

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XLII. Handling Blatant Opposition To Scripture's God

(2 Chronicles 32:1-23)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Even with today's COVID-19 trial, its economic and political fallout and disasters like storms and fires when one might think people would consider turning to God, opposition to Scripture's God is often quite blatant:

(1) "President Donald Trump," speaking about Democratic presidential nominee "Joe Biden," claimed, "He's following the radical left agenda . . . no religion . . . hurt the Bible, hurt God. He's against God . . ." ("At Ohio campaign rally, Trump claims Biden opposes God," Republican-American, August 7, 2020, p. 9A)

(2) One might think such criticism by the President is too severe, but support for it comes from none other than New York Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo himself: "on the heels of Easter Sunday, Cuomo haughtily asserted, 'The number [of COVID-19] cases is down because we brought the number down. God did not do that.'" (Paul Kengor, "No Thanks to God: The Awful, Angry Andrew Cuomo," April 26, 2020; spectatur.org)

(3) Opposition to Scripture's God is widespread, too, seen by a letter to the editor from James M. Anderson of New Milford. It claimed, "The gospel once preached in . . . most Protestant Churches in the 19th century and . . . less so in the 20th . . . is [today] viewed as the ravings of some religious fanatics . . ." (Ibid., August 5, 2020, p. 8A)

(4) Opposition to Scripture's God arises in Christian circles: "Jon Steingard, former lead singer of the Christian band Hawk Nelson, recently denounced his faith, saying, 'I am now finding that I no longer believe in God . . . Once I found that I didn't believe the Bible was the perfect Word of God -- it didn't take long to realize that I was no longer sure [God] was there at all.'" ("Christian Music Artist Denounces His Faith," Answers, July-Aug., 2020, p. 43)

Need: *So, we ask, "How should we handle blatant opposition to Scripture's God?!"*

- I. Judah's king Hezekiah faced blatant opposition to him and his God from Assyria's king, 2 Chr. 32:1-19:**
 - A. After Hezekiah had led the nation of Judah back to God, Assyria's king Sennacherib invaded Judah and encamped against its fortified cities, intending to win them for himself, 2 Chronicles 32:1.
 - B. Hezekiah responded by bolstering his defenses and urging his military leaders to trust in the Lord instead of fearing Assyria's king and his large army, claiming that God was stronger than Assyria, 2 Chronicles 32:2-8a.
 - C. The people of Judah thus rested in Hezekiah's words, looking to God for deliverance, 2 Chronicles 32:8b.
 - D. Assyria's king countered Hezekiah and his words, blatantly mocking Hezekiah and the Lord, 2 Chr. 32:9-19:
 1. Sennacherib sent messengers to Jerusalem to mock Hezekiah's call for Judah to trust in God, v. 9-10.
 2. This pagan king told Jerusalem's people that Hezekiah was destining them to die by famine and thirst under Assyria's siege by Hezekiah's telling them God would deliver them, for Hezekiah had removed Judah's high places, leaving only the temple at Jerusalem for the worship of God, allegedly angering God into not wanting to help Judah, 2 Chronicles 32:11-12. [Sennacherib as a pagan believed Judah's God like any pagan god he knew wanted to be worshiped in many places, revealing Sennacherib's ignorance of the true God's desire that Israel worship Him only at the temple opposite paganism, cf. Deuteronomy 12:1-7!]
 3. Sennacherib also claimed that since no god of any other nation Assyria had defeated was able to deliver their people from him, neither would Judah's God be able to deliver Judah from him, 2 Chron. 32:13-15.
 4. The servants of Sennacherib spoke more against Hezekiah and God and Sennacherib wrote letters with more mocks to be read aloud outside Jerusalem's wall to get her people to surrender, 2 Chron. 32:16-19.
- II. Hezekiah and God's prophet Isaiah prayed for the Lord's deliverance from Assyria (2 Chron. 32:20), and 2 Kings 19:20-34 tells how God answered, giving a prediction that He would deliver Judah:**
 - A. The Lord told Hezekiah that Sennacherib was merely God's tool for punishing various nations for sin (2 Kings 19:20-28), what had been predicted in Isaiah 10:5-6. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Kings 19:20-34)
 - B. God added that a remnant in Judah would survive though losing two years' worth of harvest (2 Kings 19:29-31; Ibid.), but that Jerusalem would not fall to the Assyrians. (2 Kings 19:32-34; Ibid.)
- III. In fulfillment of this prophecy, that night, the Angel of the Lord, the Preincarnate Christ, slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (2 Kings 19:35). Sennacherib withdrew in shame to Assyria where his sons slew him in the temple of his god, GOD'S just recompense for Sennacherib's mock of the Lord, 2 Chronicles 32:21!**
- IV. Hezekiah was then greatly honored in reward for his faith in the Lord: rulers of nations around him sent Hezekiah gifts in congratulation of God's deliverance of the kingdom of Judah, 2 Chronicles 32:22-23.**

Lesson: *When Hezekiah trusted God for deliverance from Assyria even amid brazen opposition by Assyria's king to Hezekiah's God and Hezekiah's trust in God, God gave Hezekiah a prophetic promise of His deliverance and fulfilled it, shaming and destroying Assyria's king while greatly honoring Hezekiah for his faith.*

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) To handle blatant opposition to Scripture's God, may we follow Hezekiah's example to trust God and His Word, particularly His prophetic utterances, for divine blessing.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In view of the illustrations in our sermon introduction of opposition to God and His Word, we note from Isaiah 46:9b-10a NIV that God wants us to see in His fulfillment of Biblical prophecy evidence of His existence and the validity of His Word: God there said, "I am God, and there is no other. I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, and what is still to come . . ."

One prophecy of note we can use to these ends is Daniel 9:24-27. Though Liberal Theology critics claim that the book of Daniel was written after its prophecies were fulfilled, recent studies show its Aramaic portions are in the style of government circles "from the 7th century B. C.," and its "linguistic forms are also closely related to the language of the 5th century B. C. Elephantine papyri," so Daniel was written when it claims it was written -- around 537 B. C. (Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., vol. Two, p. 17-18; *Ibid.*, Ryrie, "Introduction To The Book Of Daniel," p. 1217)

That being so, in 538 B. C., Daniel in Daniel 9:1 wrote that in studying Scripture, he learned that the 70 years of Israel's Babylonian Captivity predicted in Jeremiah were about to end, fulfilling Leviticus 26:33-34 (2 Chronicles 36:20-21) that claimed Israel would be in captivity for each year she had not observed her *land sabbaths* that occurred **every seventh year**, or as the KJV states it, every "**week**" of **years**. (*Ibid.*, ftns. to Daniel 9:1 and 9:24)

The Angel Gabriel then told Daniel in Daniel 9:24 that **another** literally "seventy sevens" or seventy "weeks" (KJV) of years (*Ibid.*), **another** 490 years of God's working with Israel, would occur before the Messianic Kingdom **began**. That 490-year timeline would start March 5, 444 B. C. when Persia's king Artaxerxes Longimanus ordered the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem and run to the sixty-ninth "week" of years when Messiah arrived, Daniel 9:25. (Josh McDowell, A Ready Defense, 1990, p. 59) The ancients and prophetic literature of the Bible used a **360-day year** calendar, so the sixty-ninth "week" of years ended March 30, A. D. 33, the day Jesus of Nazareth rode into Jerusalem on a donkey presenting Himself as Israel's Messiah to fulfill Zechariah 9:9! (*Ibid.*; Harold W. Hoehner, Ph. D., Chron. Aspects of the Life of Christ, 1979, p. 135-139) Thus, Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of Daniel 9:25-26!

There is a break in the timeline between the **end** of the sixty-ninth "week" of years in Daniel 9:26a and the **start** of the seventieth "week" of years in Daniel 9:27, for Daniel 9:26b mentions several events that occur **after** the sixty-ninth "week" of years **ends** in verse 26a but **before** the seventieth "week" of years **begins** in verse 27. The four events **during this timeline break** in Daniel 9:26b are: (1) Messiah's being "cut off," or executed on April 3, A. D. 33, three days **after** the "sixty-ninth week" of years **ended** (*Ibid.*), and (2) Messiah's having nothing, that is, no Kingdom! (Daniel 9:26 ESV, NIV) [Herman H. Goldstine's book, New and Full Moons: 1001 B. C. to A. D. 1651, 1973, p. 87, contains a computer-calculated list of lunar syzygies, and shows a full moon for April 3, A. D. 33, what precisely fits the Passover date for Christ's death!] (3) The **people** of the **prince yet to come**, this prince being the **future antichrist**, would then destroy Jerusalem and its temple, and since Romans did this in A. D. 70, the antichrist will rule over a [Revived] Roman Empire in the future Daniel 9:27 "seventieth week." Then, (4) in the rest of the unspecified time period of Daniel 9:26b, there would be wars and desolations of the temple and Jerusalem, what occurs in our era now!

Daniel 9:27 **then** predicted the "seventieth week" of years, the **still future** seven-year Great Tribulation Period that occurs after the rapture of the Church. Antichrist then makes a seven-year treaty with Israel only to break that treaty halfway through, or 3 1/2 years into the seventieth "week" of years, to try to destroy Israel, Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15-21; Revelation 12:1-17. However, antichrist will not succeed, and Christ's Kingdom will come after the "seventieth week" of years **ends**, Daniel 9:24; 12:11-12. [From Daniel 12:12 we learn that the actual functioning of the Messianic Kingdom begins 75 days after Christ's Second Coming, allowing time for final judgments, cleaning up and ordering a world that has been devastated in the Great Tribulation Period, *Ibid.*, Ryrie, ftn. to Daniel 12:12!]

Since the first "sixty-nine weeks" were literally and accurately fulfilled in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, we know the "seventieth week" will be literally and accurately fulfilled. We thus also know that Jesus is the sole, true Messiah from God, that Scripture is true and that the God Who predicted the seventy "weeks" nearly 100 years before the first "week" of the timeline began both exists and reigns as the Sovereign God of history!

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. May we use prophetic fulfillment as evidence to believe in God and His written Word!