

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of The Chronicles: God's Preservation Of His Davidic And Levitical Covenants

XXVIII. Sustaining Good Thinking In Prolonged Crises

(2 Chronicles 16:1-14)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

There is a great need for those of us who face prolonged crises today to *sustain good thinking*:

(1) When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the nation, former Vice-President and "Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden . . . urged President Trump, 'Follow the science, listen to the experts, do what they tell you.'" (Rich Lowry, "The limitations of science," Republican-American, May 2, 2020, p. 8A)

However, a letter by Mark Godburn of Norfolk, Connecticut in the April 30, 2020 Republican-American, p. 10A claimed these "'experts'" have been dreadfully inconsistent: the media first reported that "the new virus" was "10 times deadlier than swine flu," but the "Associated Press" has since reported "that infections in Santa Clara County, Calif., actually were 50 times higher than previously thought" and that the rates in "Los Angeles County . . . were 40 times higher" with "(s)imilar reports . . . coming in from across the United States. If these new reports are accurate, it means the coronavirus is far less deadly than previously reported," Ibid. Mr. Godburn concluded, "From the beginning, the amount of flawed, incomplete data being reported as 'fact' by 'experts' has been appalling," Ibid.

(2) Government officials have failed to be consistent in this crisis, too: the editorial, "Short-sighted jobless benefit" (Ibid., May 1, 2020, p. 8A) told how the new law providing supplemental unemployment benefits of \$600 to laid-off workers due to the shutdown have motivated many workers to want to be laid-off. They can make more money on unemployment than at their regular jobs while also performing odd jobs under the table without paying taxes on the income. The editor summed, "(P)olicymakers should have known better than to indebt future generations of Americans while creating a disincentive for people to return to work -- and simultaneously, *incentivizing* people to take on extra jobs that will generate no tax revenues," Ibid.

Nevertheless, Federal Reserve "Chairman Jerome Powell" still "made a . . . plea for Congress to spend as much money as necessary to aid workers and businesses . . . despite his previously expressed concerns about surging deficits . . ." ("Fed signals it will hold rates near zero for months," Ibid., April 30, 2020, p. 11A)

Need: So we ask, "With even officials and experts being very inconsistent in their views or claims in the prolonged shutdown, how can we believers at the grassroots level sustain good thinking in the crises we face?!"

- I. Judah's king Asa was lured by his nation's prolonged struggle with the Northern Kingdom of Israel to cease trusting God for his nation's security and handle it himself, 2 Chronicles 16:1-6:**
 - A. King Baasha of the Northern Kingdom of Israel captured and fortified Ramah to block all traffic in and out of the Southern Kingdom of Judah from its north, 2 Chronicles 16:1; The Carta Bible Atlas, 2002, p. 93.
 - B. Baasha's action comprised a two-fold attack on the Judah' welfare: (1) it kept people in Israel from traveling south to worship God in Jerusalem, hindering Judah's power (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 632) and (2) with Ramah being south of the junction between the north-south trade route running north from Jerusalem and the east-west Beth-Horon road to the Mediterranean, it threatened Judah's economy, Ibid., The Carta Bible Atlas.
 - C. Ever since the split of the Davidic Kingdom, there had been tension or war between Judah and Israel, a prolonged crisis, so Baasha's action at Ramah would have greatly enhanced the concerns of Judah's king Asa.
 - D. Consequently, Asa forsook the words of God's prophet Azariah that he trust in God for Judah's security and instead he took personal action to protect the nation, 2 Chronicles 16:2-6:
 1. Asa brought out the valuable items he and his father had dedicated to God and put in the temple to hire Benhadad of Aramea to attack Israel and thus get Baasha to withdraw from Ramah, 2 Chr. 16:2-3; 15:18.
 2. Behadad accepted Asa's payment and attacked Israel, so Baasha withdrew from Ramah, 2 Chron. 16:4-5.
 3. Asa then dismantled Baasha's works at Ramah for use in fortifying other towns in Judah's favor, v. 6; Ibid.
- II. However, Asa's action violated God's Word on several counts (as follows):**
 - A. Asa handled Judah's security needs instead of letting God guard the nation like Deuteronomy 17:16 implied.
 - B. Second, Asa idolatrously replaced God with the Arameans as his Source of protection, violating Exodus 20:3.
 - C. Third, Asa used God's valuables to hire Benhadad to attack Israel, stealing from God opposite Exodus 20:15.
- III. The Lord sent the prophet Hanani to critique Asa for failing to heed the lesson he had learned in his battle against a million Ethiopians, that of trusting God with Judah's national security, 2 Chron. 16:7-8.**
- IV. Hanani thus announced that Asa would face wars for the rest of his reign, 2 Chronicles 16:9.**

- V. **Asa angrily persecuted Hanani for this message, so God ceased blessing him, 2 Chronicles 16:10-14:**
- A. Asa raged at Hanani for his message of judgment, he imprisoned him and oppressed other people too, v. 10.
 - B. In accord with the Mosaic Covenant at Deuteronomy 28:15, 21-22, God then punished Asa by giving him a bad disease in his feet, but instead of repenting, Asa sought the help of "physicians" who "doubtless used more magic than medicine," 2 Chronicles 16:11-12. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 2 Chron. 16:12)
 - C. A year after contracting the disease, Asa died, a hardened and spiritually defeated king, 2 Chronicles 16:13-14.

Lesson: *Lured by the threat of the king of his long-time nemesis Israel, king Asa of Judah forsook his past lesson from God that he rely on the Lord for his nation's security to handle it himself, so God stopped blessing Asa.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) In facing prolonged crises, may we sustain good thinking by (a) subjecting our minds to Scripture's truths and (b) heeding the past lessons God has taught us.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

To illustrate how to apply this message, we address each issue of concern in our introduction by (a) subjecting our minds to applicable Scripture passages (b) that we have also previously noted in our ministry (as follows):

(1) On the fact that former Vice President and Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden advised President Trump how to respond to the pandemic, we have often observed that Psalm 119:105 claims Scripture is our step-by-step light in a life that is lived in a world full of darkness. We must thus subject all advice given by all humans, be it the advice of a former Vice President and presidential nominee or anybody else, to what Scripture actually teaches!

(2) On heeding science as Joe Biden recommended to the President, we before noted Romans 3:4a claims all men have failed to assert the truth at some point in life, and we have often cited the Answers In Genesis magazine, Answers to display the fact that many scientists have erred in their scientific views! Yet, we have also before noted that Psalm 119:89 claims God's Word is forever settled in heaven, so we must trust Scripture over man's science.

(3) On Joe Biden's call to listen to the experts, as we have before taught from Romans 3:4a, all men err, even experts, so we must rely on (a) written Scripture first (2 Tim. 3:16-17), (b) and if Scripture is silent on an issue, we must rely on God the indwelling Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16) for discernment (1 John 2:18-27)! Then, as we have often taught, God can use godly counselors (Prov. 11:14; 2 Tim. 3:14) then circumstances (Acts 16:6-10) then what we will [as the Holy Spirit works to make us will and do God's will, Phil. 2:12-13] to guide us in decision-making.

(4) On Joe Biden's call to do what the experts tell us to do, we have taught that 1 Peter 2:13-15 and Romans 13:1 direct that God has ordained **NOT experts**, but **governing officials** who are in **power to be in power**, and Proverbs 21:1 claims God sovereignly controls **governing officials**. The sole exception to this rule, as we have also noted, is to heed **Scripture over governing officials IF they DIFFER**, Acts 5:29. If our **governing officials** ever differ with Scripture, we have also learned that 2 Timothy 3:15-17 promises that Scripture will show us what to do!

(5) On the new law providing supplementary unemployment income that discourages many from working on their regular jobs and hurts the economy, we have many times taught that 2 Thessalonians 3:10 directs that if we do not work, we should not eat. We should work to earn our own livelihoods versus living off of the money of others.

(6) On the way the massive government spending during the pandemic is indebting future generations of Americans, we have long taught that Exodus 20:15 calls us not to steal, and burdening future generations with debt is stealing from them! As we have also long taught, we believers in Christ must seek not to spend excessively, but be content with what we possess (Hebrews 13:5) and save up for our children like 2 Corinthians 12:14b directs us to do.

(7) On the Federal Reserve Chairman's decision to cease warning against surging deficits and urge Congress "to spend as much money as necessary to aid workers and businesses," we have often taught that Proverbs 22:7 warns against debt! Opposite what the government is doing, God calls us to work for our livelihoods and seek to avoid debt, and those should be our personal goals regardless what occurs in the godless world of spiritual darkness around us!

(8) On the pressure that fuels excess government spending being the lack of money for food that many face due to loss of income, we before noted that 2 Thessalonians 3:10 calls us to work for our income, that Jesus in John 6:12 urged His disciples to gather up the leftovers of His feeding of the 5,000 and that in Luke 14:28-29 He taught saving and budgeting to pay day laborers each day for each day's work to build a vineyard tower, implying the need for us to work for our income, to budget and to save. We have also before noted that Hebrews 13:5 directs us to be content with what we have that we avoid needless spending! Yes, we should help the needy in this crisis as Galatians 2:10 teaches, but God wants us to learn from this crisis to work for our income, to budget, to be frugal and save.

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we sustain good thinking in prolonged crises by constantly subjecting our minds to what Scripture actually teaches and recalling so as to apply God's past lessons for us.