

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XLVIII. Overcoming At-Risk Thinking Under Duress

(2 Chronicles 35:20-27)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Much of our experience today is marked by stress, and with it comes the lure to adopt harmful thinking:

(1) Tyler Brandt's article, "Harmful Ideas That Weaken Generation Z" (The Epoch Times: Mind and Body, September 9-15, 2020, p. 6) claimed, "Many university students are learning to think in distorted ways, and this increases their likelihood of becoming fragile, anxious, and easily hurt."

He explained that "'three Great Untruths' negatively impact the mental well-being of today's youth," and that they are: (1) "What doesn't kill you makes you weaker," (2) "Always trust your feelings" and (3) "Life is a battle between good and evil [classes of] people," with this third untruth reflecting "Marxist" ideology, *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.

(2) Actually, these very untruths negatively impact our whole society today: (a) we see the "What doesn't kill you makes you weaker" fear-promoting untruth in Connecticut Governor Lamont's recent ruling on masks. A letter by attorney Leslie Wolfgang of Waterbury in the Republican-American (September 18, 2020, p. 8A) observed, "The rationale for an otherwise sober Gov. Ned Lamont to impose fines and jail time on citizens who violate vague and suspect mask mandates . . . eludes me . . . (A)t the start of the COVID-19 crisis . . . (w)e the people were sold a lockdown based on hospitalization rates and 'bending the curve,'" but "the standard for lockdowns has evolved to analyzing 'positivity,'" what "has been hovering around 1%. Not of the population, mind you. This is 1% of the people who bother to get tested for COVID-19 . . ." (*Ibid.*)

(b) The "Life is a battle between good and evil [classes of] people" untruth is being played out in the political drama that is unfolding upon the passing of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The mainstream media and Democratic politicians pontificate about the alleged immorality of a Republican-controlled Senate and President seating a conservative justice in place of the far left Ruth Bader Ginsburg just weeks before the presidential election! However, "during the administrations of Republican Presidents George H. W. Bush (1989-93) and George W. Bush (2001-19), some prominent Democrats -- including 2020 presidential nominee Joe Biden and now-Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer . . . opposed hypothetical late-in-presidential-term nominations," but when "Democratic President Barak Obama's nomination of federal Judge Merrick B. Garland to fill the Supreme Court seat left vacant by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia" occurred late in President Obama's term, and Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to let the Senate consider it, Chuck Schumer and Joe Biden never objected to President Obama's nomination of Judge Garland! ("Duty eludes U. S. Senate," *Ibid.*, September 22, 2020, p. 8A)

Actually, "for decades, the nomination and confirmation processes" for the "Supreme Court" were "relatively smooth," but "in 1987 when President Ronald Reagan nominated conservative jurist Robert Bork to serve on the high court," the "late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy . . . with help from Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman [Joe] Biden . . . made this a fight about ideology," so the "nomination died in the Democratic-controlled Senate. Since then, Democrats have offered generally scorched-earth opposition to Republican nominees." ("Court-packing specter returns," *Ibid.*, September 24, 2020, p. 10A) Now, "(c)ourt packing," or "dictating the number of Supreme Court seats" has "been touted . . . by many progressives" to place a super, long-term majority of progressives on the Court, what "President Franklin Roosevelt" had "planned" to do to make the Court "protect New Deal legislation," *Ibid.*

So, our national politics is composed of an alleged "battle between good and evil [political parties of] people!"

(c) As for the "Always trust your feelings" untruth, we face it in evangelicalism: John H. Armstrong, gen. ed., "Introduction: Two Vital Truths," The Coming Evangelical Crisis, 1996, p. 22, lamented that "today's evangelicalism treats experience as final authority" versus the Protestant Reformers' stand that Scripture is that authority, *Ibid.*, p. 20.

This theological shift shows up in the dearth of Bible teaching in Sunday School materials: our Sunday School Superintendant recently spoke with me on the difficulty he faced in finding Sunday School materials that even teach through a Bible passage instead of just listing a theme verse and jumping off into human reasoning. Relying on human reason and experience over Scripture has led many evangelicals to abandon verse-by-verse Bible exposition!

Need: *So, we ask, "In view of the stress we face due to troublesome thinking, what is the solution, and why?!"*

I. Due to great stress, good king Josiah faced the lure to adopt troublesome thinking, 2 Chron. 35:20-21:

- A. After Josiah led Judah to follow the Lord, Pharaoh Necho of Egypt led his army up Judah's western seacoast to fight Babylon at Carchemish up north near the western origin of the Euphrates River, 2 Chronicles 35:20a.

- B. With such a powerful foreign force as Egypt's army making an uninvited pass through Judah's territory, Judah's king Josiah was understandably upset, and led his army out to fight Egypt's army, 2 Chron. 35:20b.
- C. Pharaoh sent Josiah ambassadors who claimed that Pharaoh wanted no war with Judah, but that Josiah's God had directed Pharaoh to hurry to fight at Carchemish, that if Josiah opposed Pharaoh's army he was actually opposing a force that had the support of Judah's God, 2 Chronicles 35:21a.
- D. Accordingly, Pharaoh warned Josiah to cease trying to oppose him, for countering him was to fight against Josiah's God, what would then result in Josiah's destruction, 2 Chronicles 35:21b ESV.
- E. In responding to Pharaoh's ambassadors, Josiah had a critically important decision to make in his thinking:
 1. Josiah could have decided to follow king David's example in 1 Chronicles 14:9-17 when the Philistines *twice* invaded Judah and where David then *twice* sought God's advice on fighting against the Philistines!
 2. However, Josiah could sensibly **presume** that *pagan* Pharaoh was **lying** in saying that God was with him and decide to fight Pharaoh anyway. Yet, Josiah had no proof that Pharaoh's claim about God's helping him was false, and fighting Pharaoh when God was helping him would be a disastrous move for Josiah!
- II. **Josiah chose to rely on his own upset feelings instead of seeking God's counsel: he engaged Egypt in battle, disguising himself not to appear to be Judah's king to avoid being a big target, 2 Chron. 35:22a.**
- III. **This was a HUGE mistake, for PHARAOH'S advice REFLECTED GOD'S WILL, 2 Chronicles 35:22b.**
- IV. **Josiah thus experienced what wicked king Ahab of Israel did before him -- disguising himself to fight without God's blessing and being mortally wounded by archers, 2 Chron. 35:23-24b with 18:29, 33-34!**
- V. **God had promised Judah blessing only in Josiah's life (2 Chron. 34:24-28), so Josiah's untimely death hurt his nation, and its people led by the prophet Jeremiah lamented Josiah's loss, 2 Chron. 35:24c-27.**

Lesson: *By relying on his own thinking under duress instead of seeking God's counsel, good king Josiah made a bad decision that resulted in his untimely death, a tragic loss for the people of Judah.*

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) In facing duress, (a) may we not make a reactionary decision that may violate God's will and cause us and others who depend on us harm, but instead (b) follow Scripture.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We thus address **from Scripture** the "Three Great Untruths" that create great duress in our youth and society:

(1) On the untruth of "What doesn't kill you makes you weaker," the Apostle Paul in Acts 17:28 claimed the entire human race lives, moves and has its being in the Creator God [of Genesis 1]. Also, Revelation 1:18 teaches our Risen Lord Jesus Christ currently controls the death and eternal destiny of every human being. We couple these facts with Revelation 3:21 that we before noted predicts a Mini-Great Tribulation era for today before the rapture of the Church to cause unbelievers and wayward Christians to turn to Him. COVID-19 is thus a part of this era, so instead of being afraid of the virus, God wants us to trust in His Son Jesus Christ and obey His will in Scripture to enjoy His peace and blessing in our era, knowing that our personal lifespan is completely in His hands!

(2) On the untruth of "Life is a battle between good and evil [classes of] people," Paul's words in Acts 17:24-31 with John 3:16 shows God made of one blood all the nations of mankind who live on the earth so that all nations might seek the Lord and believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. Then, once people believe in Christ, there "is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:28-29) The battle in today's world is **not** between good and evil *classes* of *people*, but between **Satan**, the **god of this world** (2 Corinthians 4:4) and the **God of Scripture** (1 John 3:8b)! To be victorious, we must **personally** side with the God of Scripture by trusting in Christ for salvation from sin and hell (1 Cor. 15:1-11) and fellowshiping with God! (1 John 1:1-5:21)

(3) On the untruth of "Always trust your feelings," Deuteronomy 13:1-4 warns us against experience-based thinking that opposes written Scripture, and 2 Timothy 3:13-17 directs us to overcome deceivers ultimately by heeding Scripture. It is a fact that the Holy Spirit works in godly believers to make us will and perform God's will (Philippians 2:13), but even we believers can unwittingly slip out of fellowship with God and thus lack the capacity to discern the Holy Spirit's will from the will of our own sin natures or even from the will of Satan [as in Peter's case in Matthew 16:21-23]. Thus, like David who had the Holy Spirit (1 Samuel 16:13), ***in times of duress*** as when the Philistines came against David in 1 Chronicles 14:9-17, ***we need to consult God's written Word.***

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. In facing duress, may we not make impulsive decisions, but heed God's written, Biblical guidance.