

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith

XXXV. God's Help When Experiencing Cruel Rejection By Formerly Close Associates (Psalm 35:1-28)

I. Introduction

- A. As human beings, we need some close associates, so experiencing cruel rejection by them is very traumatic.
- B. David faced this trial and revealed how he obtained God's help in dealing with it in Psalm 35:1-28 as follows:

II. God's Help When Experiencing Cruel Rejection By Formerly Close Associates, Psalm 35:1-28.

- A. The title "A Psalm of David" that appears before the first verse in the English Bible is part of verse one in the Hebrew text, (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1003), but we stay with the numbering system of the English Bible.
- B. We translate Psalm 35:1-28 as follows: (v. 1) "Contend, O Jahweh, with those who contend against me; do battle with those who battle against me." (v. 2) "Take up personal hand-held shield (*magen*, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 171; R. deVaux, Anc. Israel: V. 1 - Soc. Insts., 1961, p. 244f) and buckler; arise and come to my aid." (v. 3) "Brandish spear and javelin against those who pursue me. Say to my life principle, 'I Myself am your Salvation!'" (v. 4) "May those who seek my life principle be ashamed and humiliated; may those be turned backwards and be put to shame who plot my ruin." (v. 5) "May they be as the chaff before the wind with the Angel of Jahweh driving them away." (v. 6) "May their path be dark and slippery with the Angel of Jahweh pursuing them." (v. 7) "Since they hid their net for me without cause and without cause dug a pit for me." (v. 8) "May ruin overtake them by surprise -- may the net they hid entangle them, may they fall into the pit, to their ruin." (v. 9) "Then my life principle will rejoice in Jahweh, and delight in His salvation." (v. 10) "My whole being will exclaim, 'Who is like You, O Jahweh! You rescue the afflicted from those who are too strong for them; the afflicted and needy from those who tear away plunder from them.' (v. 11) "Ruthless witnesses come forward; they question me on things of which I know nothing." (v. 12) "They repay me evil for good and leave my soul bereaved." (v. 13) "But I (em. pr.), when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting; and my prayers returned to my bosom." (v. 14) "I went about mourning as though for my friend and brother. I bowed my head in grief as though weeping for my mother." (v. 15) "But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee; attackers gathered against me when I was unaware. They maligned me and did not cease." (v. 16) "Like the ungodly they maliciously mocked; they gnashed their teeth at me." (v. 17) "O Adonai, how long will You look on? Rescue my life principle from their ravages, my precious life from these lions." (v. 18) "I will give You thanks in the great assembly; among the throngs I will praise You." (v. 19) "Let not those gloat over me who are my enemies without cause; let not those who hate me without reason maliciously wink the eye [secret signals to co-conspirators; J. A. Alexander, The Psalms, 1975, p. 153]." (v. 20) "Because they do not speak peaceably; but devise false accusations against those who live quietly on the earth." (v. 21) "They gape at me and say, 'Aha! Aha! With our own eyes we have seen it!'" (v. 22) "O Jahweh, You have seen this; do not be silent. Do not be far from me, Adonai!" (v. 23) "Awake, and rise to my defense! My Elohim and my Adonai, contend for me!" (v. 24) "Vindicate me in Your righteousness, O Jahweh, my Elohim! Do not let them gloat over me!" (v. 25) "Do not let them say in their hearts, 'Aha! Just what we wanted!' Do not let them say in their hearts, 'We have swallowed him up!'" (v. 26) "May all who gloat over my distress be put to shame and confusion; may all who exalt themselves over me be clothed with shame and disgrace." (v. 27) "May those who delight in my vindication shout for joy and gladness; may they always say, 'May Jahweh be exalted, Who delights in the wellbeing of His servant!'" (v. 28) "My tongue will speak of Your righteousness and of Your praises all day long."
- C. Key observations about this psalm help us to understand its application for today:
 1. The intensity and large number of petitions David voices in this psalm to the Lord reveal he was venting his shock and hurt over being unjustly rejected and mistreated by formerly close associates, so we also should pour out our hearts to the Lord upon experiencing similar traumatic hurt in similar cases.
 2. David viewed the Lord as his Close Associate to fill the vacuum of losing close associates (cf. v. 22b, 23-24; v. 2 and God being his Personal Hand-Held Shield), so we must seek God's fellowship in such cases.

Lesson: David handled his loss of close associates who unjustly turned on him (1) by pouring his heart out to God, asking for His help and justice (2) and viewing God as His Close Associate to fill the void of lost close associates.

Application: For God's blessing, may we follow David's example if facing similar difficult trials.