

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
CXVIII. Rejoicing In God's Deliverance, Psalm 118
A. Finding Refuge In God Instead Of People
(Psalm 118:1-9)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Recently, columnists, editors and talk show hosts have aired concern about alarming people in high places:

(1) One columnist lamented, "(I)t is disturbing that even as Americans and our allies harbor serious concerns about whether the president is up to an increasingly fraught geopolitical and economic moment, his constitutional understudy (Vice President Kamela Harris) has done so little to reassure the public." (Jonah Goldberg, "Why Kamala Harris is avoiding the press – and getting away with it," Republican-American, August 14, 2024, p. 6A)

(2) Another writer warned, "Social Security is in a big financial mess . . . (I)t is projected that the main Social Security Trust Fund will dry out by 2033 . . . (and) law requires that when insolvency happens, . . . benefits will have to be cut by 23% unless Congress reforms the program." (Veronique DeRugy, "Social Security can't afford tax cut to benefits," Ibid., August 11, 2024, p. 10A)

(3) Connecticut columnist Chris Powell complained that the recent hikes in electricity bills for Connecticut residents include a charge "for people who don't pay but who under state law can't be disconnected during much of the year . . . Insofar as electricity is a necessity of life, taxing it is no more justified than taxing food and medicine would be." (Chris Powell, "Conn. isn't ready to prosper; and stop taxing electricity," Ibid., August 13, 2024, p. 6A)

(4) The editor of the Republican-American expressed concern over Kamala Harris, writing, "As she faces persistent dissatisfaction over . . . the economy under the Biden administration, Vice President Kamala Harris has . . . a price-control scheme . . . to shift the blame away from the federal government and onto private industry . . . But government interventions such as price controls are hallmarks of the failed far-left regimes of the 20th century, which culminated in bread lines and mass suffering. If Ms. Harris' plan becomes a reality, get ready for a return of COVID-era shortages and even more extreme price increases." ("Control economy, not prices," Ibid., August 21, 2024, p. 6A)

(5) Another editorial by the same editor warned, "Until . . . FBI Director Christopher Wray is expelled from government, the Democratic Party and the federal bureaucracy will have no reason to stop leveraging corporate power to interfere in elections." ("Unconstitutional intrusion," Ibid., August 29, 2024, p. 8A)

(6) Many people rely on the public to keep ominous people out of office by voting, but "Democrats are counting on . . . the media to be loyal soldiers for them, selling a mystery box . . . to the American people. . . The risk for Kamala is if the American people wake up in time to notice." (Ben Domenech, "Kamala's DNC team is saying the quiet part loud," The Spectator World, Aug. 19, cited in "Quotable," Ibid., August 23, 2024, p. 6A) Indeed, "(m)ore than any other danger right now, Kamala Harris dreads . . . (b)eing forced to answer a question on national television, without anyone there to bail her out by interrupting or changing the subject." ("Quotable," Ibid., August 27, 2024, p. 6A, citing Jeffrey Blehar, "The Harris Campaign's Cheap New Debate Gambit Reveals Its Fears," National Review Online, Aug. 26) After all, she "was Biden's partner in every failed policy he initiated. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre emphasized to reporters during a recent briefing . . . how the vice president has been a 'critical part' of all the president's decision-making" (Joe Guzzardi, "Kamala Harris, Reimagined by 180 Degrees," The Signal, August 23, 2024; msn.com), but will enough voters realize it when they vote on November 5th?

Need: *So, we ask, "Where should one gain refuge from threats to his welfare by troubling people of influence?"*

I. Psalm 118 praises God for triumphing over all of Israel's enemies (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Psalm 113; Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 878).

II. The introductory portion of the psalm in verses 1-9 provides an important lesson on seeking refuge in the Lord during trials instead of relying on people, be they the general public or elitists (as follows):

- A. The psalmist called on Israel, the house of Aaron, and all who revered the Lord to thank Him, for the Lord is good, and His "loyal love" (*hesed*, Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1078; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, vol. I, p. 305-307) endures forever, Psalm 118:1-4.
- B. The reason for this call was that God had delivered the psalmist from literally "a tight place" of trouble (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Psalm 118:5) and set him in a "large place" (*medhab*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 932) of freedom from bondage, from trouble, and from stress, Psalm 118:5.
- C. Psalm 118:6b explains that the restriction the psalmist had faced was caused by his enemies.

- D. Nevertheless, the Lord was on his side, that he then did not need to fear what people might do to him, but that he could be confident that God would give him victory over his enemies, Psalm 118:6a, 7.
- E. In response to this experience of deliverance, the psalmist testified that it is better to seek refuge from troublesome foes in the Lord instead of relying on people for relief – be they common people or elitists, v. 8-9:
1. In Psalm 118:8, the psalmist declared that it is better to “seek refuge” (*hasah*, Ibid., p. 340) in the Lord than to “trust, rely on” (*batah*, Ibid., p. 105) “common man” (*‘adam*, Ibid., Kittel; Robert B. Girdlestone, *Syns. of the O. T.*, 1973, p.), what would apply to “the general public” in our era.
 2. Then, in Psalm 118:9, the psalmist added that it is better to “seek refuge” (*hasah* again) in the Lord than to “trust, rely on” (*batah* again) “the princely in rank” (the predicate adjective *nedib*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 622), what would apply to “officials or rulers of high rank or influence, elitists” in our era.

Lesson: *We believers in Christ owe God thanksgiving, for His loyal love that delivers us from oppressive calamity by our foes is everlasting. Thus, it is better to seek refuge from troubling enemies in the Lord than to rely on the general public or on officials, rulers of high rank or influence or on elitists.*

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) May we seek refuge in the Lord instead of relying on the general public that votes in elections or on elected officials or those in power in an administration's bureaucracy!*

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

The book of Proverbs offers helpful insight on the issues of concern mentioned in our introduction:

(1) To understand why events that we witness do occur, (a) Proverbs 24:24 states that one who says to the wicked that he is righteous, the people and nations will curse and abhor. Some key leaders treat wrongdoers as righteous, explaining the unrest they create. (b) Proverbs 28:15 asserts that a wicked ruler over vulnerable common people is like a roaring lion and a charging bear! We have wicked people in influence in elected positions and the bureaucracies of today's nations, what is unsettling the general public like wild animals! (c) Proverbs 29:2 claims that when the righteous rule, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people mourn. Different views that people have of righteousness and wickedness of different politicians or officials affect not only how they vote, but how they react to election results, what is also serving to create unrest! (d) Proverbs 29:18 ESV states that where there is no divine revelation, a nation's people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law, that is, who obeys God's Word. Life in today's world leads many who do not heed or even know God's Word to cast off restraint in thought and deed as they vent their reactionary fear or anger to upsetting situations, what only adds to the unrest. However, those who know and who heed Scripture are settled and blessed by God even in times of unrest!

(2) If we then turn to Scripture for edifying insight, (a) we read in Daniel 2:41-43 that God predicted that Western Civilized nations that have inherited remnants of former Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman empires will become mixed with other people groups, those nations becoming partly strong and partly weak. The people groups in such nations will not adhere to one another, and this state will continue beyond the rapture of the Church into the Tribulation Period with its Revived Roman Empire and its ten kings who will give their power to the antichrist until Christ returns to judge the earth, abolish the remnants of the former empires and set up His Kingdom, Daniel 2:44-45. (b) We also read in Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 that we are in a “mini-Great Tribulation” where rulers full of intrigue oppress subordinates, creating disillusionment that drives people to seek balm that can be found only in Bible exposition. (c) Thus **today**, we need (i) to apply Psalm 118:1-9 and seek refuge only in God and not in officials, politicians, elitists or even in the general public! (ii) That divine refuge is **attained** by (+) believing in Christ to become a child of God where we can be qualified to be under God's “much-more” care (Romans 8:31-32). (+) That divine refuge is then **utilized** by (-) **relying** on the indwelling Holy Spirit (Who is given to us at salvation) for thought and behavior control (Galatians 5:16, 22-23), by (-) **committing** all of our anxieties in life to the Lord (Philippians 4:6-7), by (-) **filling** our minds with godly insight from Scripture and (-) **applying** Scripture's insight in our lives that the God of peace might dwell **with** us in comforting edification (Philippians 4:8-9; John 14:21-23).

[(3) On the financial concerns in our introduction, our best path forward is (a) to earn a living as independently as we can (1 Thess. 4:11-12), (b) to invest boldly, long-term, consistently, with diversification (Eccl. 11:1-6), (c) with whatever we find worth doing in life, to do it with diligence (Prov. 10:4), (d) to be frugal (John 6:12) and (e) to be content with what we have for God to sustain us regardless what financial harm others might do to us (Heb. 13:5-6).]

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 seek refuge in the Lord instead of relying on officials or the general public for blessing!