

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
CXIX. The Vast Value Of God's Word
O. God's Blessings For Biblical Separation
(Psalm 119:113-120 [Samekh])

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

If a believer in Christ chooses to heed Scripture, he will eventually find himself so contrasting in belief and action with the world around him that he will be viewed as a hateful person by many people. We illustrate:

(1) "A mountain in New Zealand considered an ancestor by Indigenous people was recognized as a legal person on Thursday (January 30, 2025) after a new law granted it all the rights and responsibilities of a human being." (Charlotte Graham-McLay, "New Zealand mountain granted personhood, recognizing it as sacred for Maori," Republican-American, January 31, 2025, p. 3B) The mountain is called "Mount Taranaki" by the Maori people, but in 1770 it was named Mount Egmont by British explorer Captain James Cook, so Debbie Ngarewa-Packer, a co-leader of the political party Te Pati Maori and a descendant of the Taranaki tribes, said of the new law, "'Today, Taranaki . . . is released from the shackles, the shackles of injustice, of ignorance, of hate.'" (Ibid.)

However, for a Biblical Christian, viewing a mountain as a human ancestor is godless paganism: Genesis 1:26-28 claims that God made man in His image and gave him "dominion . . . over all the earth," what includes rule over mountains since mountains are part of the earth. Nevertheless, such a view becomes "hate" to the Maori people!

(2) Here in Connecticut, in "1971 the state was among the first to repeal its ancient law criminalizing homosexuality . . . In 1991 the state prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation. In 2005 the state legalized same-sex 'civil unions' and in 2008 same-sex marriage. While some towns decline requests to fly the 'pride flag' at town hall, it's because the flag constitutes propagandizing for causes government hasn't endorsed and most people oppose. As for (President) Trump . . . his choice for treasury secretary, investment fund manager Scott Bessent, is a gay man married to another gay man, and they have two children." (Chris Powell, "Alphabet people needn't be so terrified in Connecticut," Ibid., p. 6A)

However, for a Biblical Christian, fellowshiping with transsexuals and condoning homosexuality, civil unions and same-sex marriages are abominable actions according to Romans 1:24-27 and Leviticus 18:22, and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 teaches that unsaved people need to be saved and sanctified from such sins!

(3) Paul Hughes story, "Looking at hate crimes" (Ibid., p. 1A) reported, "Gov. Ned Lamont will propose the state legislature consolidated and rewrite hate crime statutes . . . to make the statutes consistent, and easier to enforce and prosecute." The story noted "a 50% rise in hate crimes in Connecticut since 2021," and Ronnell Higgins, commissioner of the state Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection . . . said . . . 'Nearly all of these incidents involved bias related to race, religion or sexual orientation' . . ." (Ibid.)

Biblical Christians are called of God not to hate other people, but to love all mankind, including people of all races (cf. Romans 13:8). Nevertheless, on "religion" and "sexual orientation" issues, Scripture calls believers to have no fellowship with those in apostate religions that deny Christ as God (2 Peter 2:1-9; 2 John 9-11; Jude 3-10) and to view unbiblical sexual orientations (Leviticus 19:22) and even cross-dressing (Deuteronomy 22:5) as abominations.

(4) Such tension often exists in the community of evangelical believers: 2 Thessalonians 3:6 and Titus 3:11 call believers to separate from other believers who disobey the apostles' teachings and who are divisive.

Need: So, we ask, "**How can I detest sins that God calls abominable if other people think I hate by my detesting?**"

- I. The psalmist observed that loving God's Word coincided with his strong aversion to those who were half-hearted about loving and heeding Scripture, Psalm 119:113:**
 - A. The Hebrew verb rendered "hate" (v. 113 KJV) is *sane'*, what often means "hate" but here denotes "hold in aversion, revulsion" (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1084; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 971).
 - B. The words "vain thoughts" (KJV) mistranslate the Hebrew word *se'ep*, "divided, half-hearted," and the NIV, ESV and B. D. B. lexicon (Ibid., p. 704) make it a substantive, meaning "the double-minded, half-hearted."
 - C. In other words, the psalmist who loved and obeyed God's Word found himself sensing a strong, inner aversion toward others who were divided in allegiance or half-hearted about loving and thus heeding Scripture!
- II. This relationship stain is inevitable because there is enmity between sinful man and a righteous God, and if a believer aligns with God, he participates in the conflict God has with sinful man, John 15:18-22.**
- III. However, God edifies those who love and heed Scripture only to face such relationship strain, v. 114-120:**

- A. God edifies the heart of the faithful over relationship strains they face for heeding Scripture, v. 114-117:
 1. God protects the faithful from harm caused by relationship strains for heeding Scripture, Psalm 119:114.
 2. The Lord sustains the inner man of the faithful in facing relationship strains for heeding Scripture, v. 116.
 3. God provides the faithful deliverance in relationship crises they face for heeding Scripture, Psalm 119:117.
 4. In view of these divine rewards, the faithful can separate himself from ties with evildoers that would otherwise harm his obedience to and love for God's Word, Psalm 119:115.
- B. Furthermore, God deals out punishment on those who do not love and heed His Word, further directing and encouraging the faithful to continue to revere Him and to love and to obey His Word, Psalm 119:118-120:
 1. God will completely neutralize and destroy all who depart from His Word, Psalm 119:118-119a.
 2. Realizing this fact gives a two-fold edification for those who love and obey Scripture, v. 119b-120:
 - a. When obedient believers consider God's severe punishment on those who oppose their alignment to Scripture, they sense relief for escaping that judgment, so they love Scripture even more, Psa. 119:119a,b.
 - b. Along with relief, obedient believers experience a greater respect for the Lord, leading them to fear God's punishment so that they respect and heed God's Word all the more, Psalm 119:120.

Lesson: *Though loving and heeding Scripture creates a relationship tension with those who do not love and heed Scripture whole-heartedly, God rewards the faithful by edifying their inner man over the tension they face and He spurs the godly to fear not continuing to love and obey His Word by leveling dreadful punishment on the ungodly.*

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 wholeheartedly love and obey Scripture regardless of the relationship strain such obedience produces with the ungodly, for God will edify our inner man over the tension and level punishment on the disobedient, what will cause us to fear not loving and heeding His Word.*

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

We view Scriptures that both edify and motivate us to obey God over the wrongs we noted in our introduction:

(1) For edification of the inner man in resisting viewing Mount Taranaki in New Zealand is an ancestor of the Maori people, in opposing Connecticut's sanctioning of aberrant sexual orientations, in countering ungodly "religion" and "sexual orientation" loathing that is sanctioned by the state, in standing against other believers who disobey the apostles' teachings and are divisive, Psalm 119:114-117 reveals that God will guard us from harm caused by such relationship strains if we heed Scripture in each case even if it breaks fellowship with the disobedient. God will sustain our inner man and faithfully deliver us in relationship crises we face so that we can obey and love His Word.

(2) For motivation to heed Scripture on each issue above, (a) though the Maori regard Mount Taranaki as an ancestor, it will disappear in the Tribulation when a great earthquake rocks the earth in Revelation 16:17-20. In view of that judgment on paganism in general and on the Maori error in particular, we believers should revere the Lord and exalt Him alone as God and not Mount Taranaki. (b) On the state of Connecticut's sanctioning of all kinds of aberrant sexual orientations, Revelation 9:13-19 describes a severe judgment that will come on the world in the form of demons who will kill a third of mankind by the plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur because of various sins, including sexual immorality (Revelation 9:20-21). In view of that divine punishment, we should revere the Lord and abstain from all forms of immorality regardless what relationship tensions we face in doing so! (c) On handling the alleged hate crimes of "religion" and "sexual orientation," Revelation 18:4-5 NIV predicts that in the future Tribulation, the worldwide false religion of "Babylon the Great" will be destroyed, and God will warn His people who are in her, "Come out of her . . . so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes." If God will warn those who have become believers in the Tribulation to come out of the false world religion to avoid divine judgment, and knowing that that judgment will be catastrophic, we believers do well today to avoid fellowship with false religions! (d) For the alleged hate crimes of aberrant "sexual orientations," see "(2,b)" above in this Conclusion section. (e) On fellow believers who disobey the apostles' teachings and are divisive, 2 Corinthians 5:10 predicts every believer will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive rewards or a lack of rewards for what he has done as a believer on earth. Paul added that since we know what it means to revere the Lord since we will give an account to Him for our deeds as believers, we must stay committed to obeying God regardless of fellowship loss with other believers or lose rewards in eternity (2 Cor. 5:11)!

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 love and obey Scripture, knowing God will edify us amid relationship pain we face as a cost of such obedience and that His punishment for disobeying Scripture doesn't make it worth disobeying it!