

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith CXXIV: Thanking God For His Rescue From Furious, Overwhelming Foes (Psalm 124:1-8)

I. Introduction

- A. We believers in Christ are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13), people not of the world, so we can face furious, overwhelming foes who are motivated by the Evil One to oppose us.
- B. Israel's famous warrior David (who defeated Goliath) knew this truth well, and he spoke of the believer's need for God's help in such cases in Psalm 124. We view the psalm for our instruction and application (as follows):

II. Thanking God For His Rescue From Furious, Overwhelming Foes, Psalm 124:1-8.

- A. The introductory remarks are part of the first verse, so the numbering system in the Hebrew text matches that of the English Bible (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1088), so we stay with the English Bible's numbering system.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 124:1-8 (as follows):
 - 1. "A song of ascents. Of David. Except that (*lule'*, protasis, or "if clause;" B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 530) Jahweh had been on our side -- let Israel now say --" (Psalm 124:1)
 - 2. "except (*lule'* again, cf. v. 1) Jahweh had been on our side when men rose up against us," Psalm 124:2.
 - 3. "then, in that case (*'azay*, apodasis, or "then clause;" Ibid., p. 23) they would have swallowed us alive when their anger flared against us," Psalm 124:3.
 - 4. "then, in that case (*'azay* again, cf. v. 3) the flood would have engulfed us, the torrent would have swept over us," Psalm 124:4.
 - 5. "then, in that case (*'azay* again, cf. v. 3, 4) the raging waters would have swept away our life principle," Psalm 124:5.
 - 6. "Blessed be Jahweh, Who has not let us be torn by their teeth," Psalm 124:6.
 - 7. "Our life principle has escaped like a bird out of the fowler's snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped," Psalm 124:7.
 - 8. "Our help is in the name of Jahweh, the Maker of heaven and earth," Psalm 124:8.
- C. We note significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. The repetition of the "if clause" protasis *lule'* and the repetitions of the "then clause" apodasis *'azay* coupled with the psalmist's repeat references to escaping an infuriated, overwhelming enemy's snare reveals that the situation the nation faced had led to a close escape from otherwise certain, calamitous destruction by a furious, highly motivated and overpowering foe.
 - 2. The key to deliverance in this case, as noted in verse 8, was the **Creator** God, Who is also Jahweh, A God Who is more powerful and sovereign than the overwhelming and infuriated human foes that Israel faced.
 - 3. Since David is the psalm's author (verse 1a) and he was Israel's great warrior king (defeating Goliath and numerous great Gentile armies, cf. 1 Samuel 17; 2 Samuel 8 et al.), his acknowledgment of the nation's need for God to have victory over formidable, motivated foes provided a great lesson for all pilgrims of God's people in Israel: they truly needed to rely completely on God, the able, omnipotent Creator of all entities, for victory over such great, infuriated enemies.
 - 4. This is a timeless lesson for God's people, applicable even today: in the spiritual realm, if we face overwhelming, highly motivated enemies who are empowered and led by Satan who is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4a) and ruler of the world's secular nations (Matthew 4:8-9), we dare not battle them in our own might. Rather, we follow the example of archangel Michael in Jude 9 and cleave to the authority of God and His Word to defeat the Evil One.
 - 5. When God then delivers us from a near complete disaster, we like David and the pilgrims of Israel owe God praise and a renewal of our commitment to trust in Him.

Lesson: *Israel's great warrior king David directed Israel's pilgrims to the temple to realize their complete dependence upon their Creator God for deliverance from far more powerful, infuriated foes, and so to thank Him.*

Application: *(1) May we realize that we face overwhelming and highly infuriated spiritual opposition in the form of the Evil One who is the god of this world and who rules the nations of the world, that we TRUST the Lord at ALL times and in ALL situations. (2) May we also thus not fear the opposition we face, for our God is the Creator Who is sovereign over all foes we face. Rather, may we as David directs always cleave to the Lord for His help.*