

**THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION**  
**Psalms: Living By Faith In God**  
**CXIX. The Vast Value Of God's Word**  
**T. Scripture's Value For Legal Conflicts**  
**(Psalm 119:153-160 [Resh])**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Though we might not face legal trials now, we may possibly face future trials due to current legal conflicts:

(1) We face potential trials with our health due to legal conflicts over Monsanto's weedkiller Roundup: "Germany-based Bayer, which acquired Monsanto in 2018 . . . has been hit with more than 177,000 lawsuits involving the weedkiller," and "numerous lawsuits . . . allege glyphosate" in Roundup "does cause non-Hodgkin's lymphoma" ("Georgia jury orders Monsanto parent to pay nearly \$2.1 B in Roundup weedkiller lawsuit," Republican-American, March 25, 2025, p. 10B). This case affects millions of consumers. For various "crops – including corn, soybeans and cotton – Roundup is designed to work with genetically modified seeds that resist the weedkiller's deadly effect" so "farmers" can "produce more while conserving the soil by tilling it less." (Ibid.). "(A)ttorney Kyle Findley" said that "evidence relating to Barnes' case" where a jury ordered Monsanto to pay \$2.1 billion revealed the company practiced "'many years of cover-ups' and 'backroom dealings'" and "'tried to find ways to persuade and distract and deny the connection between this product and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma'" (Ibid.).

(2) We face potential conflicts with black bears due to legal conflicts in our state: "According to the 2025 'State of the Bears' report released by" the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection "in March . . . (b)ears entered households in Connecticut at least 67 times in 2024, the highest recorded number in the state over the past 10 years . . . There were over 3,000 reported bear conflicts across Connecticut in 2024, with the most taking place in the western half of the state . . . Compared to other neighboring northeastern states having higher bear populations . . . Connecticut had almost five times more human-bear conflicts in 2023" (Lilli Iannella, "The 'State of the Bears' in Connecticut: sightings, conflicts increased in 2024," Ibid., March 27, 2025, p. 1A).

"(I)ncreases in potentially dangerous encounters are pushing lawmakers to finally allow bear hunting in the state. But animal rights activists" are pushing back (Ken Dixon, "Bear hunt debated by state lawmakers," Ibid.).

(3) Home schoolers face the potential loss of personal liberties by state government: Lisa Backus' story, "Waterbury man's decades in captivity prompt concerns that homeschooling is hiding abuse in CT" (March 24, 2025; ctinsider.com) highlighted this issue and recalled the governor's failed 2019 bill that would have put restrictions on home schoolers. Lisa cited "The CT Homeschool Network" website's opposition to that bill that noted it "'would have mandated that we appear in person to 'register' to homeschool in Connecticut'" and that "'the data collected would then be turned over to (the Department of Children and Families).'" The website objected to such action, asserting, "'We are innocent until proven guilty, and we are not criminals, nor should we be treated as such'" (Ibid.).

In "spectacular irony . . . (c)hildren in public school are far more neglected than children schooled at home" as to "educational failure . . . since a quarter to half of city students lack parenting and are chronically absent" and "state . . . and municipal governments don't dare to enforce *any* proficiency standards with *public school* students" or "more than half of the students would have to be held back every year" (Chris Powell, "State's most neglected children are public-schooled," Ibid., April 1, 2025, p. 6A). How the state might ensure the welfare of home-schooled children when it so greatly fails to address the dire needs of public school children is a huge question.

**Need:** *So, we ask, "What does God direct that we do if we face potential trials due to current legal conflicts?"*

**I. In Psalm 119:153-154, the psalmist faced the painful trial of a difficult legal battle:**

- A. He faced a painful trial from which he asked the Lord to deliver him, Psalm 119:153.
- B. That trial was a difficult legal battle, Psalm 119:154:
  - 1. The Psalm 119:154a KJV phrase, "Plead my cause" translates the Hebrew verb **rib** that here means "to conduct a legal case, suit" (B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 936), and it is coupled with the **noun** form of **rib** that here means "case at law" (Ibid., p. 936-937).
  - 2. The psalmist thus asked God, "Conduct my legal case" as if God were his Attorney! (Psalm 119:154)

**II. The solution was found in how the opposing sides related to God, His Word and to each other:**

- A. The psalmist and his legal opponents differed in their relationships with the Lord and His Word:
  - 1. The psalmist recalled (v. 153b), believed (v. 154b), sought out (v. 155b), adhered to (v. 157b), heeded (v. 158b) and loved (v. 159a) God's Word, reflecting his positive relationship with the Lord.

2. Conversely, the psalmist's legal foes did not seek Scripture's directives (v. 155b) nor did they obey it (v. 158b), reflecting their lack of good relationships with God.
- B. The psalmist and his legal opponents differed in their relationships with each other:
  1. The psalmist's legal foes afflicted him (v. 153a), doggedly pursued him on the legal issue (v. 157a) and dealt treacherously with him (v. 158a).
  2. By implication, the psalmist felt exhausted over what his opponents were doing to him (v. 154b, 156b, 159b), and he asked God for deliverance from their oppression (v. 153a).
- C. Consequently, the Lord sided with the psalmist and opposed his legal foes:
  1. On the one hand, the psalmist's devotion to God and His Word led him to expect God to help him:
    - a. He could expect God to feel compassion for him in his legal battle, Psalm 119:156a.
    - b. The psalmist knew that God's compassion would lead Him to conduct the psalmist's case, v. 154a.
    - c. The psalmist also knew that God would sovereignly rule in his favor as both Judge and jury, for the word "judgments" (v. 156b) renders the Hebrew noun *mishpat* that in this context of a legal case means "judgmental acts on the wicked" (Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, p. 1086; *Bible Know. Com., O. T.*, p. 880).
    - d. Furthermore, the total sum of God's words were true and all of His "judgmental acts on the wicked" (*mishpat* again, *Ibid.*, Kittel; v. 160b) were eternally binding, so the psalmist was assured of lasting justice.
  2. Conversely, the psalmist's foes could only expect deliverance from God to be far from them, v. 155a.

***Lesson:*** *The psalmist's devotion to God and his application of Scripture to his life equipped him to gain God's loving control of his legal case so that the psalmist was assured of getting lasting justice before his godless foes.*

***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 we face unjust, oppressive legal conflicts, may we fellowship with the Lord and heed His Word, and God will sovereignly conduct our case to give us lasting justice.*

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

We view Scripture passages that address legal issues we face as noted in the sermon introduction (as follows):

(1) On our possible exposure to the weedkiller Roundup used in the production of genetically modified (GMO) crops, including corn, soybeans and cotton, Proverbs 22:3 ESV states, "The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it." If Monsanto has faced over 177,000 lawsuits against its weedkiller Roundup, and a lawyer who won the case in Georgia publicly testified that Monsanto has long tried to coverup and make backroom deals to counter the claim that Roundup causes non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a believer is wise **at least to take precautions** about the foods he ingests, to **investigate** and to **err** on the side of **caution!**

(2) On the increasing likelihood that we will face conflicts with bears, (a) Proverbs 17:12 ESV says, "Let a man meet a she-bear robbed of her cubs rather than a fool in his folly." We know from several proverbs that "a fool in his folly" is a disaster waiting to happen, so comparing the meeting of "a fool in his folly" to meeting a Momma bear robbed of her cubs implies that the latter is a dangerous event! Thus, if we meet a large bear with smaller bears, we best give them all plenty of room to avoid needless harm! (b) Proverbs 28:15 NIV states, "Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a helpless people." If we see a bear take aggressive action, the wisest thing to do is to get out of its way, for a bear with an aggressive attitude is unstoppable while it is alive. That also implies that we best not influence a bear to be aggressive by leaving food out to lure him our way or by charging at him, etc.

(3) On home schoolers' potential loss of liberties by state government, (a) we recall the example in our last sermon from 1 Samuel 2:12-20 where though Samuel had to be raised away from his godly home by the High Priest Eli whose own sons were vile, Samuel's mother Hannah influenced him to remain godly by her making him a little robe every year. Similarly, the government may pass laws restricting what parents can do with their child's schooling, but it cannot stop the influence of godly parents on their child. (b) Case in point: Reverend James Braga, a teacher I had at the Multnomah School of the Bible in the late 1960s. As a child, he was forced by his unsaved father to attend a Catholic school when he grew up in China before the communists ruled the nation. However, his godly mother would ask him when he came home from school each day what he had learned that day, and Reverend Braga told our class that in five minutes, she would undo all the error he had learned that day. He thus became a devout believer and a Bible School teacher due to his mother's persistent oversight! The "Hannah influence" works!

**May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. If we face unjust, oppressive legal conflicts, may we fellowship with the Lord and heed His Word, and God will sovereignly conduct our case to give us lasting justice.**