

**THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION**  
**Psalms: Living By Faith In God**  
**LXXXVI. Handling Ruthless People Who Can Disorient Us**  
**(Psalm 86:1-17)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We face an increase in ruthless people whose actions can shock others, leaving them mentally disoriented:

(1) It has occurred with supporters of Hamas terrorists in the Gaza War: Simon Sebag Montefiore’s article, “The Decolonization Narrative Is Dangerous and False” in the Atlantic, October 27<sup>th</sup> (cited in “Quotable,” Republican-American, November 1, 2023, p. 8A) observed, “‘Almost instantly after the Hamas attack, a legion of people emerged who downplayed the slaughter, or denied actual atrocities had even happened, as if Hamas had just carried out a traditional military operation against soldiers.’”

(2) The left’s support of Hamas at times includes an astonishing censure of political conservatives: “‘MAGA and Christian Nationalism: Bigger threat to America than Hamas could ever be’ was the original headline on a vicious article published at the left-wing website Salon.com on Thursday,” November 2<sup>nd</sup>. (Jarrett Stepman, “Far left sees ‘MAGA’ Republicans as worse than Hamas,” *Ibid.*, November 8, 2023, p. 10A) “Do they really think that traditional Americans – who for instance, still believe that marriage should be between a man and a woman – are worse than vicious terrorists who glorify in the torture and slaughter of innocent people . . .? In many cases, yes . . .” (*Ibid.*)

(3) Elections in some key states are in danger of being manipulated by ruthless people: “Election offices in at least five states were” recently “sent threatening mail, some containing” a “potentially deadly drug,” taking “‘a toll . . . emotionally and mentally with our elections administrators’” said Julie Wise, the King County (Georgia) elections director. (Christina A. Cassidy, “Local election workers now face fentanyl-laced letters,” *Ibid.*, November 11, 2023, p. 12B) As a result, “(s)ome politically important states are seeing significant staff turnover,” and “the exodus of some top local election officials has the potential to create a vacuum on institutional knowledge, raising concerns that inexperience could lead to mistakes that could later be twisted by conspiracy theorists.” (*Ibid.*)

(4) It occurs in many personal relationships: Annie Lane’s November 7<sup>th</sup> “Dear Annie” column dealt with a letter in a past column from a woman named “Old Soul” who had asked for help. Old Soul had been in a seemingly great friendship with another woman only to see that other woman abruptly cut off their relationship. Annie reported, “Many readers wrote in to offer help to ‘Old Soul.’” (“Dear Annie,” *Ibid.*, November 7, 2023, p. 9B)

The fact that so many readers wrote to offer help for Old Soul that Annie used her whole November 7 column to deal with this lady’s trial reveals that what Old Soul experienced is a widespread relationship problem. Indeed, both “Gramma in S. C.” and “Hard Lesson Learned,” two ladies whose letters Annie had posted on her November 7 column as helpers to Old Soul, told how they also had undergone the relationship trial that Old Soul faced. (*Ibid.*)

**Need:** *So, we ask, “How can we respond to those whose acts are so ruthless that they can mentally disorient us?!”*

- I. David composed Psalm 86:1-17 for use in facing ruthless foes who left him in need of thinking correctly:**
- A. This psalm is composed almost entirely of parts of Psalms 25 to 28 and 54 to 57 by which David had formerly dealt with his sufferings “at the hands of Saul” who had ruthlessly sought to kill him. (H. C. Leupold, Exposition of the Psalms, 1974, p. 616; Joseph Addison Alexander, The Psalms, 1975, p. 360-361)
- B. Psalm 86 is also written in the form of a literary chiasm, an ornate, stately, dignified literary structure that stressed David’s awareness of his need to think God’s edifying truth as he faced other ruthless foes like Saul:
1. The chiasm structure of Psalm 86 is comprised of a petition for God’s help in verses 1-7 (part “a”), a praise for God in verses 8-10 (part “b”), a request for discipleship in verse 11 (part “c”), a second praise of God in verses 12-13 (part “b^”), and a second petition for God’s help in verses 14-17 (part “a^”). (E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used In The Bible, 1968, p. 374-379)
  2. Thus, the climax of the chiasm is its core at part “c,” verse 11, where David asked God to give him His “authoritative direction” (*horeni*, Hiphil imperative of *yarah*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 434-435) and an undivided heart to revere the Lord that he might obey God’s authoritative direction.
  3. David thus implied his need for God to guide his mind amid the disorienting shock of facing ruthless foes.
- C. The contents of Psalm 86 reveal that David wrote it for use in facing other ruthless foes like Saul:
1. In Psalm 86:1, David acknowledged that he was bowed down with affliction and that he was needy.
  2. At Psalm 86:14, he stated that arrogant and “terror-striking, ruthless” (*‘aris*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 792) men were opposing him, seeking to end his life.

**II. Thus, Psalm 86:1-17 conveys David's WAY of handling mind-numbing, ruthless foes like Saul as follows:**

- A. David's petitions in Psalm 86:1-7 and verses 14-17 called on God to deliver him from ruthless enemies:
  1. He referred to himself as God's servant in Psalm 86:2 and 4 and then as a son of God's "maid servant" (*amah*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 51) in Psalm 86:16. God has no mistress, no "maid servant," but David used this term to liken himself to being a lowly, humble child of God as if he were the son of a mere mistress.
  2. David repeatedly relied on God's unmerited favor and compassion for deliverance, Psalm 86:3, 5, 15-16.
- B. He also praised the Lord as the sole God of the universe Who would one day be worshiped by people of all nations for His great deeds (verses 8-10) and for delivering David from his enemies (verses 12-13).
- C. At the heart of the literary chiasmus of Psalm 86, at verse 11, David acknowledged his need for God's authoritative direction (cf. the explanation of *horeni* in "I,B,2" above) and an undivided heart to revere and hence to heed God's authoritative direction when facing mind-disorienting, ruthless enemies.

***Lesson:*** *Realizing from his past trials with ruthless Saul his need to think correctly in such trials, David composed Psalm 86 as a mosaic of his past psalms that he wrote while facing Saul that would recall David's need to rely on God's Word and grace to give him authoritative direction in facing other disorienting, ruthless 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 facing ruthless foes whose actions can disorient us, may we rely on Scripture and God's grace to give His authoritative direction in guiding us to think and to act correctly.*

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

We turn to Scripture for God's authoritative direction on handling the issues of concern in our introduction:

(1) Re: the toxic outlook of people relative to the Gaza War, (a) regarding those who side with Hamas terrorists who attacked Israel on October 7, (i) Daniel 10:21 reveals that God's archangel Michael (cf. Jude 9) guards the existence of the Hebrew people, for Satan tries to destroy Hebrews to keep God from fulfilling His Abrahamic Covenant to establish Israel's Millennial Kingdom under Christ (cf. Revelation 12:7-17). (ii) Satan also deceives the world (2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 1 John 5:19 NIV, ESV), so hatred for the Hebrew people, "antisemitism," is fueled by Satan, and we should not be shocked at its persistence or intensity. (iii) Also, God predicted war and desolation for the land of Israel throughout the Church era in Daniel 9:26b as judgment on Israel for having rejected her Messiah, Jesus. (b) Re: the far left's hatred of political conservatives, (i) Revelation 20:3 reveals that Satan deceives the nations now, and John 8:44 states that he influences the ungodly to murder and not to remain in the truth. (ii) We can thus expect Satan to stir up errant, hateful foes to all who desire to have a lawful and orderly society. (c) In summary, (i) we must rely on the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16) to obey God's Word (2 Timothy 3:15-17) that calls us to stay productive in every good word and work until the pretribulation Rapture of the Church, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17.

(2) Re: potential election distortions due to threatening mail sent to election officials, (a) Daniel 10:20 reveals that powerful demons war with God's powerful angels over the world's nations and rulers, so we should not be shocked at people who foment unrest in a nation's elections of its officials. (b) However, God sovereignly decides which people come to power (Romans 13:1-7) and what nations exist, and when, and where (Acts 17:26-27), (c) so we believers in Christ must not live in fear regardless what occurs in political realms, but trust God to be sovereign over it all and live responsible, law-abiding lives, honoring everyone (1 Peter 2:11-17). (d) Only when God's directives for us believers are opposed by the directives of rulers must we obey God over man, Acts 5:29.

(3) Re: relationships where people abruptly turn irreconcilable, (a) in writing of Satan's influence on people in 2 Timothy 2: 24-26, Paul added at 2 Timothy 3:1 KJV that "perilous" times will come with the rise of awful people. The Greek word for "perilous" is *chalepos*, "hard, difficult, bad," and it is used elsewhere in the New Testament **only** at Matthew 8:28 to describe the unruly ferocity of a demon possessed man. (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 882) (b) Thus, in the latter era of the Church, people will arise under Satanic influence who love themselves, love money, are arrogant, proud, verbally abusive, disobedient to parents, unthankful, profane, who lack love for relatives, who are irreconcilable, blasphemous, who lack self-control, are untamed and despise the good, who are traitorous, reckless, conceited, who love pleasures more than God, who have a form of godliness but deny its power, who are controlling, who ever learn but are unable to acknowledge the truth, and who try to discredit God's servants, 2 Timothy 3:2-8. (c) We must "be avoiding, turning away from" (*apotrepou*, present middle imperative from *apotrepo*, Ibid., p. 101) them as far as needed to guard our own (middle voice) spiritual welfare, 2 Timothy 3:5a.

**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 the Holy Spirit and Scripture to guide our thinking when facing ruthless people.**