

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XXVI. Overcoming Harmfully Errant Thinking In Crises

(2 Chronicles 13:1-22)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The potent mental and emotional pressures the pandemic crisis produces can lead to harmfully errant thinking:

(1) The April 19, 2020 Sunday Republican story, "Pandemic affecting the food supply," p. 1A, reported, "The virus has infected hundreds of workers at plants in Colorado, South Dakota, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Mississippi" and elsewhere so that even "(m)eat" and "veggies may be hard to come by." Many consumers have already made panic runs on paper products, so news of a possible shortage of meat and vegetables may cause runs on those staples, worsening the plight of food banks already depleted by millions of recently unemployed workers ("Pandemic adds spike in demand for food pantries," Republican-American, April 17, 2020, p. 10A) and creating shortages on these foods for those who can still afford to buy them.

(2) Chris Powell's article, "Putting a price on lives" (Ibid., p. 12A) noted, "If the country goes back to work, people will die. But people will also die if the country doesn't go back to work, and without work, the country will be much changed for the worse for many years."

(3) The stress of the crisis is taking its toll, too: (a) last week, my wife saw a university official in a video conference call give a long rant on how the pandemic had upset her life at the university! (b) I saw a grocery store clerk get all flustered and rush about when customers tried to pick up grocery carts from an unsanitized line of carts! (c) Recently, a believer who worried we might be facing the Great Tribulation asked me to give him an overview of Revelation chapters 2-3 to settle him. I gave the overview, and emphasized the Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 prediction about the "mini-Great Tribulation" that is to occur before the rapture and the Great Tribulation that follows that.

(4) Some talk show hosts and religious leaders claim globalists and/or Marxists are using the quarantine to rob us of our personal liberties. Whether this is true or not, such claims can lead people to become so alarmed that they develop harmfully errant thinking that produces wildly lawless behavior that does nobody any good.

Need: *So we ask, "How can we overcome harmfully errant thinking in this pandemic crisis?!"*

- I. The Southern Kingdom of Judah's king Abijah chose to fight king Jeroboam of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, a decision that put Abijah and Judah in a very dangerous crisis, 2 Chronicles 13:1-3:**
 - A. When Abijah came to Judah's throne, he led 400,000 "valiant men of war" against Israel, 2 Chr. 13:1-3a ESV.
 - B. However, Jeroboam of Israel then led 800,000 "chosen mighty warriors" against Abijah, 2 Chron. 13:3v ESV.
- II. Realizing he faced grave danger and certain military disaster, Abijah spoke to Jeroboam and Israel to try to persuade them not to fight him, 2 Chronicles 13:4; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 630!**
- III. However, Abijah's words exposed harmfully errant thinking that had led to his crisis, 2 Chron. 13:5-12:**
 - A. Abijah claimed his father Rehoboam had been manipulated by bad counselors to decide to rule harshly, what led Israel to rebel against him (2 Chronicles 13:5-7). In reality, Rehoboam himself had rejected the culturally superior, Biblical advice of his older advisers, what had led to Israel's rebellion, 2 Chronicles 10:6-14.
 - B. Abijah claimed Jeroboam and Israel were foolishly countering God to fight against him, the Davidic king, in view of God's lasting Covenant with David (2 Chronicles 13:5-8a). However, Abijah was not heeding the prophet Shemaiah's warning to Judah not to fight Israel to try to regain control of the ten northern tribes since God had let them rebel to punish sin in Judah, 1 Kings 12:22-24 with 2 Chronicles 10:15; 1 Kings 11:29-39.
 - C. Abijah claimed God would help Judah defeat Israel because Jeroboam had started an apostate syncretism opposite the true worship of God in Judah's city of Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 13:8b-12). However, Abijah himself hypocritically worshiped the false pagan gods of his father Rehoboam (1 Kings 15:1-3 with 14:21-24), so Abijah was in no position before God to expect the Lord to bless him by giving him victory over Israel.
 - D. In summary, had Abijah heeded God's Word, he would have never landed in his dangerous predicament:
 1. First, heeding Scripture would have led Abijah to worship God, and God would have helped him in battle.
 2. Second, heeding God's warning through Shemaiah would have led Abijah to avoid war with Israel!
- IV. Since Abijah's speech exposed unbiblical error that left him without God's blessing, Israel's Jeroboam circled some of his soldiers around behind Abijah, cornering him into an even worse crisis, 2 Chr. 13:13.**
- V. Terrified, Abijah and his men finally did what was Biblical: they cried unto God and blew the priests' trumpets in faith that God would deliver them in battle in accord with Numbers 10:9. (2 Chr. 13:14-15)**

- VI. God gave Abijah and Judah a great victory over Jeroboam and Israel, and Scripture states this victory came because they Biblically RELIED on the God of their fathers, 2 Chron. 13:18 with Deut. 20:1-4.
- VII. Abijah and Judah ended up blessed while Jeroboam and Israel lacked God's blessing, 2 Chron. 13:17-20.

Lesson: When Abijah neglected to heed God's Word, he developed harmfully errant thinking that landed him in a very dangerous crisis, but when he Biblically relied on God for help, God rescued and blessed him.

Application: (1) May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) May we (a) avoid harmfully errant thinking that leads to dangerous crises by heeding Scripture. (b) If we face a crisis caused by harmfully errant thinking from having overlooked or disobeyed Scripture, may we heed God's Word for His restoration and blessing.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

To apply this message, we address each of the issues in our introduction with Scripture (as follows):

(1) On the potential shortage on livelihood products, (a) Hebrews 13:5-6 ESV directs: "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he [God] has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'" Instead of panic buying or hoarding, God wants us to buy our food with self-control, considering the needs of other people around us, trusting He will provide even when others hoard. (b) We recall in our last message in this series that God fed Elijah in a drought when he was quarantined by the Brook Cherith, hiding himself from Ahab. God sent ravens that often neglect to feed their young (Job 38:41) faithfully to give Elijah meat and bread both morning and evening, 1 Kings 17:1-6. When the brook dried up, God addressed that need, too, 1 Kings 17:7-16. (c) Also, if God provides for ceremonially unclean ravens (Numbers 14:12-14), He will meet our needs, Luke 12:22-24.

(2) On whether to stay quarantined or return to work, (a) medical and government officials have openly contradicted each other on this issue, leaving the public unsettled. (b) However, Romans 13:1-2 claims God ordains every official to rule, so God wants us to obey all authorities over us with the exception that we heed **God above** such human officials **when they differ** in their commands, Acts 5:29. (c) As for **God's will** on this issue, (i) Jesus in Matthew 6:25 NIV put a higher value on the life of the body than food (ii) and a higher value on the body than on clothes with (iii) Paul in 1 Timothy 6:8 calling us to be content with the "means of subsistence, food" (*diatrophe*, Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 189) like food and the income to buy it (iv) and housing and clothing "cover" for the body (*skepasma*, Ibid., p. 761). (d) Applied to us today, **God** wants us (i) to put saving our lives from death by the coronavirus our top priority, heeding government rules. (ii) **However, if** the **shutdown** is so **long** that to **sustain life itself** with food, clothing and housing means we must work as 2 Thessalonians 3:10 orders, we should **disobey** government rules as **hygienically** as is **possible**, but do so **prudently** like Gideon did with the Preincarnate Christ's approval when he threshed wheat in a winepress to hide it from the Midianites, Judges 6:11-12.

(3) On how pressures from the pandemic can cause us emotional problems, (a) Isaiah 26:3-4 KJV states of the Lord: "Thou wilt keep him in [literally] peace peace [*shalom, shalom*, *Bib. Heb.*, p. 642], whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth [*batah*, relies upon; lie extended on the ground, B. D. B., *A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T.*, p. 105] in thee. Trust [*batah* again, Ibid.] ye in the Lord for ever: for in the [literally] Lord Lord [*Jah(weh), Jahweh*, Ibid., *Bib. Heb.*] is everlasting strength." The repetition of the noun in Hebrew makes it emphatic, so Isaiah 26:3-4 emphasizes the **greatness** of the **peace** one obtains when the One upon Whom he **relies** is the **Lord!** (b) Isaiah 41:10 KJV gives God's promise: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (c) Also, as noted in our last Easter message [on our web site], Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 predicted a "mini-Great Tribulation" for our era of Church History, so what we now face is **not** the Great Tribulation that will occur after the rapture of the Church. As we noted in our last Easter message, God wants us to respond to this pandemic by obeying His Word for blessing.

(4) On the claim that globalists or Marxists are using the shutdown to rob us of our liberties, since we face a "mini-Great Tribulation," we can expect evil rulers by intrigue to afflict people akin to what the antichrist will do in the Great Tribulation. Though we will face troublesome rulers, we will face a lesser degree of them than those who will face the Great Tribulation. We must then trust **God's** sovereign control of even godless rulers to work for **His** interests with **His** people as in Esther 6:1. There, God kept pagan king Ahasuerus awake until his chronicles were read to him, leading to the Hebrew people being rescued from wicked Haman! (c) Regardless what evil exists in the powers that be, we are to heed all officials (Romans 13:1-2) unless doing so causes us to disobey God (Acts 5:29).

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we avoid needlessly falling into harmfully errant thinking by heeding Scripture. If we face a crisis that is pushed upon us, may we heed Scripture to think well for blessing.