

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
XLIII. Handling Unsettling Accusations
(Psalm 43:1-5)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Several unsettling accusations have been made by influential parties about people like us:

(1) Representative Jim Jordan (R-OH), the ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, wrote, “Behind the” January 6 “committee’s storytelling” is “a sinister aim: convincing Americans that conservatives are to blame for the events of that day.” (Jim Jordan, “The True Goal Of The J6 Committee Is To Slander And Shame Conservatives Out Of The Public Sphere,” June 7, 2022; thefederalist.com) Mr. Jordan added that the committee’s goal is to slander and shame all politically conservatives as being responsible for the January 6 riot, that they should stay out of the public sphere so only progressives can be there. (Ibid.)

(2) Similarly, a letter to the Republican-American by John Kanca II of Middlebury, Connecticut (October 5, 2022, p. 7A) observed, “On Sept. 1, President Biden . . . demonized 75 million Americans – Trump voters” as “‘extremists’ who are a ‘threat to democracy’” for being “‘election deniers.’”

(3) We face it at the state level: “Last month an English teacher at Southington High School distributed to his students materials intended to facilitate ‘conversations about race, gender, equality, and inclusivity.’ Among the claims students were expected to accept without question is that in America, racism is ‘a systemic issue,’ and that while ‘no individual is personally responsible for the historical decisions of the American government, you are responsible for whether you are upholding the systems that elevate white people over people of color.’” (Ibid., Jay Bergman, “Teachers aren’t moral authorities”) Then, “(a)fter . . . parents in Southington made known their objections to the school board and to the superintendent of schools, 72 faculty at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) sent a letter claiming that parents had no business objecting to their children’s education: determining what their education consists of was the sole prerogative of the school system.” (Ibid.)

(4) We face it in the religious realm: “Progressive faith leaders . . . ‘a lot of’” them “‘mainline Protestants and Methodists, are very concerned about Christian nationalism’” asserted Eric Folkerth, senior pastor at Kessler Park United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas. (Michael Williams, “Progressive Dallas pastors warn against Christian nationalism,” Ibid., Oct. 14, 2022, p. 3B) “Christian nationalism” is an ideology that believes “that America is a Christian nation, its founding documents were divinely inspired, and its leaders are anointed by God” whom “God calls . . . to seek political power to reinstate Christian principles to shape and guide policy.” (Ibid.)

This story can leave us at Nepaug Church asking if we are the accused Christian nationalists: As Brannon S. Howse in Marxianity, 2018, p. 9-61 reported, many mainline Protestants and some evangelicals adopt some Marxist ideas, what we strongly counter, for we hold that the liberties granted to us in the U. S. Constitution fit the Biblical model of individual rights. Yet, opposite Christian nationalism, we hold that the canon of Scripture was closed by apostolic authority in the first century A. D., that America’s founding documents are not God-inspired! (2 Timothy 3:15-4:2) We may then ask, “Are *we* the accused Christian nationalists here? How do we respond to this charge?”

Need: So, we ask, “How does God want us to handle the unsettling accusations that people like us face?!”

I. Among other concerns, Psalm 43 addressed the psalmist’s need to be cleared from false charges:

- A. Psalms 42 and 43 were once a single psalm, but they were later separated, with Psalm 43 focusing on the psalmist’s desire for God to guide him back to Jerusalem. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 826)
- B. The psalmist was exiled from Jerusalem in the far north of Palestine (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Psalms 42 and 43), and he needed to be cleared from false charges by his foes that had led to his exile:
 1. The Hebrew verb rendered “judge” (Psalm 43:1 KJV) is *shaphat*, and it carries the broad meaning of “to exercise the processes of government,” for Ancient Near Eastern people “did not think of themselves as ruled by laws” so much as “by men” so that the “centering of law, rulership, government in a man was deeply ingrained” in their culture (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1012; Harris, Archer, Waltke, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament., 1980, Volume II, p. 947)
 2. Thus, *shaphat* in the Old Testament can mean “deliver, vindicate, condemn, punish, and related words of judicial-executive import” as defined by the **context** (Ibid., p. 948), so in the historical context of Psalm 43:1 where the psalmist was exiled from Jerusalem due to false charges, *shaphat* means “vindicate.”

II. The psalmist then described what he needed for God’s vindication to provide deliverance, Psalm 43:1-5:

- A. Deceitful and wicked foes had slandered the psalmist, oppressing him, leading to his exile, and leaving him in a state of mourning, of even doubting God’s goodness, and of his need for God to vindicate him, Psalms 43:1-2.
- B. Consequently, the psalmist asked God to send forth His “light” and “truth,” with “light” figuratively referring to God’s “understanding and life” and “truth” the Lord’s “faithful Word by which” the psalmist could “find guidance” to be led by God safely back to Jerusalem, Psalm 43:3; *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 826.
- C. Expecting God to guide him back to Jerusalem, the psalmist planned to praise the Lord there, Psalm 43:4-5.

Lesson: *Facing slander by deceitful, wicked foes that had led to his exile from Jerusalem, the psalmist asked God to deliver him by vindicating him in sending forth His understanding and life and the truth of His Word to conduct the psalmist in his life’s course toward ending his exile in returning him safely to Jerusalem.*

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) If facing disturbing accusations, may we ask God to send forth His understanding and life and the truth of His Word to lead us back to the place where we are at peace.*

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

Since God’s Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105), we find in Scripture the means to understand and to discern the peace-producing truth about the unsettling accusations we noted in our introduction:

(1) On the (a) January 6 committee’s effort to discredit conservatives by blaming them for the January 6 riot and (b) President Biden’s critique of 75 million people who voted for Trump as a threat for being election deniers, Matthew 24:51 condemns hypocrisy! However, (c) hypocrisy marks these parties: (i) “Democrats spent most of 2020 condoning left-wing violent riots across the country” (*Ibid.*, Jordan), and (ii) after the 2016 election in which Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton, “Biden himself said, ‘We’ll pass election reform and made sure no one, no one, ever has the opportunity to steal an election **again!**’” (*Ibid.*, Kanca II; emphasis ours) The January 6 committee and President Biden are discredited by their own actions, for they themselves have done what they charge of others!

(2) Besides, many conservatives who voted for Donald Trump did not riot at the capitol just like many Democrats did not riot across the country in 2020! Guilt is an **individual** matter, **not a class** issue, Ezekiel 18:1-28.

(3) On the Southington High School teacher’s claim that his students were responsible for upholding the systems that elevate white people over people of color, this view errs according to Scripture: Proverbs 3:13-18 states that happiness, long life, wealth, honor, pleasant experiences in life and peace are available to all men through wisdom, and James 1:5 NIV claims that if any of his readers lacked wisdom, he should ask of God who gives wisdom to **all** men generously, without finding fault. Thus, failure to attain a decent life is an **individual** problem, not one related to race, gender, ethnicity, etc. It is a matter of the **individual’s** relationship with God and heeding His Word!

(4) On the Southern Connecticut State University’s 72 faculty members who wrote that parents have no business determining how their children are to be educated, Ephesians 6:1-4, Genesis 18:19 and Proverbs 22:6 teach that parents are responsible before God to rear their children in the reverence and instruction of the Lord so that this rearing affects them throughout their lives, even in old age! The SCSU faculty members greatly err on this matter!

(5) On the charge by progressive faith leaders against “Christian nationalism” (*Ibid.*, Williams), progressives **and** Christian nationalists **err, but WE are NEITHER ONE!** We explain: (a) Progressive mainline Protestants and progressive evangelicals are influenced by errant Liberal Theology and/or errant Marxism (*Ibid.*, Howse) (b) while “Christian nationalists” are errantly Amillennial in theology, and two other terms linked to this view are Dominion Theology and Reconstructionism. We explain: (i) In the third century A. D., the Alexandrian school of Christian theologians tried to harmonize their theology with Platonic philosophy by viewing Scripture **nonliterally**. Augustine adopted their nonliteral method for interpreting Bible prophecy, and he concluded that there would be **no literal** thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth versus what Revelation 20:1-6 **literally** claims, and that the eternal state would start at Christ’s Second Coming. In this view, Christ’s Kingdom occurs between His first and Second Coming, the Church is that Kingdom so that the Church is to gain control of world governments before Christ’s return. The Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformers adopted Amillennialism (John F. Walvoord, The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation, 1976, p. 12-13), as have many evangelicals today! (ii) In **contrast, we** hold that the Bible teaches Premillennialism where we are to **wait for Christ** to set up **His literal** thousand-year reign at His Second Coming, that the Church is **not** to gain control of world governments, but **disciple individuals** for Christ’s future reign, *Ibid.*, p. 15!

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life. If facing unsettling accusations, may we ask God to send forth His understanding and life and the truth of His Word to lead us in our understanding and lives back to the place of peace with God.