

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XLIII. Conquering The Destructive Sin Of Pride

(2 Chronicles 32:24-33)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Ezekiel 28:11-17 reveals that pride was Satan's downfall, but it is still a destructive sin in today's world:

(1) It occurs in politics: "Republican Town Committee Chairman Jeffrey Santopietro . . . was arrested . . . following a tussle at a breakfast and lunch spot." (Michael Puffer, "Mayor rebuffs GOP slam on his vacation," Republican-American, August 14, 2020, p. 3A) "Witnesses" said Mr. "Santopietro pushed another customer against a wall after a perceived insult." He later apologized for his "'immature' response" to the insult (Ibid.), but not before his hurt pride had led to his personal and political reputations being injured.

(2) It exists in the government: "The Connecticut State Police Union is asking a federal judge to declare parts of the state's new police accountability law unconstitutional." (Dave Collins, "Police union asks judge to toss part of reform law," Ibid., August 13, 2020, p. 1A) "Andrew Matthews . . . executive director" of the union, said of the lawmakers, "'What's really offensive is they didn't call us, sit down and negotiate.'"

Hurt pride has thus played a significant role in the institution of a police union lawsuit against the state!

(3) It happens in evangelical circles: Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon in, The Seduction of Christianity (1985, p. 222-223) wrote, ". . . (A) number of Evangelical Christian leaders . . . are working toward the . . . goal of creating a new world of peace, love and brotherhood" with Dominion theology, Ibid., p. 222-223. "The call to . . . save our world . . . by setting up a new world government of love and equality . . . caters to our pride to tell ourselves that after all *we can do it.*" (Ibid., p. 221) Evangelical Earl Paulk even claimed, "'Don't expect the 'rapture' to rescue you! . . . If you want to bring Christ back to earth, you can do it . . . WE CAN DO IT!" (Ibid.) So, Dominion theology is used by some evangelicals proudly to say the Church is sovereign over Christ's return and to debase the rapture doctrine!

Need: So, we ask, "*What would God direct in gaining victory over the destructive sin of pride?!*"

- I. **After the Lord gave Hezekiah honor from other nations for trusting God to rescue him from Assyria's invasion (2 Chronicles 32:22-23), God knew Hezekiah could become proud over all that honor, so He let Hezekiah become mortally ill that he might humbly beg God to be healed, 2 Chronicles 32:24, 25:**
 - A. The Lord saw that granting Hezekiah great honor from many nations left him vulnerable to turning proud, so God let Hezekiah become ill to the point of death, 2 Chronicles 32:22-23 with 2 Chronicles 32:24a, 25.
 - B. Hezekiah initially rightly humbly asked God to heal him, so God did so, 2 Chron. 32:24b; 2 Kings 20:1-11.
- II. **However, though Hezekiah humbly responded to his life-threatening illness, he failed to REMAIN humble in a later test, leading to a disastrous act of sin, 2 Chronicles 32:25-26, 31; 2 Kings 20:12-21:**
 - A. After God healed Hezekiah of his illness, some ambassadors from Babylon visited Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery, 2 Kings 20:12; 2 Chronicles 32:31a.
 - B. Secular history reveals that the real reason the Babylonian king sent his ambassadors to Hezekiah was to get him to join Babylon in an alliance against Assyria, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 579. These ambassadors thus used the opportunity that Hezekiah's healing provided them to congratulate him on his healing so as to appeal to his ego and in doing so get him to unite with Babylon in opposition to Assyria.
 - C. 2 Chronicles 32:31b reveals God let Hezekiah face these Babylonian ambassadors with their ego-teasing words to test him, to see whether he would sinfully take proud credit for his wealth and recovery from illness or properly testify in humility of God's gracious blessings unto Him!
 - D. Instead of properly staying humble, Hezekiah fell for the ambassadors' ploy and proudly showed them all of his wealth, boasting how he could greatly finance Babylon's campaign against Assyria, Ibid.; 2 Kings 20:13.
 - E. Accordingly God sent His prophet Isaiah to tell Hezekiah that all the wealth he had shown the men from Babylon would one day be carried away to Babylon when it invaded Judah, 2 Kings 20:17-18.
- III. **Hezekiah repented of his false pride (2 Chron. 32:26a), so God graciously postponed His punishment of the Babylon seizure of Hezekiah's wealth until after Hezekiah's era, 2 Chron. 32:26b; 2 Kings 20:19.**

Lesson: *Through various events, God sought to teach Hezekiah humbly to honor the Lord for God's blessings. When Hezekiah instead sinfully, proudly exalted himself, the Lord severely punished him, but when he humbly repented, God graciously postponed His punishment.*

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) *May we never proudly take credit for God's blessings, but humbly thank Him and testify to others of God's gracious goodness to us.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) Several Scripture passages reveal why and how we are to remain humble before God (as follows): (a) in Jeremiah 9:23-24 ESV, God directs us not to boast in our wisdom, our human might or our riches, but in knowing and understanding the Lord, who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness in the earth. (b) 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 ESV informs us that God has not chosen those who are great according to this world's standards to serve Him, but those who are relatively weak and unimpressive according to this world to do great things in His might that none of us believers might boast of ourselves before God, but give Him the glory for His gracious use of us. (c) 1 Corinthians 4:7 teaches that the gifts of supernatural power God has given us believers can never allow us to boast in ourselves, for they are God's gifts. If God mightily uses us in Christian life and service, we must stay humbly grateful for it.

(2) As for Dominion theology that we reported in our introduction, we note this belief teaches believers in Christ are so mighty that they can save the world politically, socially and spiritually so that Christ will be impressed by their work and return to rule instead of believers having to wait on Him to rapture them out of a hopeless situation. In response, (a) we view John 14:1-3 NIV where Jesus said, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." (b) There are differing views on this rapture doctrine, so we list them (as follows): (i) Some hold to the Posttribulation view, the rapture occurs at the end of the seven-year Great Tribulation where believers are caught up to meet Christ in the air and then turn right around and return with Him to the earth as He sets up His Millennial Kingdom. (ii) Others hold this rapture occurs in the middle of the seven-year Great Tribulation, the Midtribulation or so-called "Pre-Wrath" view, after the antichrist has been revealed to the world as the antichrist. (iii) Others hold to the Partial Rapture, that believers are raptured only as they are matured through the trials of the Great Tribulation and (iv) others hold the Pretribulation view, that the Church is raptured before the seven-year Great Tribulation begins.

(c) We comment on each position from John 14:1-3 NIV (as follows): (i) On the Posttribulation view, we note that the Greek verbs for "be" (*ete*) and "am" (*eimi*) in the last phrase of John 14:3 that reads, "that you also may *be* where I *am*" are *both* in the *present* tense (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 386; The Analytical Greek Lexicon, 1972, p. 118, 189) that denotes **continuance of action**. (J. Gresham Machen, N. T. Grk. For Beginners, 1951, p. 21-22) Thus, when the rapture occurs, Christ will take believers to be with Him in heaven *for some length of time!* The rapture **cannot** then occur at the **end** of the Great Tribulation when Christ is returning to the earth and there is no time for believers to be with Him in His Father's house in heaven! (ii) On the Midtribulation view, Jesus prefaced His remarks on the rapture with a call that His disciples not let their hearts be troubled, John 14:1. That does not fit a view that believers must live through 3 1/2 harrowing years of antichrist's rule when he has been revealed as the antichrist and is allowed to rule as God's judgment on a Christ-rejecting world, 2 Thessalonians 2:6-12. We believers in Christ are not guilty of rejecting Him so as to have to face the antichrist, so the Midtribulation view errs. (iii) On the Partial Rapture view, in John 14:1, Jesus' call for His disciples not to be troubled involves a present imperative (*tarassestho*, The Analyt. Grk. Lex., 1972, p. 398) with a subjunctive negative particle (*me*), so Christ was calling His disciples to **STOP being** troubled. They were already upset over Jesus' John 13:38 prediction that Peter would deny Him. (B. K. C., N. T., p. 322), so Jesus' comforting word one day to take Peter and His other disciples to heaven was made right after Christ had exposed Peter's coming denial with no hint that Peter first had to become spiritually mature to qualify for the rapture, countering the Partial Rapture view! Also, the Great Tribulation is God's punishment of unbelievers who rejected Christ's Gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12), and no true Christian is guilty of that sin, so no believer can face the Great Tribulation! (iv) Thus, John 14:1-3 allows for **only the PREtribulation** Rapture view, that the rapture occurs for **every** believer *before* the *start* of God's judgment of the **WHOLE seven-year Great Tribulation Period!**

(d) Since the rapture must be **PREtribulational** for God to punish a Christ-rejecting world (2 Thessalonians 2:6-12), Dominion theology's view that the Church will successfully disciple the world to trust in Christ greatly errs! Thus, instead the Church's seeking to dominate the political and military forces of the world to usher in Christ's Kingdom like Dominion theology teaches, we believers in Christ are to disciple individuals and look for God's deliverance of us out of this godless world in the Blessed Hope of the **PREtribulation** rapture! (Titus 2:13)

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. May we then not proudly take credit for God's blessings, but humbly thank Him and testify before others of our reliance on God for His deliverances and blessings!