

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
LXVIII. God's Triumphs On Behalf Of The Oppressed, Psalm 68:1-35
A. God's Provisions For The Vulnerable
(Psalm 68:1-6)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We need help both handling and answering the Left's hostility toward Christianity:

(1) We need help **handling** the Left's hostility toward Christianity: (a) "Christophobia [fear or hatred of Christianity], much like anti-Semitism, remains one of the final remaining forms of politically acceptable animus [hostility] in the United States," what is especially true of the LGBTQ community. This is evidenced by the fact that "nearly two months after the mass shooting" of people at a Christian school in Nashville by deranged transgender Audrey Hale "and well after Nashville police and the FBI deemed it prudent to comply with a braying transgender activist mob, whether Hale's manifesto is released is a legal matter awaiting its fate before an ever-fickle judge." ("Quotable," Republican-American, May 26, 2023, p. 6A, citing Josh Hammer, May 19 Newsweek column, "Release the Manifesto") (b) An area church is trying to befriend LGBTQ people by holding an alleged gently facilitated open discussion on what spirituality means for the LGBTQ community followed by an informal gathering at a local bar or tavern for those who are interested. ("LGBTQIA+ community discussion at St. Paul's," *Ibid.*, p. 2B) (c) On the other hand, passionate debates over LGBTQ issues are currently splitting the United Methodist Church, one of the largest Protestant denominations in America. Disputes over "recognizing same-sex marriage and ordaining LGBTQ clergy" is causing this falling-out, and "the dividing line isn't just running between congregations. It's running right through the pews of individual churches, separating people who had long worshipped together." ("Peter Smith and Holly Meyer, "LGBTQ issues bring divisiveness to Methodist Church," *Ibid.*, p. 3B)

(2) We also need help **answering** the Left's hostile charges against some historical actions by Christians of the state's colonial past: (a) The "state House found time May 11 to pass a resolution that . . . repudiated and apologized for the conviction and execution of people alleged to have been witches in the Connecticut colony 400 years ago" when it was under Puritan influence. (Chris Powell, "Repair state's present before repudiating its past," *Ibid.*, May 24, 2023, p. 9A; Wm. W. Sweet, The Story of Religion in America, 1973, p. 61-62) (b) Another round of criticism against Christians arose last year when Leftists tried to get the state legislature to remove a statue of John Mason from the capitol. (Christine Stuart, "John Mason Statue at Capitol Gets Temporary Reprieve," October 1, 2021; nbconnecticut.com/news/local) Why? "During the Pequot War [in 1637], an allied Puritan and [Native American] Mohegan force under English Captain John Mason" attacked "a Pequot village in Connecticut, burning or massacring 500 Native American women, men and children." ("1637: Pequot massacres begin," *history.com*; brackets ours)

Need: *So, we ask, "How can we handle and answer the Left's hostile attitude and criticism of Christianity?!"*

- I. **Psalm 68:1-35 is a song that was sung in celebration of God's triumphal ascent to Mount Zion over His and Israel's foes possibly when David brought the ark to Jerusalem; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 842.**
- II. **Accordingly, it praises God for His works "on behalf of the oppressed" of His people, *Ibid.***
- III. **Psalm 68:1-6 opens the psalm with a call to revere and praise the Lord for His help to vulnerable people:**
 - A. The psalmist's words in Psalm 68:1 recall Moses' words about God's defeating Israel's enemies "whenever the Israelites set out on their march in the wilderness" as recorded in Numbers 10:35; *Ibid.*, p. 843.
 - B. At the time, God had figuratively born Israel's people "on eagles' wings" in delivering them from their Egyptian oppressors and bringing them to Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:4), taking care of them like a mother eagle that flies under her young with her wings spread out to catch them when they are learning to fly, *Ibid.*, p. 138.
 - C. Psalm 68:2-4 not only recalls that great divine deliverance, but it calls for the wicked to perish before the Lord while God's righteous people in contrast greatly rejoice as He triumphantly rides on the heavens in sovereignty over the false pagan god Baal of the Canaanites who lived near Israel, *Ibid.*, p. 843.
 - D. Returning to the theme of this great Biblical God's care for His people in their past wilderness journeys in Israel's Exodus, Psalm 68:5-6 highlights God's care of Israel when she was especially vulnerable to harm:
 1. God is a compassionate Father to the fatherless and a defensive "judge" (*dayyan*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 198) for widows, people especially vulnerable to harm in that era, Psalm 68:5a.
 2. This kindness of God so contrasted with pagan despotic gods that David added that God is in His "holy," i. e., "separate" dwelling apart from false gods, v. 5b; Bruce K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 1974, p. 57-65.

3. In addition, God sets literally “solitary, isolated” ones, or “friendless wanderers or exiles” (*yahid*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 402) in literally “a house” (Psalm 68:6a; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Psalm 68:6), the figurative precedent being God’s putting wandering Israelites of the Exodus in houses that had already been built by their Canaanite foes whom they defeated and dispossessed in Canaan, cf. Deuteronomy 19:1.
4. Also, the Lord leads prisoners out of bondage with singing (Psalm 68:6b), a figurative precedent being God’s delivering His people from oppressive Egyptian taskmasters in Israel’s Exodus.
5. However, the Lord in contrast lets the “stubborn, rebellious” (*sarar*, Ibid., p. 710-711) “dwell” (*shacan*, Ibid., p. 1014-1015) in the “scorched land” (*sehahah*, Ibid., p. 850) [of the wilderness, desert], Psalm 68:6c. The figurative precedent to this claim is the faithless, stubborn, rebellious generation in Israel that was punished to die in the wilderness instead of entering the Promised Land of Canaan, Ibid., Ryrie.

Lesson: *In celebrating God’s triumphant ascent of Mount Zion in victory over His and Israel’s foes, the psalmist recalled God’s work in the Exodus when He in contrast to pagan, despotic gods graciously cared for His vulnerable people while punishing Israel’s wicked Egyptian oppressors and Israel’s faithless generation.*

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 rely on the Lord and His provisions for us both to handle and also to answer foes who are hostile to Christianity.*

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

To apply this message, we address the issues of concern mentioned in our sermon introduction in accord with God’s provisions for us to do so (as follows):

(1) First, we know from 2 Timothy 3:15-17 that Scripture provides all the information we need to be fully equipped by God for every good work until the rapture of the Church. We thus turn to Scripture for God’s directions.

(2) Second, we heed Galatians 5:16, 22-23 NIV in Scripture to rely on the Holy Spirit for God’s behavior control that produces in us love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

(2) Third, under such divine control, (a) Scripture at Colossians 4:5 NIV directed Early Church believers to relate to people in their hostile pagan world with wise acts. (b) To be specific, they were to let their speech with such people always be gracious, but seasoned as it were with salt, that is, that it be righteous and penetrating, that believers might wisely answer people of the pagan community, Colossians 4:6 NIV. (d) 1 Peter 3:15-16a NIV similarly directs that believers set apart Christ as Lord in their hearts, and in that frame of mind always to be ready to give an answer to everyone in the ungodly community around Christians who asks them to give the reason for the hope that believers have, being careful to speak with gentleness and respect with those in the world who were hostile to Christianity.

(4) Fourth, on the answer we must give to those hostile to Christianity over acts by American Pilgrims and Puritans against alleged witches and Native Americans, (a) the Pilgrims and Puritans were of the Protestant Reformed faith, being Calvinists and “Amillennialists.” (L. Boettner, The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, 1972, p. 382; J. F. Walvoord, The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation, 1976, p. 12-14) Amillennialism began in the 3rd century A. D. Alexandrian School of Theology that interpreted the Bible figuratively to have Christianity appeal to pagan Platonists, and this way of viewing Scripture led to the Amillennial belief that there is no literal thousand year (millennial) reign of Christ in Revelation 20 because the Church allegedly replaced Israel. This belief was later condoned by influential Bishop Augustine and adopted by the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformers (Ibid., Walvoord, p. 12-13). (b) Thus, the Pilgrims and Puritans viewed themselves as Israel and America as Canaan, that God called them to subdue America like Old Testament Israel was to do to Canaan. (Ibid., Sweet, p. 285) (c) They applied Exodus 22:18 of the Mosaic Law not to let alleged witches live and (d) first tried to convert Native Americans like Matthew 28:19-20 taught (Ibid., p. 155) only to kill them if they did not convert to obey Deuteronomy 7:1-6 of the Mosaic Law.

(e) However, in **great contrast to Amillennialism**, we at Nepaug Bible Church follow Jesus’ example in Mark 12:18-27 to interpret the Bible in its literal, historical, grammatical contexts (as also did believers in the late 19th century Bible prophetic conferences, Ibid., p. 13) so that we hold to the **Premillennial** view that **the Church does NOT replace Israel**, but we look for Christ’s Second Coming to earth to establish His literal Millennial or thousand year world rule through a saved literal nation Israel. We seek to disciple all nations today, but we do *not* harm anyone because we are *not* under the rule of the Mosaic Law, but we live in the dispensation of God’s grace! (f) We defend our faith before LGBTQ people and Leftists as being **true Biblical Christianity in contrast to errant Amillennialism!**

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 rely on God and His provisions to handle and answer all who are hostile to Christianity.