

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
CXV. Trusting In God Versus Today's Futile Idols
(Psalm 115:1-18)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Recent events have exposed the futility of a lot of entities upon which many people have relied:

(1) With regard to the assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump, Mark Morgan called for “an independent commission . . . (b)ecause no existing entity in the federal government is both trusted to produce honest results and capable of doing so in a timely manner.” (Mark Morgan, “Who can be trusted to investigate the assassination attempt?”, Republican-American, July 24, 2024, p. 6A)

(2) Millions of voters were led to believe that President Biden was fit to run for a second term, so they voted for him in the primaries, but “(e)lected Democrats, with the eager compliance of their allies in the media, dismissed any expression of concern about the president’s acuity (sharpness). They . . . were keeping the truth from those voters . . .” (Baron Swaim, “Democrats Misled Their Own Voters,” The Wall Street Journal, July 22, 2024, p. A17)

(3) Then there’s the matter of *how* Mr. Biden was pressured to stop running for a second term: Christine Flowers (“Democrats and Biden” A classical lesson in modern betrayal,” Ibid., Republican-American, p. 7A) asked, “(W)hat do you call people” like “Pelosi, Obama and Schumer . . . who thwart the will of the electorate by essentially coercing the primary winner to step down? . . . We . . . mourn . . . our . . . flawed and unworthy leaders.”

(4) There’s also the matter of national security: If President Biden is not fit to run for a second term so that Democratic leaders “were willing to upend his presidency and publicly humiliate him, they are admitting that he is unfit *now*.” (“Is he fit or not?” Ibid., July 23, 2024, p. 6A)

(5) President Biden supports Vice President Kamala Harris to run in his place, but “she carries the policy legacy of the Biden years,” and “Mr. Biden was losing to Mr. Trump even before the debate owing to inflation, the migrant and border failures, and disorder abroad. She is even more of a left wing culture warrior, and she will . . . have to answer for her role in covering for Mr. Biden’s cognitive decline.” (“The Voters Prevail Against Biden,” Ibid., p. A16) National Review’s Charles C. W. Cook put it more bluntly, asking, “Is (the press) going to ask Kamala Harris why she lied her head off on television about Biden’s state?” (Charles C. W. Cook, “It Was Fun Having a Press Corps For a Month,” National Review Online, July 23, cited in “Quotable,” Ibid., July 25, 2024, p. 8A)

(6) At the local level, many people think that a “good” neighborhood is key to raising well-adjusted children, but columnist Tom Purcell, who “grew up in Bethel Park . . . south of Pittsburgh where 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks lived,” claimed “Crooks’ attempt to kill Donald Trump . . . has filled my old neighborhood with shock and sadness. Bethel Park is populated by decent, salt-of-the-earth people . . . a safe, friendly community with big yards and good schools . . . (However), (a)t 20, Crooks was a member of Generation Z . . . (and) many in the Zoomer generation are struggling. Social psychologist Jonathan Haidt explains their troubles in his book, ‘The Anxious Generation,’” that “parents have over-protected post-1995 children in their home lives, but under-protected them in their digital lives, where powerful, negative online forces overwhelm the positive influence of parents, churches and teachers . . . (T)he . . . tried-and-tested values that have been passed down for many generations – are not being transferred fully to younger generations . . . (so) even salt-of-the-earth communities . . . can give birth to a troubled would-be assassin.” (Tom Purcell, “My childhood neighborhood did not raise assassins,” Ibid., July 17, 2024, p. 7A)

Need: *So, we ask, “If many entities upon which people have relied are evidently deficient, what should we do?”*

- I. Ancient Near Eastern pagan man mocked Israel for depending on an entity that to them seemed futile:**
- A. Israel’s pagan neighbors believed the universe and their idol gods were from the same primordial realm, so they were the source of man’s whole existence and welfare (B. K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 1974, p. 57).
 - B. Thus, after Psalm 115:1 opened with the psalmist’s praise to God for His loyal love and faithfulness, Psalm 115:2 recorded a mock by pagans who asked of Israel, “Where is their God?”, the source of Israel’s welfare!
 - C. To explain, pagan temples all had statue idols of their gods where Israel’s temple had no idol, just an ark with a mercy seat on top of it with two cherubs looking toward the apparent empty space above that mercy seat.
 - D. Thus, the absence of any statue of Israel’s God left pagans mocking Israel’s lack of a deity for her welfare!
- II. Psalm 115:3-8 answered this pagan critique with an apologetic and also a polemic for Israel’s faith:**
- A. As an apologetic, a defense for Israel’s faith, the psalmist answered the pagan world’s critique of God’s invisibility in her temple with the claim that God was in the heavens and He did whatever pleased Him, v. 3.

- B. The psalmist then shifted to critique pagan Gentile gods with a polemic, Psalm 115:4-8:
1. The gods in the pagan Gentile temples were idols of silver and gold that were made by the hands of men that would then illogically be worshipped by people regardless if craftsmen had made them, Psalm 115:4.
 - a. Besides, these idols were utterly helpless, Psalm 115:5-7: they had mouths, but they could not speak, eyes, but they could not see, ears, but they could not hear, noses, but they could not smell, hands, but they could not feel, feet, but they could not walk, and they could not even utter a sound in their still throats!
 2. Thus, pagan Gentiles who create such futile idols were as vulnerable as their idols to calamity, and so were all who relied on such false gods, Psalm 115:8 (H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms*, 1974, p. 800).
- III. **The psalmist then encouraged Israel to rely on her invisible but true God for blessing, Psalm 115:9-14:**
- A. The psalmist admonished Israel, her priests who descended from Aaron and who ministered in God's temple, and all who revered the Lord to rely on Him, for He was their Help and Shield, Psalm 115:9-11!
 - B. God remembered and would bless Israel, Aaron's line and all who revered Him, both small and great, v. 12ff.
- IV. **In summary, Israel's God in vast superiority to pagan gods had created the universe, and He had given the earth to man, v. 15-16. As long as God's people lived on the earth, they were to praise Him, v. 17-18.**

Lesson: *Since mankind's existence and welfare does not depend on manmade idols, be they Ancient Near Eastern gods represented in idols or anything else that man today might view as an "idol" for fulfillment, but our existence and welfare instead depends upon the Creator God of Scripture Who dwells in the highest heavens, may we rely on Him and worship Him, our True and Stable Source of comprehensive blessing.*

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) For all of our needs in today's world, may we not rely on federal entities, our president's mental acuity, on the testimony of elitists who surround him, on the Vice President whom he supports to replace him, on a mentally failing lame duck president, or even on a nice neighborhood, but on the only true God of Scripture, the Creator of heaven and earth.*

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

Scripture provides us additional insight in addressing the issues of concern in our introduction (as follows):

(1) In **general**, as for (a) distrust in federal entities rightly to investigate the assassination attempt on Mr. Trump, (b) the coverup of President Biden's mental decline, (c) the undemocratic pressuring of Mr. Biden to end his reelection bid, (d) the national security issue with President Biden's remaining in office and (e) the ominous political baggage of Vice President Kamala Harris who is running for the presidency, these circumstances together fit God's Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 prediction that we would face a "mini-Great Tribulation" where leaders full of intrigue would oppress subordinates, driving them to seek balm that is found only in Bible exposition. Our part is to live in reliance on the Holy Spirit and to heed and use Scripture to help other needy people. God has then promised to give His "overcomer(s)" whom He will raise us great spiritually nurturing influence, Revelation 3:21 with 7:17!

(2) **Specifically**, (a) on the distrust of federal entities to investigate the assassination attempt on Mr. Trump, Prov. 27:12 calls the prudent to sense danger and to take refuge. Increasingly, we need to watch for our own safety. (b) On the vast coverup of President Biden's mental decline, 2 Tim. 3:13-17 warned of growing deception in the latter days, that we then need to keep heeding Scripture to offset deception. (c) On the undemocratic pressuring of Mr. Biden to forego his reelection bid by formidable political leaders, Prov. 38:2 states that political unrest created by vying power-seekers can be offset by the common man of understanding and wisdom. We at the local level can use understanding and wisdom to provide local stability. (d) On the national security threat with Mr. Biden's remaining in office, Psalm 127:1b claims that God is our only real security, so we need to pray for His help. (e) On the ominous political baggage of Vice President Kamala Harris in her run for office, Prov. 29:2 ESV claims that when the righteous thrive, people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, people groan. If Ms. Harris wins the election and people groan, our role will be to provide nurture in fulfillment of Revelation 3:21 with 7:17! (See section "I,a,b,c" above!)

(3) **As for the "good" neighborhood** from which former President Trump's would-be assassin came, (a) in Genesis 8:21 just after godly Noah's family of 8 left the ark as the sole human survivors of the world flood, God said that the imagination of man's heart is evil starting in his youth. (b) A "good" neighborhood cannot solve the problem of sin that exists in every child. Each one must trust in Christ to be saved (Romans 3:20-28; 2 Corinthians 5:17) and rely on the Holy Spirit as a believer to heed Scripture for blessing (Galatians 5:16, 22-23; 2 Timothy 3:13-17).

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we not depend on anything else – which is idolatry – but Scripture's God for fulfillment!