

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
XCV. Resting In God For Our Livelihood
(Psalm 95:1-11)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Right now, the meeting of livelihood needs is a great concern in our nation. Here is the evidence:

(a) 78% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck according to Emily Baldorf, “Living Paycheck to Paycheck Statistics 2024,” February 15, 2024; forbes.com/advisor. (b) “‘Shrinkflation’ is the latest consumer cause” of “the . . . left . . . ‘(I)t means companies are giving you less for every dollar you spend.’” (“Democrats’ economic scapegoats,” Republican-American, February 16, 2024, p. 6A) (c) One result of inflation that causes “shrinkflation” is rising credit card debt – a “record \$1.13 trillion at the end of last year” as many “Americans are overextended” with “(h)igher prices for food, gas and housing.” (George Petras, “Graphics show how Americans’ total credit card debt reached record high,” February 7, 2024; usatoday.com) (d) Also, “(m)ajor credit card companies are setting interest rates far higher than major indexes like the federal funds target rate” claims the “Consumer Financial Protection Bureau” (Ibid.) and (e) “‘interest payments are projected to . . . reach \$1.6 trillion in 2034’” states “a Feb. 7 report by the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, citing CBO data.” (“Confronting the debt crisis,” Ibid., Republican-American, February 13, 2024, p. 6A) (f) Taking a second job might be one way one thinks he can help cover rising livelihood costs, but “(n)ot only has all job creation in the past four years gone exclusively to foreign-born workers, but since July 2018 there has been zero job-creation for native-born workers . . . The Biden administration has unlawfully given about one million aliens parole, an immigration status that includes work permission. Foreign-born workers displacing Americans is an ongoing and accelerating tragedy that President Biden willfully imposed on citizens.” (Joe Guzzardi, “U. S. workers lose ground once again,” Ibid., February 14, 2024, p. 8A) (g) Acquiring affordable housing is another massive concern: “(C)ountless Americans are struggling . . . with finding somewhere affordable to live . . . (T)he (Consumer Price Index)” reports “rents have gone up 19.5% over the last three years . . . (and) the National Association of Realtors” claims that “the median sales price of existing homes is up 23.7% in the last three years . . . (I)nterest rates on mortgages have more than doubled in that time, increasing the monthly mortgage payment . . . more . . . In January 2021,” it cost “\$1,600 a month to afford a home, which is 28% of the median household income . . . By November 2023 . . . the monthly cost of homeownership” had risen to “\$2,831 . . . a 77% increase in just three years . . . It now takes 43.9% of the median household income to afford a median-priced home.” (E. J. Antoni, “Housing inflation is crushing would-be homeowners,” Ibid., February 17, 2024, p. 6A)

(2) Amazingly, Veronique De Rugy, the George Gibbs Chair in Political Economy and a senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, in her piece, “Biden’s shrinkflation blame game” (Ibid., February 19, 2024, p. 8A), wrote, “(P)oliticians are responsible for initiating the recent inflation” that has let to all these fiscal troubles by their “excessive spending policies during the pandemic.” However, “Congress can enhance economic efficiency and productivity by reforming the tax code, rolling back regulations and moving toward freer policies, potentially alleviating the family budget squeeze by raising incomes . . . (It) could also . . . get serious about cutting spending . . . to help the Federal Reserve tame inflation entirely,” but will Congress ever do all that? (Ibid.)

Need: *So, we ask, “With the meeting of livelihood needs being such a big concern today, what should we do?”*

- I. Psalm 95:1-2 calls Israel to praise God Who was her Deliverer from all who threatened her welfare:**
 - A. The word for “Rock” in verse 1 translates the Hebrew noun *sur*, “rocky wall, cliff” (B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 849), and it figuratively refers to God as Israel’s “support and defense of his people” like a tall rock cliff gives soldiers safer ground in facing their enemies who are below the cliff. (Ibid.)
 - B. The psalmist thus called on Israel to praise the Lord as her Deliverer from the enemies to her welfare.
- II. God as Israel’s Deliverer from foes to her welfare was also sovereign over all the pagan gods upon whom her enemies relied to harm her, and He was sovereign over the universe as the Creator, Psalm 95:3-5.**
- III. Furthermore, God was also sovereign over Israel as her Maker, God, and Shepherd Who possessed Israel’s people and Who met their every livelihood need, Psalm 95:6-7b:**
 - A. Besides being Israel’s Maker and God, the Lord is her Shepherd, her Protector and Provider, Psalm 95:6-7a.
 - B. In Psalm 95:7b, Israel is called “the sheep of (God’s) hand,” where “hand” (*yad* in the Hebrew) figuratively refers not only to God’s sovereignty over His helpless “sheep” in Israel, but his “custody” of them, and hence His livelihood care of them. (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1059; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 388-391)

- IV. Accordingly, the psalmist called on Israel not to fail to trust Him for her LIVELIHOOD needs IN PARTICULAR like her forefathers failed to do in the wilderness during the Exodus, Psalm 95:7c-11:**
- A. The nouns “provocation” and “temptation” in Psalm 95:8 KJV are respectively and **correctly** rendered as the Hebrew nouns *Meribah*, meaning “strife,” and *Massah*, meaning “testing” in the NIV and ESV, for these nouns refer to the Exodus 17:1-7 event when the people of Israel quarreled with and tested Moses and the Lord over their lack of water in the wilderness. (Ibid., Kittel; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 863)
 - B. The psalmist in Psalm 95:7c-11 then warned his own, later generation that was living in the Promised Land not to sin like their forefathers did in the incident at Meribah and Massah so that God eventually caused that generation to die in the wilderness without entering God’s “rest” of the Promised Land of Canaan.
- V. The psalmist’s directive to trust the Lord for livelihood provisions is supported by God’s great record of meeting Israel’s livelihood needs during the Exodus, conquest and possession of the Promised Land:**
- A. God amply and faithfully provided Israel with the “manna,” His bread from heaven, each day for 40 years in the wilderness until the day after Israel had eaten of the food of Canaan, Exodus 16:13-35; Joshua 5:11-12.
 - B. The Lord’s supply of manna, His preservation of Israel’s clothes for 40 years in the hot, dry wilderness, His sustainment of her health and the bountiful riches she received from the Egyptians before she left Egypt were all God’s provisions to teach Israel to trust in Him for her livelihood, Exodus 12:35-36; Deuteronomy 8:2-5.
 - C. Also, when they entered Canaan, God gave Israel great, good cities, furnished houses, wells, vineyards, olive trees and an ample food supply that had been produced by the labor of the Canaanites, Deuteronomy 6:10-12.
- VI. Israel of course had to learn to OBEY God to OBTAIN these provisions (as explained in the Conclusion).**

Lesson: *God is able and willing to provide amply for all of the livelihood needs of His people regardless what foes to their welfare do to the contrary. However, God’s people must trust and learn to obey Him to see such needs met.*

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 trust and learn to obey God to have our needs met.*

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

God’s livelihood provisions for Israel involved her not only trusting Him, but also by her **learning to obey** Him to **acquire** those provisions in a **profitable** manner, and we explain this for our application today (as follows):

(1) According to Deuteronomy 8:2-5, God’s provisions of the manna and His preserving the clothes and health of Israel for 40 years in the wilderness meant to **teach** Israel’s people that they did not live by food alone, but by every word of the Lord. In this “training” period, the people **not only** learned to view the Lord as the Provider of their livelihood needs, but in accord with Isaiah 48:17 (as we will see in section “(2)” below), He **also used** the **experience** of Israel’s **collecting** manna **for 40 years** to teach her people how to “**profit**” (*leho’il*, Hiphil infinitive construct from *ya’al*, “gain profit,” Ibid., Kittel, p. 677; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 418; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. I, p. 389-390) with the many provisions He would **later** give them once they entered Canaan (like God taught Jacob how to profit in herding Laban’s livestock regardless of Laban’s oppression of Jacob, Genesis 31:4-12)!

Then, the great wealth Israel had received from the Egyptians before leaving Egypt (Exodus 12:35-36), wealth they could not spend in the wilderness because they were not then involved in fiscal transactions, and their eventual acquisition of Canaan’s great, good cities, furnished houses, wells, vineyards, olive trees an ample food supply, could be **profitably used** by Israel with thanksgiving to God and responsibility in having learned how to handle their assets!

Israel took possession of what the Canaanites built only as Israel’s people heeded God’s Joshua 1:1-9 Word to trust and obey Him in defeating the Canaanites, the trust-and-obey lesson they had learned in handling the manna!

(2) So, applied to us, (a) God may **first** humble us to live a-day-at-a-time financially as He did with Israel and the manna for 40 years (+) to teach us (i) **responsibility** [each one had to collect manna], (ii) **punctuality** [each had to rise early to collect it], (iii) **industriousness** [each had to collect it before it melted], (iv) **outfitting** [each had to use a fitting container to collect it], (v) **thrif**t [half of God’s double supply of manna on Friday had to be saved for the Sabbath Day’s food needs], (vi) **philanthropy** [those who gathered extra shared with those who could not gather all they needed] and (vii) **faithfulness** [the collection had to occur daily for 40 years], Exodus 16:13-34. (b) **After** we **learn** these **lessons** in “training,” and we keep obeying the Lord, in accord with Psalm 62:11-12, God will reward us according to our **workmanship** by giving us **more** material assets that we can responsibly handle as He did in giving Israel Canaan’s great assets! God rewards our properly handling a few things by giving us more, Matthew 25:20-23.

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 trust God to be willing and able to meet our livelihood needs as we heed His will for us.