

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XXXIV. Focusing On Our Role In A Trying Time

(2 Chronicles 22:9c-23:21)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We are living in a trying time when we face many humanly overwhelming problems:

(1) "The Federal Reserve" recently "estimated . . . that the economy will shrink 6.5% this year . . . by far the deepest annual contraction on records dating to World War II" ("1.5 million more laid-off workers seek benefits," Republican-American, June 12, 2020, p. 11A) and job and even food insecurity is rampant around the nation.

(2) Rich Lowry ("Social-distancing hypocrisy," Ibid., June 17, 2020, p. 12A) noted, "More than 1,000 public-health experts signed a letter calling the protests 'vital to the national public health' . . . It's social distancing for people and activities they find uncongenial and different rules for their ideological allies," a "betrayal of the public trust."

(3) Hans von Spakovsky's piece, "Gorsuch's Supreme Legislature" (Ibid.) observed, "(A) six-member majority [of the Supreme Court] led by Justice Neil M. Gorsuch has rewritten Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include sexual orientation and gender identity in the definition of 'sex.' Why bother trying to pass the proposed Equality Act when you can get the justices to make law for you?"

(4) We face big spiritual problems in some evangelical leaders: last Tuesday, a minister on a nationwide Bible teaching class that was broadcast on Christian radio station WIHS in Middletown, Connecticut taught that Ephesians 5:21-33 orders husbands to submit to their wives even though Ephesians 5:22a KJV clearly states just the opposite!

(5) We face big spiritual problems at the grassroots level, too: last week, two believers independently of each other told me of three cases of grave sin in other professing Christians that were troubling them and other believers.

(6) The title of Tamara Lush's story, "'It's been one thing after another': Americans are unhappiest they've been in 50 years," says it all, for indeed, "2020 has been rough on the American psyche." (usatoday.com, June 16, 2020) In addition, the survey that produced this finding was performed mostly before George Floyd's death, what would have added to the unhappiness of Americans! (Ibid.)

Need: *So we ask, "In our era of humanly overwhelming problems, what uplifting thing would God have us do?!"*

- I. Judah faced a terrible era after Judah's 23-year-old young king Ahaziah was slain, 2 Chron. 22:9c-10:**
- A. Ahaziah's death produced a power vacuum, for he left only small sons incapable of ruling, 2 Chronicles 22:9c.
 - B. His mother Athaliah, daughter of ruthless pagan Jezebel and king Ahab of Israel, then chose to annihilate all of Ahaziah's young sons, her own grandsons, to assume the throne of Judah, 2 Chronicles 22:10.
 - C. Athaliah promoted Baal worship in Judah (2 Chron. 23:17), and as evidenced by her murder of her grandsons, Baal worship "was barbarous and thoroughly licentious," having "a most serious retarding and debilitating effect on every phase . . . of cultural and community life," Merrill F. Unger, Arch. and the O. T., 1973, p. 175.
 - D. Athaliah's reign thus was an appalling experience for Judah's people as was evidenced by Jerusalem's being "quiet" only after her eventual demise, 2 Chronicles 23:21.
- II. However, individuals privately served God, and He used their efforts for blessing, 2 Chron. 22:11-23:21:**
- A. Ahaziah's half-sister Jehoshabeath, wife of high priest Jehoiada, so opposed Athaliah's move to kill her half-brother's sons that she risked her life to steal one of Ahaziah's sons named Joash from among those being slain and hide him and his nurse in a temple storage chamber for mattresses and couches where the baby's cries could not be heard, 2 Chronicles 22:11. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 2 Kings 11:2)
 - B. Athaliah thus ruled Judah as little Joash, the rightful heir to the throne, was hidden in the temple, 2 Chr. 22:12.
 - C. When Joash had grown big enough to rule with the high priest Jehoiada's help, Jehoiada took courage to act to preserve the Davidic line in obedience to Scripture, 2 Chron. 23:3. He secretly planned for Joash's coronation under heavy guard by Levites and men in Judah, using weapons of David stored in the temple, 2 Chr. 23:1-9.
 - D. Having carefully crafted a plan to crown Joash and protect him until he reached the throne beyond Athaliah's power to harm him, Jehoiada gained the help of individual Levites and men in Judah to implement his plan for a coup so that Athaliah was slain and little Joash was crowned king in her place, 2 Chronicles 23:10-15.
 - E. After the coup, Jehoiada made a covenant with all the people and the king to follow the Lord, 2 Chron. 23:16.
 - F. The people then destroyed the temple of Baal, they executed its high priest Mattan, they reestablished full Biblical worship at God's temple and placed Joash on the throne of David, 2 Chronicles 23:17-20.
 - G. The land of Judah finally rejoiced and Jerusalem was quiet at the death of Athaliah, 2 Chronicles 23:21.

Lesson: When wicked Athaliah tried to annihilate her grandsons to gain the throne, producing a godless reign, individuals did what they personally could do to heed God's Word in toppling her and reinstating a Davidic king.

Application: (1) May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) In facing an era of humanly overwhelming trouble, may we (a) focus on what God in Scripture calls us individually to do and (b) courageously fulfill that calling, (c) looking to God to make our effort effective.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In addressing the needs noted in our introduction, we view Scripture on God's **individual** assignments for us:

(1) In regard to our individual duties regarding our mental health, livelihoods, lifestyles, marriages, families, society and world, Psalm 128:1-6 offers comprehensive guidance: (a) If a male head of household reveres God and obeys His Word (v. 1), (b) he will enjoy the fruit of his labors, he will be "happy" (*'ashar*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 80-81) and "things will go well for him" (*tob*, Ibid., p. 373), v. 2. To explain, a God-revering man who heeds God's Word will succeed in making a living, enjoy good mental health and experience God's blessing of a good life, v. 1-2. (c) He will also see his wife become like a fruitful vine throughout the rooms of their home, v. 3a. (d) This state will produce blessing in the couple's children who will be like olive trees around about their dining table (v. 3b-4). (e) The blessing of this family will yield blessings on Israel's capital of Jerusalem (v. 5). (f) Then, the blessing of this family in ensuing generations will so impact the nation that it will lead to good relationships between the nation Israel and other nations so that Israel will enjoy peace (v. 6). Thus, in time, in widening circles of cause-effect issues, a God-revering man will eventually impact everything in himself and everyone around him for good!

In cases where the male head of household is not a believer, 1 Corinthians 7:13-14 teaches, "The presence of a believer in the home sets the home apart and gives it a Christian influence it would not otherwise have," Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to 1 Corinthians 7:14. Accordingly, by application of Psalm 128, the saved wife who is wed to an unsaved husband by her reliance on the Holy Spirit will have a great and good influence on her own mental health, her livelihood, her lifestyle, her marriage, her family, her society, her nation and the world!

(2) In ministering in the local church, Romans 12:1-8 directs us (a) to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God to glorify Him (Romans 12:1) instead of being conformed to the world, to be transformed by the renewing of our mind to function in God's will (Romans 12:2). (b) That divine will involves our not presuming to be spiritual renaissance men who try to do more than what God directs, but who focus on using the spiritual gift God gave us to minister to others. (Romans 12:3-8). (c) It is God and not we who builds the church, Matthew 16:18 and Acts 2:47b.

(d) For teachers and preachers in particular, (i) to handle Scripture well, expositors must interpret God's Word by use of the literal, grammatical and historical or "normal" method of interpretation (as we have taught how Jesus interpreted Exodus 3:6 in some of our lessons out of Mark 12:18-27). [Applied to the Ephesians 5:21-33 passage noted in our sermon introduction, though Ephesians 5:21 KJV calls believers to submit "one to another," the **context** shows that this does **NOT** mean that husbands are to submit to their wives anymore than parents are to submit to their children or masters to their slaves (Ephesians 6:1-4, 5-9). Rather, Ephesians 5:21 is a **general** directive where Paul in Ephesians 5:22-6:9 *specifies* that subordinate wives, children and slaves are to submit to their respective husbands, parents and masters!] (ii) As for concerns about great sin in professing Christians, Bible expositors must heed Christ's Matthew 13:1-52 parables that explain that only a minority of those who hear the Word of God proclaimed will respond well to it in the long-term, and only a fraction of that receptive minority will respond a hundredfold due to varying degrees of spiritual victory over Satan, the world and the sin nature. Satan will also try to flood the local church with unsaved folk and then let the organized Church grow numerically, corrupting it with false doctrines in order to discourage God's teachers so much that they cease proclaiming God's Word! However, Christ taught that God's servants must be highly motivated to **keep on** expounding priceless Old Testament [parable of Hid Treasure] and New Testament [parable of Pearl of Great Price] truths (Matthew 13:52b) regardless of the discouraging oppositions they face. After all, the effects on the few who respond are so valuable in God's estimation that in eternity, He will richly reward expositors who obey Him, Matthew 13:43; Daniel 12:3. Christ in these parables twice told of God's final separation of the unsaved from believers to encourage those who proclaim His Word not to be discouraged by the evil they face in ministry, that their work to expound God's Word will be invaluable in the end so that they keep on ministering for those who will respond! (iii) Also, in our Laodicean era, God offers the **extra** reward to Bible expositors of **current** great, positive influence in their earthly ministries over the local and eventually over the universal Church if these teachers live righteously and faithfully, eagerly expound Scripture, Rev. 3:21!

May we trust in Christ for salvation. In facing today's era of humanly overwhelming trouble, may we focus on God's personal calling, courageously fulfill that Biblical assignment and let Him make us effective.