

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith CXXVI: The Promise Of Success In Enduring In God's Assignment (Psalm 126:1-6)

I. Introduction

- A. God's servants often face hardships in performing His assignments, what can tempt them to stop their work.
- B. However, the Lord's people need to be encouraged to continue to perform God's assignments amid such hardships, and Psalm 126:1-6 provides that encouragement with an edifying lesson for us today (as follows):

II. The Promise Of Success In Enduring In God's Assignment, Psalm 126:1-6.

- A. The introductory remarks are part of verse one, so the numbering system in the Hebrew text matches that of the English Bible (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1089). We thus stay with the English Bible's numbering system.
- B. We then translate Psalm 126:1-6 (as follows):
 1. "A song of ascents. When Jahweh brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like men restored to health [Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 884; a reading to be preferred for being 'well supported by various versions and the Dead Sea Scrolls'," Psalm 126:1.
 2. "Then our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "Jahweh has done great things for them," Psalm 126:2.
 3. "Jahweh has done great things for us; we are filled with joy," Psalm 126:3.
 4. "Restore our fortunes, O Jahweh, like stream-bed ravines (seasonal streams; 'aphiq, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 67) in the Negev (wilderness of southern Judah)," Psalm 126:4.
 5. "Those who sow seed with tears will reap with a ringing cry of exultation (rinnah, Ibid., p. 943)," v. 5.
 6. "He who goes forth weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with a ringing cry of exultation (rinnah again, cf. v. 5), carrying his sheaves with him," Psalm 126:6.
- C. We note significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
 1. The initial wave of exiles who returned after the Babylonian Captivity recalled the joy they experienced when they returned, that they were like men who had been healed of a great wound that had been inflicted upon them when their nation had fallen and their people taken captive, v. 1. The testimony of the Gentiles who marveled at the great things God had done for them is recalled and appreciated by the exiles, v. 2-3.
 2. However, the fields in the land had long lain fallow, so the soil was hard, and not all the captives had returned at first, producing real hardship for the initial returners who saw the rebuilding of their nation as a harsh task; Ibid., B. K. C., O. T. Accordingly, they asked God to restore their fortunes, to bring "a flood of returning exiles, like the seasonal torrents that fill normally dry streams in the desert," the Negev of southern Judah, Psalm 126:4; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Psalm 126:4.
 3. In Psalm 126:5-6, the exiles presented their hope of the nation's rebuilding amid great difficulties in an illustration of their making the hard, unworked soil productive farmland again: those who sowed seed with tears due to the hardship they faced in working the soil would doubtless reap a bountiful harvest with a ringing cry of exultation. He who went forth weeping, carrying his seed to sow, would doubtless return with a ringing cry of exultation, carrying his sheaves of an abundant harvest with him.
 4. This principle is "applicable to Christian work as well," Ibid., fn. to Psalm 126:5-6: the Apostle Paul in Galatians 6:9 ESV put it this way: "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Discipling people takes "great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2 NIV), so we must invest our time and talents without giving up in order to reap success in the end.

Lesson: (1) Upon initially returning to Israel, the captives coming back from the Babylonian Captivity were as men who had been healed of a long, unhealthy wound, a very joyful event. (2) Yet, in seeking to rebuild their nation, they realized the difficult assignment involved, and saw the need for more captives to return and help them, so they prayed for God's abundant provision of more returning exiles and of His blessing in their reconstruction effort. (3) They applied the illustration of sowing and reaping to claim that though their efforts would be associated with tears of great toil, they would doubtless one day rejoice in the abundant harvest of success in their efforts.

Application: If God assigns us to perform a work for Him, we can trust that when we face difficulties in the effort that if we choose not to quit, but trust that our work is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58), the Lord will cause us to have a bountiful harvest of success in the end (Galatians 6:9).