

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
XXXV. Responding To Intense Hatred
(Psalm 35:1-28)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Intense hatred is a very difficult problem to face, but it is one that we increasingly encounter in today's world:

(1) In 2019, Franklin Graham, son of the late evangelist Billy Graham, spoke of the effort "to impeach President Donald Trump," claiming that he had "'never witnessed such intense hatred toward a president.'" (David Rojas, "'I have never witnessed such intense hatred toward a president,' says Rev. Graham," November 26, 2019; thebl.news/us-news/) (b) The backlash in hatred has also been intense: ". . . (I)ntimidation efforts have especially targeted election officials in the battleground states where Donald Trump contested his loss to President Joe Biden." ("Justice Department details threats against election workers," Republican-American, August 4, 2022, p. 7A)

(2) Intense hatred occurs in religious realms, too: three families in our Church in the last four weeks have told of sharp criticism they have received from unsaved extended family members due to their Biblical beliefs or practices.

(3) This problem can also occur among professing Christians: over the years, we have heard of a lot of church or ministry splits or closings in Gospel-preaching entities due to sin and/or hate among professing Christians!

Need: So, we ask, "*How does God want us to respond to intense hatred?!*"

I. Psalm 35:1-28 enlarges on David's 1 Samuel 24:15 assertion that God might judge between him and king Saul who hatefully pursued David in order to kill him. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Psalm 35)

II. Saul's intense hatred arose from his perverse jealousy of David:

- A. After David slew Goliath, Israel's women sang greater praises of David than of Saul, so Saul "enviously eyed" (*in*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 745) David for the rest of his life, 1 Samuel 18:6-9 NIV.
- B. Proverbs 27:4 NIV claims that though anger is cruel, and fury is overwhelming, jealousy is even more potent and destructive for the one who is the object of envy, what was evident in the case of Saul's jealousy of David.

III. Thus, Psalm 35:1-28 provides edifying guidance in facing and responding to intense hatred:

- A. Scattered in this psalm are reports of painful events that David faced due to the hatred of Saul and his helpers:
 - 1. David faced various actions by his foes secretly to entrap him to his harm (Psalm 35:7-8) including seeing his foes question him about matters that he did not know to make him look nervous and thus suspiciously guilty of sin before others when he had actually done nothing wrong, Psalm 35:11.
 - 2. When David faced some difficulty that caused him to "stumble" in human weakness that was not related to sin itself, his intensely hateful foes gathered in glee, Psalm 35:15a.
 - 3. David's foes met together against him when he was unaware of it and thus unable to defend himself, and in their gathering they constantly maligned him, fomenting damaging lies about him, Psalm 35:15b.
 - 4. Upon devising false accusations against him when he had lived quietly without harming anyone, David's foes gaped at him and falsely charged him with wrongdoing, Psalm 35:20-21.
 - 5. David expressed concern that his hateful enemies would gloat over him at his demise, Psalm 35:26.
- B. Thus, David asked God to deliver him by fighting against these foes, and defeating them, Psalm 35:17, 1-8.
- C. He also acknowledged the hurt he felt over the way that his enemies had repaid him evil for good (Psalm 35:11-16), and David asked God not to let his enemies gloat over him, Psalm 35:19-25.
- D. For this reason, he asked the Lord to vindicate him before other people, Psalm 35:26-27.
- E. In the end, David claimed that he would praise the Lord for delivering him, Psalm 35:9-10, 18, 28.

Lesson: *In response to hatred, David told God of the hurt he felt over being repaid evil for good and his concern over his foes' gloating over him. David thus asked God to rescue and vindicate him that he might praise the Lord.*

Application: (1) *May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11.* (2) *As the right response to intense hatred in our dispensation is to let God take vengeance for us while we do good to our foes (Romans 12:19-20) and avoid their abuse (2 Timothy 3:1-5), we apply Psalm 35 (as follows): (a) We should pray about the hurt we feel at being repaid evil for good and (b) our concern over our enemy's gloating over us. (c) We also need to do good to our foes without being abused in doing so and (d) ask God to vindicate us while (e) we let Him deal with the vengeance He wills to administer.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

We can apply David's directives relative to the issues we mentioned in our introduction (as follows):

(1) On the intense hatred existing in the political realm, (a) we need to know that we cannot diffuse this hatred since it is driven by a lust for power: Shelby Steele ("Why the Left Is Consumed with Hate," September 23, 2018, in The Wall Street Journal; wsj.com/articles/) explained, "Today's left lacks worthy enemies to fight. It is driven to find a replacement for racism, some sweeping historical wrongdoing that morally empowers those who oppose it. (Climate change?) Failing this, only hatred is left." (b) Thus, we must not hate in response or try to diffuse the hate, but tell God how upset we are over its injustice and our concern of the gloating of the haters. (c) We should do good to such foes while avoiding being abusively treated by them and (d) ask God to vindicate us and (e) let Him take vengeance.

(2) On facing intense hatred from unsaved associates or relatives, (a) we must realize that we cannot diffuse the hatred even if the spiteful party is a relative, for all unbelievers are under Satan's influence, John 8:44! (b) Thus, in facing all such angelic conflict issues, we need to pray (cf. Ephesians 6:10-12, 18) to God, expressing the hurt of what unjust treatment we face and voice our concern to the Lord over their gloating. (c) We should do good to our unsaved associates or relatives, being careful in the process not to expose ourselves to needless abuses from them and (d) ask God to vindicate us while (e) we leave with the Lord the vengeance He wants to administer.

(3) On facing intense hatred from a professing Christian, (a) we must recall from Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 KJV Christ's parable of the wheat and the "tares" (i. e., weeds), a figurative reference to unbelievers whom Satan secretly plants in local churches to use them to try to obstruct the discipling process! A "professing Christian" who has an intense hatred of another believer may actually be a "tare," an unbeliever who acts as if he were a believer but who is actually under Satan's control, so it is futile to try to diffuse that person's hatred! (b) In addition, even true believers can be taken captive by Satan to oppose the godly as occurred with Peter in Matthew 16:21-23 (2 Timothy 2:24-26 for churches), so it is impossible for us to diffuse the hatred of one who is influenced by Satan! (c) Rather, we must pray to God, expressing our grief over the painful injustice involved and (d) our concern over the gloating by the spiteful party. (e) We should do what we can to be kind to the ungodly party, but in doing so, be careful to avoid being abused by him (2 Timothy 3:5) while we (f) ask God to vindicate us and (g) leave with Him the vengeance He intends to administer.

(4) Also, we need to **fill** the relationship *vacuum* created by having to withdraw from people who harbor intense hatred, and Scripture offers guidance on this: (a) We need to fellowship with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, 2 Timothy 2:22! (b) Also, Hebrews 10:25 directs us not to abandon the gathering of ourselves together in the local church that we might edify one another! (c) At times, there may be so much intense hatred even in a church that one cannot be edified by meeting with the people there. If so, (i) we first can follow Christ's example in John 16:32: in predicting how His disciples would be scattered from Him, leaving him alone as he faced the cross, Jesus said that He was actually not alone, "because the Father is with me." Relying in our walk with the Lord upon the power of the Holy Spirit is all we need for inner peace. (cf. Isaiah 26:3; Galatians 5:16, 22-23) (ii) Second, in fellowship with the Lord, we need to follow His lead in seeking to fellowship with godly believers in some other local church of like precious Biblical faith. (d) As we then fellowship with other upright believers in a local church, we must "put on the whole armor of God" as taught in Ephesians 6:10-20 to stand against the wiles of the devil who wants to trouble the church. This involves speaking the truth (Ephesians 6:14b), living righteously (Ephesians 6:14c), being prepared to give the gospel (Ephesians 6:15), trusting God (Ephesians 6:16), holding to belief in unconditional salvation security (Ephesians 6:17a), using Scripture (Ephesians 6:17b) and praying always for all believers to have spiritual victory over Satan (Ephesians 6:18-20).

(5) For edification, we need to understand the spiritual dynamics of the hatred we face as follows: (a) Christ's (i) words (John 15:22) and works (John 15:24) rebuke the unsaved world of sin, so it hates Him! (ii) Since the world hates Christ (John 15:18), the world hates His followers (John 15:19) (iii) and persecutes them (John 15:20). (iv) The basic cause of all this hatred is that the world does not know God Who sent Christ into the world (John 15:21)! (b) In further application of John 15:18-24, ungodly believers can adopt the world's attitude toward God, Christ, and other godly believers (1 Corinthians 3:1-3), explaining the hatred that godly believers can face from believers who live in sin! (c) Last, believers in sin think in the natural realm (1 Cor. 3:1-3; 2:13-14a), so they do not understand the godly believer, and they think and act errantly toward him (1 Cor. 2:14b) where the godly precisely knows what is going on (1 Cor. 2:15)! Knowing this fact encourages the godly when sinful believers misjudge and mistreat him.

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. Then, in facing intense hatred, may we express to God in prayer our hurt and concern over the gloating of our foes to our harm, do good to our foes while avoiding their abuses and ask God to vindicate us while we leave with the Lord the vengeance He intends to administer.