

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm One Hundred And Nineteen (Sin and Shin) - Overcoming One's FEAR Of Influential, Unjust Opponents (Psalm 119:161-168)

I. Introduction

- A. A believer can face influential and thus potentially harmful unjust opponents at work, in the neighborhood, at home or even in a church setting. What complicates this challenge is a **fear** of such parties, for the **fear** of **man itself** brings a snare causing foolish and thus counterproductive reactions by the fearful, Pr. 29:25a.
- B. Psalm 119:161-168 provides an answer to this challenge which we can validate from other Scriptures:
- C. [This section contains **two** letters, Sin and Shin. **Both** are the same *written* consonant, but are "pointed" differently, producing different sounds: **Sin** has a dot on its upper left, making an "s" sound where **Shin** has the dot on the upper right of the consonant, producing the "sh" sound! (cf. Judges 12:1-6)]

II. Overcoming One's FEAR Of Influential, Unjust Opponents, Psalm 119:161-168.

- A. The Psalmist revealed his concern over being pursued without cause by military commanders, 119:161a.
- B. His **response** is instructive as follows, Ps. 119:161b, 163b, 166, 168:
 1. The psalmist hinted at being tempted to be worried from a dread of these powerful opponents in v. 161.
 2. However, he found solace in fearing **God** more than his powerful opponents so as to obey God's Word regardless what his opponents might do to him, Ps. 119:161b, 168.
 - a. The psalmist recognized that all of his ways were transparently seen by Almighty God, so he was accountable to fear the Lord regardless what his strong opponents might do to him, Ps. 119:168b.
 - b. Accordingly, he chose to obey God's Word regardless of the actions of his opponents, Ps. 119:168a.
 - c. In the process, his hope was God's **assistance** to **shield** him from his human opponents, counting on the fact that God was greater than his enemies, Ps. 119:166.
- C. As the **result** of this response, the psalmist enjoyed victory over fearing strong military enemies:
 1. God blessed the psalmist for his obedience so as to turn the tables on his military attackers, giving the spoils of conflict to the psalmist, Ps. 119:162 implied.
 2. So relieved and happy is the outcome for the psalmist that he praises God seven times a day, 119:164.
 3. For the psalmist, there is peace without a trace of trouble, Ps. 119:165.
 4. Finally, the psalmist's former dread of his strong, military soldier enemies turns to an appreciative love for God's invaluable Word, for heeding it led to God's rescuing him from his opponents, Ps. 119:167.

Lesson: The path from a dread of influential, harmful HUMAN opponents to a relaxed joy is through one's fearing GOD more than his opponents! This PRIORITY on what one FEARS leads to heeding Scripture, and that action brings God's protection from one's enemies as he thus comes under the plan of God where GOD must take on one's OPPONENTS!

Application: All God expects from believers who face dreaded opponents is for them to turn their fear of people to a GREATER respect for GOD and HIS WORD: (a) if believers fail to obey God, they end up in defeat by troublesome opponents as they are left to tangle with the difficult parties themselves. (b) However, if believers obey God regardless of what their human opponents do, GOD blesses them by PROTECTING believers from opponents, for the battle then SHIFTS from a squabble between HUMANS to a campaign between GOD and human OPPONENTS of the believer! (3) OTHER Scriptures confirm this very lesson: (a) After stating that the fear of man brings a snare, Proverbs 29:25 continues to claim: "... but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." (b) In Isaiah 8:12-14, Isaiah was told by God not to fear what the faithless in Israel feared in thinking a conspiracy was afoot involving a traitor who worked to deliver Israel over to the Assyrians, v. 12. Isaiah was to fear the Lord Almighty instead, and God would thus become a sanctuary to the faithful to protect him from the calamities that would come on the faithless during the Assyrian invasion, Isa. 8:13-14a, 14b.