

Psalm 129 is a great song of Ascents. This Psalm tells the whole story of Israel. Martin Luther said, “The 129th psalm is a psalm of thanks in which the people of Israel give thanks for the many deliverances that God has often done for them since the beginning” (*The Reading of the Psalms*, p. 129).

This Psalm is a Psalm that in many ways we all can sing because this Psalm in some ways tells the whole story of our Christian experiences. What this Psalm teaches us is that life can hit us with the worst of things and we can have a confidence, a solid faith that God will see us through and deliver us.

That is the point:

GOD’S NATION ISRAEL AND ALL OF GOD’S PEOPLE CAN PRAISE GOD BECAUSE GOD WILL DELIVER THEM FROM ALL OF THEIR ENEMIES.

There are some wonderful truths to see from this Psalm that clearly teach us to keep trusting in God when we find ourselves surrounded by trouble. We can depend on God to vindicate us and bless us. Israel can know this and so can we. God’s people need to learn they can trust God and depend on God. Sometimes it is just a matter of hanging in there until God delivers.

TRUTH #1 – Israel has been persecuted many times from her youth up. **129:1**

Notice how this starts “many times.” The first thing the writer wants us to realize is that what I am about to talk about is not a onetime event. God’s people can know that they will be persecuted many times in life and it will occur over and over again. It will be a “frequent occurrence.”

The word “persecute” is one that speaks of an adversary that is hostile toward someone. It carries with it the idea of putting someone in distress because one is an adversary or enemy who is a constant threat to do harm and damage (*The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon*, p. 865). God is telling His people that they will find times in their lives when someone will make things very distressful for them. It will happen many times in their existence. God’s people will have their share of enemies and many times God’s people will find themselves at odds with people because they are God’s property.

Israel has been surrounded by this kind of threat from the early days of her existence. Anti-Semitism is the longest national hatred that has ever been in existence. Israel has been persecuted from her youth up.

As a nation, Israel can go back to the Egyptians who first enslaved her. From there she was persecuted by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, Greece and then Rome. There were men like Pharaoh and Sennacherib and Haman and Herod who all turned against Israel.

There have been men like Adolph Hitler; Saddam Hussein; Osama Bin Laden and many others who have hated Israel and sought to destroy her. Even to this day she is surrounded by enemies who would love to destroy her. Just yesterday, it was revealed that our government sent 350,000 dollars of taxpayers' money to try and topple Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel. This is still happening.

Notice what **verse 1** says, "Let Israel now say." Say what? Say that she has been persecuted many, many times. It is interesting that God says you need to say this. People need to verbally communicate the truth about Israel. She is the most persecuted nation on this earth.

It is a healthy thing to verbalize truth about the faithfulness of God to us when we have been in the midst of trouble, torment or trial. This is a very God-honoring thing to do.

When we remember and recite times of trouble and what we have seen God do, it is a faith-building exercise. So thinking back on times of persecution and trouble are not all bad.

There is a principle that we may glean from this and that is from the time you come to Christ you will have some hassles with certain people and it won't be your fault.

TRUTH #2 – Israel has been protected many times from her youth up. **129:2**

Just as God's people will be persecuted many times, so they will see God protect them many times. God is in the business of sustaining and delivering His people. No matter who the enemy, it will not be able to overpower God's people.

Just as various nations have persecuted Israel from her youth up, so God has preserved and protected her from her youth up. Those enemies did not prevail. Israel is still here and still in existence. She is still safe in the hands of God.

The enemies of Israel were not able, nor will they ever be able to overpower Israel. In fact, the existence of Israel is a very important proof of the literal value of the inspired Scriptures.

The Bible clearly establishes the importance of Israel in the plan of God. 4/5ths of the Bible pertains to Israel. The fact that Israel has been delivered from so many enemies, shows the Bible is to be believed and interpreted literally.

No enemy will ever be able to topple God's property. The enemy may attack and make things miserable, but in the end the enemy will not prevail. The proof is Israel.

TRUTH #3 – Israel had enemies persecute deep and long. **129:3**

The writer uses an agricultural metaphor to communicate a point. "Lengthened furrows" speak of a long, drawn out extreme affliction. Not only was Israel persecuted, but so was her land. This persecution has gone on for a long time and is still going on.

During the days of Hezekiah, the Assyrians literally came in and attacked Israel and desolated the land. Titus came in and destroyed Jerusalem and burned it to the ground.

Actually the greatest time of persecution against Israel and the land is still future. During the Tribulation, the Antichrist will launch terrible persecution on Israel to the point that she will need to flee the land.

TRUTH #4 – The LORD is righteous and will cut off the wicked. **129:4**

This is a very important point to know about God- He is righteous. What that practically means is that everything He permits to happen is righteous and just. God is righteous even when His own people are permitted to suffer temporarily. What God's people can know is that because He is righteous, He will not ever let them suffer permanently. **In His time and in His way, God will always set His people free.**

In ploughing, two cords were fastened to the yoke of the oxen. The oxen would pull the iron plough forward and it would tear open the ground. If you cut the cords, you stop the plough from doing any more tearing. This is the point. God is promising to stop the plough of persecution against His people.

The point of this is that God is a righteous, just God who will always protect His people. The LORD is in a covenant relationship with His people and those who attack He will cut off and cut down.

A Protestant pastor was once confronted by a French King and the monarch said to the pastor, "I will break your church in pieces with a hammer if you do not obey me." The pastor calmly said, "This anvil has broken many a hammer."

One thing to see here is that God does have the power to cut off things that hurt his people. God has the power to cut bad thoughts, addictions, habits and actions. God delights in stopping the destruction. He is the only One with the real power.

TRUTH #5 – All who hate Zion will be put to shame. **129:5a**

Do not miss what is said here, Israel is hated. She was hated when this was written and she is hated today. The reason why she is hated is that she is the property of God. We are not talking here about just being disliked. She is hated.

Now this is a prayer that is based on what God has done in previous times.

The noun Zion refers to Israel, it refers to Israel's land, it refers to Jerusalem and to the Temple. However, it also refers to the city and place of God's presence. This is the place that will one day feature the very presence of God. So at the core of a hatred of Zion is a satanic hatred of God and His Word. Notice the emphasis on "all."

Any person or nation who hates Israel is one who hates God. One who hates God and His Word will never be honored, but will but humiliated. God will see to it that they are brought to shame.

TRUTH #6 – All who hate Zion will be turned backward. **129:5b**

Those who hate Israel will never succeed in their desire to destroy her. In fact, things will back-fire on them. Their plots and plans will not succeed. He will turn things backward against them.

TRUTH #7 – All who hate Zion will wither very fast. **129:6**

One commentator wisely observed wickedness never has longevity. It may offer something temporarily, but that is it. Ungodly people wither fast and end up in eternity with nothing.

Many roofs in Israel were flat and to insulate them, often people would use grass or sod. The problem in the Middle East is that roof grass withers quickly under the hot sun. The roots are shallow and the sun cooks it before it can grow. That is what God will do to Israel's enemies. He will burn them up before they can grow. They may dominate Israel for a moment, but it won't be for long.

Our enemies may seem to prevail for a time, but they won't prevail for long. Notice the great contrast between what God does for one who fears Him versus one who hates Him. In the previous Psalm of Psalm 128:5, God is blessing and prospering one who fears Him.

In this Psalm, God is humiliating and burning one who hates Him.

TRUTH #8 – All who hate Zion will not fulfill their hateful harvest. **129:7**

God will see to it that all who hate Him and His people never are able to accomplish what they intend to accomplish. They will not reap a full crop and they will not bind the sheaves.

There is a reference to two body parts—"hands" and "bosom." One metaphorically pictures what one does with his hands and the other metaphorically pictures what one has in his heart.

The point is, his heart's desire to use his hands to destroy the people of God will not work. He will not succeed.

TRUTH #9 – All who hated Zion will be recognized as those not blessed of God. **129:8a**

Haters of Israel will not prosper and they cannot prosper because God will not let them prosper. He may give them the upper hand for a moment, but in the end they will not prosper.

The same is true for our enemies.

There will come a day when all will realize if you hate God and hate Israel, you are doomed. Never will any nation ever say the nation who stood against Israel got the blessings of God.

There are some national predictions that one day people all over the world will recognize this.

TRUTH #10 – All passers-by will bless Israel in the name of the LORD. **129:8b**

There will come a day when all the nations of the world will praise Israel and testify that she belongs to God.

APPLICATIONS

- 1. In the course of our lives, we will have many different kinds of enemies.**
- 2. In the course of our lives, we will see God deliver us many times from the enemies.**
- 3. Those who hate Israel and do evil things against Israel will be destroyed by God.**
- 4. In the end, all will know God's blessings are on Israel.**