans 15:4 that whatsoever things were recorded in Scripture before were written for us believers so that through patience and comfort of God's Word, we might have hope for **current** needs.
- B. Knowing that Scripture's records of **past** events are effective for **present** help is one thing, but knowing **how** that **works** in a real situation is quite another.
- C. Psalm Fifty-Six clearly examples how **David** was able to take an Old Testament precedent in **his** day and apply it to a needy situation in his **later** era. It teaches us how to do the same thing as follows:

II. Learning To Apply Past Scripture Teaching To Meet Current Needs, Psalm 56:1-13.

- A. Psalm 56 is a miktam, a teaching psalm for the listener, cf. introductory notes to Ps. 56.
- B. In viewing the psalm, we notice a striking **repetition** where verse 5 is **ALMOST** precisely repeated in verses 11 and 12: the only **difference** is the **added phrase**, "In Jahweh Whose word I praise . . ."
- C. Also, we note the **fourfold** emphasis on the great **LENGTH** of time David was suffering oppression:
 1. In verse 1, his enemies press their attack "all day long."
 2. In verse 2, they are said to pursue him "all day long" again.
 3. Verse 5 offers two such emphases, noting they painfully twist David's words "all day long" as they "always" plot to harm him.
- D. Additionally, the introductory notes of the Psalm, being the first verse of the Hebrew text, note that David had been taken **captive** by Gentile Philistines in Gath.
- E. Putting these ideas together, we find an incredible **match** to an Old Testament experience that David would have known from his readings of Scriptures at his disposal:
 1. In Exodus 2:23-24, Moses recorded how Israel's 400 **long** years of **sufferings** and **cries** unto God for deliverance from cruel Egyptian **bondage** were heard by the Lord.
 2. In the **same** context, in Exodus 3:1-14, God reveals Himself to Moses to **address** these sufferings by releasing Israel from Egyptian bondage, and He announced a new name of **Jahweh** to do so, Ex. 3:14.
- F. Thus, David identified his situation with that of ancient Israel and Moses in Egypt as a **precedent** to appeal to God for release from his current predicament:
 1. First, like ancient Israel, David was a **captive** to a **foreign** power, intro. to Ps. 56 and Ex. 2:23a,b.
 2. Second, like ancient Israel, David experienced **prolonged** oppression from his enemies, Ps. 56:1, 2, 5, with Exodus 2:23. Gen. 15:13b points this out as being **four** hundred years, and it could be that David's **fourfold** repetition of the length of his suffering reflects this time element by way of emphasis!
 3. Third, like ancient Israel, David **cried** unto God for deliverance with the hope that God would keep His covenant with him as He did for Israel in delivering her from Egypt, Ps. 56:8 with Ex. 2:23.
 4. Fourth, as God delivered Israel by His name **Jahweh** in Ex. 3:14, David emphasized the same name, **Jahweh** in his repeated segment of verse 4, adding the unique "In Jahweh Whose word I praise..." to verse 4 in his repeated chorus in verses 10-11.

Lesson: David found similarities in Israel and Moses' Exodus 2-3 plight and his own: (a) both were captive to foreign entities, (b) both had experienced prolonged suffering, (c) both had cried to God in their sufferings (d) and both looked to Jahweh to fulfill specific covenant promises to each in their particular situations. Accordingly, David APPLIED the Exodus account to his own case for motivation to count on God's PAST willingness to release ancient Israel through fulfilling His Abrahamic Covenant to help David be released to fulfill the contemporary Davidic Covenant.

Application: Though the PROMISES of God often differ in CONTENT for today's Christian from what people in Scriptural events, similarities between past Biblical events and current events can properly motivate today's believer to apply the promises God has for him now based upon His willingness to help Bible saints before him. The key is to look for a MATCH with the Bible character's circumstances and follow God's lead from that text for today by using today's promises!