

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
CXIX. The Vast Value Of God's Word
P. God's Vindication For Opposed, Upright Action
(Psalm 119:121-128 [Ain])

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A number of parties in today's world need to be vindicated of being opposed for their upright actions:

(1) It occurs in the realm of law enforcement: In 2022, New Haven fired "four police officers involved in the case of an arrested man who became paralyzed during his transport to police headquarters . . . The officer who drove the van carrying the man . . . stopped short to avoid a collision and he went flying off his seat. The van's passenger compartment had no seatbelts . . . It was a terrible incident and the city paid the man \$45 million to settle his damage lawsuit, but the proximate cause of his injury wasn't any misconduct by officers but the city's longstanding failure to install seatbelts in prisoner vans. City government made scapegoats of the officers to satisfy public anger." (Chris Powell, "Stewart goes for governor with giddy superficiality," Republican-American, February 4, 2025, p. 6A)

(2) It occurs with President Trump's executive order on birthright citizenship: "That order prohibits federal agencies from issuing or accepting citizenship documents for children born in the U. S. when neither parent is a U. S. citizen or lawful permanent resident at the time of the child's birth . . . Critics paint it as flagrantly unconstitutional . . . But the new policy fits squarely within the text and original meaning of the 14th Amendment . . . It says that 'all persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof' are citizens . . . (T)he sponsors of the 14th Amendment made it clear that 'subject to the jurisdiction' of the U. S. means owing your political allegiance to the U. S., and not to another country. Children born to aliens are citizens of their parents' native land, and thus owe their allegiance to, and are subject to the jurisdiction of, that native land . . . As a result, the president has the authority to direct federal agencies . . . to issue government documents and benefits only to those individuals who are truly subject to United States jurisdiction." (Amy Swearer and Hans Von Spakovsky, "The birthright citizenship clause too many forget," Ibid., January 30, 2025, p. 6A)

(3) It occurs in the religious realm: "Members of the clergy held a news conference at the state Capitol" recently "to protest restraint in state government spending . . . They called for a 'moral budget' – that is, a lot more spending on social services, schools, and housing . . . While the clergy . . . implied that state government should let the unfunded pension liabilities rise, they didn't specify where the extra social-services money should come from. Of course, if pressed they probably would call for raising taxes on 'the rich,' but 'the rich' and the comfortable already pay nearly all state income taxes . . . So would the clergy members favor economizing with state employees for a while with a salary freeze, as Republican state legislators propose? Would the clergy members favor economizing *anywhere* in state government so the budget could be made more 'moral'? . . . (I)t often seems that belonging to the clergy in Connecticut" involves "just striking pious poses, as if God is fooled as easily as their congregations." (Chris Powell, "A 'moral budget' needs more than pious poses," Sunday Republican, February 9, 2025, p. 8A)

Need: *So, we ask, "If we are being unjustifiably opposed for upright actions, how does God want us to respond?"*

- I. The psalmist was opposed by proud foes for his deeds of justice and righteousness, Psa. 119:121a, 122b.**
- II. To handle this problem, he trusted God's promise of deliverance (v. 121b, 123b) and longingly asked God to support his cause for the good (Psalm 119:121b, 122a, 123a).**
- III. The grounds for this appeal were given in Psalm 119:124a, 124b-126 as follows :**
 - A. As God's servant, the psalmist rested in the fact that God as his owner was responsible to protect him, v. 124a.
 - B. God's loyal love (*hesed*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1084; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. I, p. 305-307) would lead the Lord to teach the psalmist what he needed know to be able to handle the trial, 124b-125.
 - C. The psalmist knew that God had to act soon, for God's Word was being violated by his oppressors, v. 126.
- IV. In gaining victory in this trial, the psalmist expressed his greater appreciation for Scripture, v. 127-128:**
 - A. The psalmist came to love Scripture more than gold for its valuable application in his recent trial, v. 127.
 - B. He also esteemed Scripture to be right, and he learned to hate every false pathway in life, Psalm 119:128.

Lesson: *When oppressed by proud foes for doing righteous deeds, the psalmist trusted God's promises of deliverance in Scripture and asked for the Lord's vindication of his deeds. God thus equipped the psalmist to know how to handle the trial, resulting in the psalmist's growth in loving and heeding Scripture all the more.*

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) *If oppressed by proud foes for doing what is right, we can trust God's Scripture promises of deliverance and ask for His vindication IF we serve Him in life. God's loyal love will lead Him to teach us what to do for victory in the situation, and He will act soon in our behalf since His Word is being opposed by our evil foes. This will all lead to our loving and heeding Scripture even more.*

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

As long as we serve the Lord's interests in our lives, Scripture offers helpful guidance in handling each of the issues of concern noted in our sermon introduction (as follows):

(1) Regarding the four police officers who were fired as scapegoats for the city of New Haven's failure to install seat belts in a police van so that a prisoner was paralyzed in a near vehicle collision, Proverbs 22:3 NIV, ESV states that the prudent sees danger and hides himself where the naïve keeps going and suffers for it. A Christian police officer who serves the Lord and knows His Word would realize that transporting a prisoner in a van without seat belts is not only an accident waiting to happen, but that it's thereby also a lawsuit waiting to occur! Thus, if a believer as a police officer cannot get the authorities to install seat belts in the van, he might either file an official complaint with the proper authorities, or, if such an alternative is not open or feasible, he can do his best on duty to prevent a mishap from occurring with a prisoner under his care. The officer's goal needs to be to anticipate any possible negative consequences of an event during transport of a prisoner and thus to take steps to minimize the chances of potential damage ever occurring!

(2) Regarding President Trump's effort to apply the 14th amendment to solve the problem of applying birthright citizenship to children of illegal immigrants, (a) one needs to get the advice of qualified constitutional lawyers on the meaning of the phrase "subject to the jurisdiction" before acting, Proverbs 11:14 NIV states, "For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers." It appears that the president is seeking to act in accord with the dictates of the amendment, for Amy Swearer and Hans Von Spakovsky, whose article on this issue we cited in our introduction and who support the legality of the president's action, are legal experts at the Heritage Foundation (Ibid., Swearer and Von Spakovsky). Since that is so, (b) the president is also aligned with 1 Peter 2:13-15 that directs believers to obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. The goal is for the president to be sure that he acts lawfully to succeed in his administration!

(3) Regarding the members of the clergy who publicly protested spending restraints by the Connecticut state government in order to have an alleged "moral budget" that pours more money into housing, schools and social services, (a) 2 Timothy 2:4 NIV, ESV directs that a minister should not become entangled in civilian affairs, but focus on pleasing Jesus Christ, his Commanding Officer. Christ wants pastors to focus on their Biblical duties in the local church (cf. 1 Timothy 4:12-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5), not become entangled in social work or promote government run social services that involve the realm of secular affairs. (b) Also, 2 Thessalonians 3:10 calls believers to earn their own livelihoods versus living off the money of others as in a welfare state, so pastors are to direct their congregations to get off of welfare and earn their own livelihoods, not to pressure the government to sink more money into welfare programs! (c) Even more of a concern is the promotion of "social justice" themes by these ministers such as directing seemingly limitless taxpayer moneys toward social issues, for that aligns with godless Marxism (Brannon S. Howse, Marxianity, 2018, p. 47-48). Opposite Marxism, "(t)here's not a single passage in the Bible that says the job of the New Testament Church is to eradicate poverty. To the contrary, Jesus Himself said, 'The poor will always be with you' [Matthew 26:11] . . . The only (but ultimate) answer the church has for fixing the difficult issues of our world is the gospel. The transformation of individual lives changes people so they take on a biblical worldview and live it out in the areas of . . . economics" and other realms (Ibid., p. 47). (d) In addition, pastors must not associate with other religious leaders who teach ungodly views: 2 Timothy 2:20-21 calls pastors to avoid vessels of wood and clay that once used for contaminated things must be destroyed. In the context, these wood and clay vessels are errant religious leaders who trouble churches, for in 2 Timothy 2:19a, Paul alluded to Numbers 16:5 of Korah's rebellion where Moses said that God knew who were his approved religious servants and who were not, and that He would make that known by punishing the impostors. Then, in 2 Timothy 2:19b, Paul referred to Numbers 16:26 where Moses told Israel's people to pull back from Korah's evil group that they not suffer Korah's divine discipline. Thus, pastors today need to avoid heeding the peer pressure of other ungodly religious leaders and thus to avoid fellowship with such leaders in order to avoid God's discipline in their own lives and ministries!

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 serve the Lord, coming under His protective oversight, that He might teach us what Scriptures to heed to handle opposition by proud foes and gain His deliverance.