

**THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION**  
**Psalms: Living By Faith In God**  
**CXIX. The Vast Value Of God's Word**  
**U. Handling The Fear Of Powerful, Harmful Leaders**  
**(Psalm 119:161-168 [Sin and Shin])**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Powerful, harmful leaders unfortunately abound today, and many people struggle to handle their fear of them:

(1) They thrive in academia: “The academic (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) apparatus that grew up over the past decade seems to be collapsing . . . But . . . academia will remain near-monolithically left . . . because in most disciplines there aren’t enough conservative PhDs to staff ideologically balanced campuses or even provide otherwise left-leaning campuses a vibrant conservative counterweight. Getting to that point means rebuilding a pipeline of right-leaning academics . . . (but) (t)hat will mean convincing potential (conservative) graduate students that they won’t have to run through an ideological gantlet to get a job. That will be a hard sell,” for “(r)ational students know their (conservative views) and publications will often be reviewed by committed progressives looking for reasons to blackball . . . Many (conservative students) will . . . reasonably say, ‘No thanks.’” (Megan McArdle, “Abandoning DEI won’t fix academia’s left-leaning problem,” Republican-American, March 26, 2025, p. 6A)

(2) Many elected national officials are harmful: “There was the 2017 congressional baseball shooting, during which Rep. Steve Scalise, R-La., came close to being the first congressman to be assassinated since the 1970s. Then there were the 2020 riots, which resulted in more than 20 deaths and caused billions of dollars in damage, decimating entire neighborhoods in the process. Then there were the two attempts to assassinate then-candidate Donald Trump on the 2024 campaign trail . . . And now there is the growing, media-driven wave of intimidation, property destruction and violence aimed at random Americans who happen to drive vehicles made by Elon Musk . . . And amid the escalating violence, Senate Democrats blocked a Republican resolution condemning attacks on Tesla owners . . . (T)he pattern has been clear for nearly a decade: When Democrats lose to Donald Trump . . . they signal to their base that ‘resistance’ means nothing is off the table.” (“Condemning Tesla terrorism,” Ibid., April 3, 2025, p. A6)

(3) A lot of elected state officials are harmful: “A . . . study by the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services found that people addicted to gambling constitute less than 2% of Connecticut’s population but produce more than half the state’s sports betting revenue and a fifth of its revenue from all forms of gambling. While the department sees this as a problem with a huge human cost, elected officials see it as a political solution – the perfect tax. A tiny . . . minority finances a disproportionate share of state government and that human cost is not on state government’s books.” (Chris Powell, “Political correctness flusters in response to assault in school,” Ibid.)

(4) Many business and government leaders are harmful: “U. S. stocks careened through a manic Monday after President Trump threatened to crank his tariffs higher . . . The S&P 500 . . . went from a loss to 4.7% to a leap of 3.4%, which would have been the biggest jump in years. The sudden rise followed a false rumor that Trump was considering a 90-day pause in tariffs . . . (A) White House account on X quickly labeled (the rumor) as ‘fake news’ . . . (and) (s)tocks quickly turned back down,” a swing of trillions of dollars in a matter of minutes. (Stan Chue, Elaine Kurtenbach and David McHugh, “Stocks dip after Trump’s latest tariff threat,” Ibid., April 8, 2025, p. A1)

President Trump in conflict with globalists is trying to even the financial playing field for Americans while financial gurus and CEOs hotly debate the President’s tariffs and millions of investors worldwide are anxious!

**Need:** *So, we ask, “How does God want us to handle a fear of powerful, harmful leaders?”*

**I. In Psalm 119:161a, the psalmist announced that powerful rulers were persecuting him without cause:**

- A. The KJV word “Princes” is translated from the Hebrew noun *sarim*, meaning “rulers, officials” (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1086; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. II, p. 884-885).
- B. These rulers “persecuted, harassed” (*radaph*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 922-923) the psalmist literally “for nothing” (*hinnam*, Ibid., p. 336), that is, without just cause.

**II. The psalmist reacted to this trial by fearing the Lord so as to obey Him over fearing the rulers, v. 161b:**

- A. Though not stated, the psalmist was tempted to fear what persecuting, powerful rulers might do to him.
- B. However, he was “in dread, awe” (*pahad*, Ibid., p. 808) of God’s Word, realizing that it carried the authority of Almighty God so that the psalmist was required to obey it regardless what the threatening rulers did to him!

**III. Thus, the psalmist chose to heed God’s Word in hope of God’s deliverance from the rulers (v. 166, 168).**

**IV. As a result, the psalmist enjoyed victory over his fear of the persecuting rulers, v. 162, 164-165, 167:**

- A. God blessed the psalmist for his obedience to Scripture as if he were a victorious military commander who took great spoil after a battle, Psalm 119:162. The word *sarim* noted in “I,A” above can also be translated as “military officials” (Ibid., p. 978-979), meaning God will figuratively “turn the tables” to make the psalmist be like a conquering military official with regard to rulers or officials who persecuted him!
- B. The psalmist then found himself so relieved and happy that he released his tension over the trial by praising God “seven times” a day, an expression that depicted great praise, Psalm 119:164.
- C. The psalmist also experienced great peace for loving so as to obey God’s Word without any trouble, v. 165.
- D. Finally, the psalmist’s tempted concern over his persecution from the rulers was overshadowed by his enhanced love for God’s Word, the obedience of which had led to God’s rewarding deliverance, v. 167.

***Lesson:*** *The psalmist handled powerful, harmful rulers by respecting what God’s Word said with God’s sovereign authority so that he obeyed Scripture regardless of the deeds of the rulers. Consequently, the Lord gave the psalmist great victory over his oppressors to the psalmist’s joy and abounding love for God and His Word.*

***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 handle a fear of powerful, harmful leaders by revering God and His Word’s authority regardless of the troubling leaders so that we obey Scripture. God will reward that decision with great spiritual victory to our relief, joy and abounding love for Him and His Word.*

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

We apply this sermon’s lesson to the issues of concern mentioned in our sermon introduction (as follows):

(1) On handling academia’s near-monolithically left-leaning bias, (a) 2 Timothy 3:12-17 reminds us that deception will be on the rise in the latter days of Church History, that we should overcome it by adhering to what we have learned from reputable believers and from Scripture that fully equips us to do every good work. (b) We should also seek to heed God’s will in our lives as to whether He wants us to have a career in secular academics as a calling from Him. If that is how He leads us, we can expect Him to provide for our every need just as He provided a ram in place of Isaac for Abraham who followed God’s call that he initially sacrifice his son Isaac on Mount Moriah, Genesis 22:1-14 ESV. (c) In addition, Matthew 10:16-20 reveals that if God directs one to serve Him “as sheep in the midst of wolves” as in today’s secular academia, the believer merely needs to rely on God to provide him the words to say when he faces formidable leftist foes! The key to this divine provision is being in the right calling in the first place!

(2) On handling troubling elected national or state officials, (a) besides honoring and obeying all elected government officials as God directs in 1 Peter 2:13-17 (except when ordered by God to obey Him over man, cf. Acts 5:29), (b) we should pray for all officials in authority to function in ways that will allow the true Church of Christ to function in quiet, peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty so as to advance God’s discipling work (1 Timothy 2:1-4). From God’s perspective, the primary goal of this present age is for us to disciple others, a goal that transcends all the hopes and goals of leaders and their constituents in the secular realm!

(3) On handling conflicting leaders in business and government who cause volatility in stock markets, (a) we should handle our retirement “nest eggs” [401(k), Individual Retirement Accounts, etc.] like Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 asserts, namely, that we invest (i) boldly (ii) for the long-term (iii) with sensible diversification (iv) and regularly add to those investments for long-term gain. (b) If we *believe* what this passage *states*, our application of it should *never waver*, whether stock markets fly high or swoon! In testimonial support of this fact, Raymond H. Bovich, a chartered financial analyst and a partner and wealth manager at Wooster Square Advisers LLC in New Haven last week counseled, ““I was here for COVID, the great financial crisis, the tech bubble and the stock market crash of 1987. The markets and the economy are all about adaptation . . . (T)hat’s what’s happening now. Investors can adapt by keeping faith in tested strategies.”” (Paul Schott, “Experts urge investors to keep calm,” Ibid., April 9, 2025, p. A9) (c) However, the money one needs shorter-term (say 5 to 10 years) should not be in aggressive stocks or stock mutual funds, but in more conservative instruments. (d) As for immediate livelihood needs (2 Corinthians 9:10a), we should be frugal and save (John 6:12), budget our income (Luke 14:28-30) and try to avoid debt (Proverbs 22:7) for financial stability, security and flexibility. In testimonial support of this truth, Daniel J. Friedman, CEO of WMGNA Tax-Out Financial Solutions, a financial advisory firm headquartered in Farmington, advised last week, ““Make plans so that you don’t have to dip into things that were meant for the long term, for the short term . . . That . . . means having some sort of handle on your cash flow, expenses and debts – the kinds of things we should be doing all along.”” (Ibid.)

**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 handle fear of troubling, powerful leaders by revering God so that we heed His Word!**