

**THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION**  
**Psalms: Living By Faith In God**  
**CXIX. The Vast Value Of God's Word**  
**C. Handling Potent Verbal Attacks**  
**(Psalm 119:17-24 [Gimel])**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Potent verbal attacks can have dire consequences, but such attacks are commonplace today:

(1) Former President Trump and his supporters face them: “Ahead of the second assassination attempt against former President Donald Trump, many influential actors, journalists, and influencers warned that Trump is an ‘existential threat’ to democracy, compared him to Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler, and suggested he or his supporters should face violent attacks.” (Tyler O’Neil, “Influencers who encouraged violence call Trump a threat,” *Ibid.*, September 19, 2024, p. 8A) Gregory T. Angelo, president of non-profit watchdog New Tolerance Campaign told *The Daily Signal* that the rhetoric surrounding and opposing President Trump’s campaign involves insisting “‘that his reelection would lead to the collapse of the country and calls for the former president’s death.’” (*Ibid.*)

(2) Potent verbal attacks by the establishment media recently occurred against conservative Supreme Court justices: On September 19, “the news broke that a man had been arrested after allegedly threatening to kill six Supreme Court justices. ‘The indictment left the justices unnamed, though the court is dominated by a six-member conservative majority,’ *The New York Times* noted, adding later in its report that ‘two members of the court – Justice Clarence Thomas and Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. – were featured prominently in the news when some of the messages were sent.’” As an editorial in the Republican-American “noted July 31, those news stories were based on nontroversies peddled by Democrats and elevated by the media. They’ve served as a pretense for attacks on the Supreme Court’s independence and legitimacy – attacks that are only being launched because the court’s ideological composition frustrates the political left.” (“Political threats continue,” *Ibid.*, September 27, 2024, p. 6A)

(3) Recently, parents who oppose deviant, sexually explicit books to which their children are exposed in public libraries and schools indirectly faced potent verbal attacks: “(September 22-28) is what librarians and leftists . . . throughout the country call Banned Books Week,” what “is misnamed because in the United States . . . no books . . . are forbidden by government . . . (T)he promoters . . . would have the public believe that the choices made by librarians and school administrators are always right, and that anyone who questions these choices is a follower of Hitler or, worse, Donald Trump.” (Chris Powell, “The ‘banned books’ racket; and busway’s costs hidden,” *Ibid.*)

(4) Pope Francis recently made a potent verbal attack against the Christian faith by saying, “‘Sheik, Muslim, Hindu, Christian . . . are different paths [to God],’” where Jesus in John 14:6 KJV said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (Anugrah Kumar, “Pope Francis’ claim ‘all religions are a path to God’ rebuked by clergy,” September 15, 2024; christianpost.com) Consequently, Protestant and Roman Catholic clergymen have voiced strong objection to the pontiff’s statement. (*Ibid.*)

(5) It occurs locally: believers often report that they witness or face potent verbal attacks, and at times these attacks are as confusing as they are upsetting, for like many political attacks today, they don’t critique an actual sin!

Need: So, we ask, “*How does God want us to handle potent verbal attacks?*”

- I. **The psalmist at Psalm 119:17-24 [Gimel] was highly motivated to use Scripture as his physical, mental and emotional lifeline due to a significant trial he was facing, Psalm 119:17, 19-20:**
  - A. He asked God to grant him life that he might keep His Word, for He figuratively felt like a vulnerable “sojourner” (*ger*) who lacked some rights as an outsider in a challenging social environment, Psalm 119:17, 19 (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1080; H. A. W., Theo. Dict. of the O. T., 1980, v. I, p. 155-156).
  - B. His “whole [physical, mental, emotional and spiritual] being” (*nepesh*, *Ibid.*, Kittel; R. B. Girdlestone, Syns. of the O. T., 1973, p. 56-60) was “crushed” (*garas*, *Ibid.*, Kittel; *Ibid.*, H. A. W., p. 173) with “longing for” (*ta’eb*, *Ibid.*, Kittel; *Ibid.*, H. A. W., v. II, p. 963) for God’s “justice” (*mishpat*, *Ibid.*, Kittel; *Ibid.*, H. A. W., p. 947-948) at all times, Psalm 119:20!
- II. **This trial involved “princes” (*sarim*, *Ibid.*, Kittel; *Ibid.*, H. A. W., p. 884-885) who had “sat” (*yashab*, *Ibid.*, Kittel; *Ibid.*, H. A. W., v. I, p. 411-412) to take counsel to “slander” (NIV) him, v. 23a NIV.**
- III. **However, Scripture fully equipped the psalmist to overcome this threatening trial (as follows):**
  - A. By the psalmist’s relying on the Lord to open his eyes to see applicable truths in God’s Word, he beheld wondrous things out of the Scriptures that directed him on handling the trial that he faced, Psalm 119:18.

- B. Scripture thus delighted the psalmist by its supply of such timely, adequate insight, Psalm 119:24a.
- C. Indeed, Scripture became the psalmist's counselors that overcame the counsel of his enemies, v. 23b, 24b.
- D. Thus, the psalmist asked God to "take away" (*galah*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., H. A. W., p. 160-161) the scorn and contempt that his influential foes spoke against him, for He applied God's Word in his life, v. 22 NIV, ESV.
- E. Finally, God, the Author of Scripture, rebuked and punished the psalmists wicked enemies, Psalm 119:21.

***Lesson:*** *Potent verbal attacks are overcome by realizing our great need for God's correct view on our situation as revealed in His Word, that we then immerse our minds in Scripture for its wonderful insights and thus apply them to our trial for our own nurture and protection and God's handling of our verbal attackers.*

***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) To handle potent verbal attacks, may we acknowledge our great need for God's true insight on our trial so as to immerse our minds in Scripture for its edifying insight so that we apply Scripture for God's protection and blessing.*

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

Scripture provides us edifying insight and direction on the issues of concern mentioned in our introduction:

(1) On the charges many influential actors, journalists and influencers make that Mr. Trump is an "existential threat" to democracy like Nazi dictator Adolph Hitler and the suggestion that Mr. Trump and his supporters should face violence, (a) Romans 13:1-5 teaches that threats to a nation's law and order should be handled by the authorities, not by lawless acts of violence by the general public. (b) Also, former President Trump was not a threat to democracy in his first term as he has not been lawfully convicted and sent to prison by the government for opposing democracy, Thus, journalists, actors and influencers who call for violence against him and his followers are sinning against God.

(2) On the potent verbal attacks against conservative Supreme Court justices that have led some troubled people to threaten to assassinate some of them, (a) Romans 13:1-5 directs that government authorities are to keep law and order in the nation, and (b) 1 Peter 2:13 directs us to heed government laws. (c) Since the U. S. Constitution by which our nation is to be ruled allows for the removal of a Supreme Court justice from office by impeachment via Congress, not by assassination, journalists who incite people to assassinate justices are sinning against God!

(3) On the indirect, potent verbal attacks by librarians, school administrators and leftists against concerned parents over deviant, sexually explicit books to which their children are exposed in public libraries and schools, Scripture at Ephesians 6:1-4 holds parents accountable to God for the rearing of their children. No librarian, school administrator or leftist can rightfully counter a parent's Biblical directives for his child, so parents should not be intimidated by any entity that tries to usurp their authority over their children when they uphold Biblical morals!

(4) On Pope Francis's statement that Sheik, Muslim, Hindu, and Christian people are all taking different paths that lead to God in contrast to Jesus' John 14:6 statement that He alone is the way to God, John 17:2 ESV cites Jesus as saying in His great High Priestly prayer to God the Father, "You have given Him authority over all flesh." In Matthew 28:18 ESV, Jesus is recorded as saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto me." In Colossians 2:10 ESV, the Apostle Paul wrote about Jesus Christ, noting, "you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority." Thus, Jesus' claim that He is the only way to God is the authoritative truth where Pope Francis' statement that the Sheik, Muslim, Hindu paths, though differing from Christianity, also lead to God errs, for God wants us to side with Jesus' words over Pope Francis' words when they differ!

(5) On the reports we receive from believers about potent verbal attacks they witness or face at the local level that are ***confusing*** or ***upsetting*** since the criticism does not actually expose wrong in its recipient, (i) the recipient should test the entire situation with the "fruit of the Spirit test" of Galatians 5:22-23 ESV: if the criticism aligns in view and its effects with God's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, it is of God, but if the critique ***clearly lacks*** the ***production*** of ***ANY ONE*** of these marks of the Holy Spirit, it is ***not*** of ***GOD!*** [A critique that is upsetting and confusing lacks the production of "peace," "joy," "kindness," and "gentleness," so it is ungodly!] (ii) For further insight and protection, we can watch for ***repeat*** patterns of behavior in the one who gives the criticism: (+) If the critic ***repeatedly*** speaks words that ***fail*** to ***produce*** the fruit of the Holy Spirit, he is not speaking by God's leading and is "carnal" (cf. Galatians 5:19-21) (+) However, if the one who makes the critique produces the Spirit's "fruit" by his words and life as to how it affects the hearer, he is led of God!

**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 then handle potent verbal attacks by acknowledging our great need for Scripture input, and thus immerse our minds in its content for edifying insight to apply for God's protection and blessing.**