

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XLIV. Overcoming Spiritual Blindness

(2 Chronicles 33:1-20)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Spiritual blindness afflicts a lot of people today, a fact we can readily illustrate:

(1) Spiritual blindness occurs in discussions on racial disparity: "Carol M. Swain, a now-retired African-American professor of law and political science at Vanderbilt University" noted "in 2003: 'According to . . . the liberal left, it is the racism of white people -- and not the personal choices of Blacks -- that is responsible for the high rate of illegitimacy, drug abuse, HIV infections and criminal acts that distinguish them from other racial and ethnic groups . . . Redress for grievances is sought from the government, private corporations, and foundations, while nothing is expected of their victims.'" ("Justifiable refusal" main editorial, Republican-American, August 20, 2020, p. 10A)

Significantly, when white people are involved in the same vices, no one blames it on racism by non-whites!

(2) Spiritual blindness occurs in the economic realm: "On May 9" of "1939, the sixth year of the New Deal's bold, persistent experimentation . . . FDR's Treasury secretary Henry Morgenthau testified to the House Ways and Means Committee: 'We have tried spending more than we have ever spent before, and it does not work . . . We have never made good on our promises . . .'" (George Will, "False nostalgia for New Deal," Ibid., August 20, 2020, p 10A)

Nevertheless, progressives now call "for a New Deal to resuscitate the economy from the COVID-19 pandemic-induced contraction," Ibid.

(3) Spiritual blindness exists in the realm of general morality: Hugo Gurden, editor-in-chief of the Washington Examiner in his August 19th piece, "Do Democrats hear what they are saying?" ("Quotable" editorial, Ibid., August 21, 2020, p. 8A) wrote: "'There were many, many examples from the Democratic National Convention of frankly unbelievable, self-deluding propaganda. It swept down upon a suffering nation like an avalanche, containing no genuine admiration for the country it wishes to govern, no trace of self-awareness, no doubt of its own rightness -- a great, cold, smothering, torrent of deadly virtue.'" Such "'deadly virtue'" is no real virtue at all!

(4) Spiritual blindness occurs in the blaming of various officials for pandemics: in his letter in the August 25, 2020 Republican-American, p. 8A, Tom Crider of Southbury complained about President Trump's alleged "bungling" of the COVID-19 pandemic, "leaving hundreds of thousands needlessly sick or dead." Mr. Crider put his hope in "Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden" who "has vowed to undo as much Trump damage as possible," Ibid.

However, Ron Klain, former chief of staff to then-Vice President Joe Biden, reported on the Obama-Biden administration's response to the H1N1 flu, saying, "'We did every possible thing wrong. Sixty million Americans got H1N1 in that period of time (2009-10), and it is just purely a fortuity that this isn't one of the great mass-casualty events in American History . . .'" (Ron Klain, quoted by Kimberly A. Strassel, "The Obama-Biden Virus Response," The Wall Street Journal, August 21, 2020 as cited in "Quotable," Republican-American, August 22, 2020, p. 8A)

(5) Spiritual blindness often occurs regarding the political motives of evangelicals: Lisa Quint's August 19th letter in the Republican-American "cited authors who allege that in the 2016 presidential election, evangelical Christians in the United States were willing to vote for Donald Trump, who did not share their values, to 'gain power for themselves.'" (letter by Monsignor Vittorio Guerrera of Kent, Ibid., August 26, 2020, p. 11A) "Ms. Quint" also implied evangelicals were trying to create a theocracy, "citing the oft-repeated mantra that 'it is unconstitutional for any religious group to be legislating its dogma, beliefs or prejudices into law that must be followed by others.'" (Ibid.)

Actually, I know of no believer in Christ who voted in 2016 for political power or to impose his beliefs on anybody else, but many who voted for the best of the imperfect candidates available to uphold individual liberties!

Need: *So, we ask, "What would God recommend be done to overcome spiritual blindness?!"*

I. Regardless of his godly father Hezekiah's example in opposing pagan idolatry, Judah's king Manasseh in spiritual blindness practiced gross pagan idolatry and even demeaned the true God, 2 Chronicles 33:1-9:

- A. In contrast to what his godly father king Hezekiah had done, Manasseh worshiped many false pagan gods like the pagans God had removed from Canaan and rebuilt the high places his father had destroyed, 2 Chr. 33:1-3.
- B. Manasseh even demeaned the Lord in His temple, installing pagan altars in its two courts and placing a carved idol in the temple, the building God had claimed to be His dwelling place, 2 Chronicles 33:4-5, 7-8.
- C. King Manasseh also practiced child sacrifice, witchcraft and demonism, angering the Lord, 2 Chronicles 33:6.
- D. Manasseh thus led Judah to do more evil than the Canaanites God had removed from the Land, 2 Chron. 33:9.

- II. God sent messengers to get Manasseh and his people to repent, but they did not listen, 2 Chron. 33:10.
- III. Accordingly, the Lord caused Manasseh to face a severe trial, 2 Chronicles 33:11 NIV: the Assyrians captured him, put a hook in his nose that was attached to a rope, they bound him with bronze fetters and took him 900 miles to Babylon, "Assyria's southern province." (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 645)
- IV. In great affliction, Manasseh greatly humbled himself before the Lord, repented and prayed for God's deliverance, and the Lord graciously restored him to his throne in Judah, 2 Chronicles 33:12-13a.
- V. 2 Chronicles 33:13b in the Hebrew states, "Then Manasseh knew that Jahweh [Lord], He is the Elohim [Creator God]." (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1427) This is the same statement Israel spoke in 1 Kings 18:39 when Elijah called fire down from heaven to prove that Jahweh, not Baal, was the Elohim! (Ibid., p. 546)
- VI. Enlightened to the truth, Manasseh then opposed all idolatry, he fortified Jerusalem, he rid God's temple of its pagan idols and he repaired the Lord's altar in the temple courtyard, 2 Chronicles 33:14-20.

Lesson: *When Manasseh was spiritually blinded to the true God and did not heed His messengers to turn from debasing the Lord and worshipping idols, God used a severe trial to teach him that Israel's Lord, "Yahweh," was the Creator "Elohim," so Manasseh humbly repented and the Lord restored him to his throne and blessed him.*

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 heed God's Word whenever it is presented lest we face severe trials that God allows to afflict us to retrieve us from the spiritual darkness that threatens our outlook.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

If we desire to avoid God's severe trials that teach us to turn from spiritual darkness on the issues noted in our introduction, we have the following Scriptural directives we do well to heed:

(1) On alleged racial disparity, (a) Ezekiel 18:1-32 teaches that each person is responsible before God for his own sins. Thus, sin by anyone from any race is caused by his personal choice, not by society at large. The **solution** is (b) for **individuals** of **ANY race** (Acts 17:26, 30) (c) to believe in Christ and His substitutionary atonement for sin that they might be forgiven and receive eternal life and the Holy Spirit. (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Romans 8:9b) (d) Then, as a believer, one is to rely on the power of the indwelling God the Holy Spirit to boycott his sinful nature and to live a righteous life in the power of God, Galatians 5:16, 19-21, 22-23.

(2) On solving economic problems, (a) 2 Thessalonians 3:10 calls the believer to work for his livelihood and support dependents in his family (1 Timothy 5:8) while having the church care for believers in the congregation who are unable to earn a living and who lack providers in their relatives (1 Timothy 5:9-12). (b) To succeed as a breadwinner, among other things, one should work independently (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12), frugally utilize even ordinary income streams (Proverbs 24:30-34) and avoid laziness (Proverbs 27:23-27).

(3) On general morality, the unedifying characteristics of cold lovelessness and a smothering torrent of deadly self-righteous, self-deluding, deadly virtue mentioned by Hugo Gurden is overcome by the filling of the Holy Spirit! When one is **not** controlled by the Holy Spirit, he operates in his **sinful nature**, producing the unedifying behavior described by Mr. Gurden. (Galatians 5:19-21 NIV) Conversely, the Holy Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23 NIV) Many people today need to believe on Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin [described in "1, a-c" in this Conclusion section above] and rely on the Holy Spirit for complete behavior and demeanor transformation [described in "1,d" in this Conclusion section above].

(4) On handling pandemics, a pandemic generally occurs because the disease involved is an unknown entity to the medical community, so pre-pandemic preparations are only partly effective at best. The best we can do to address the threat of a future pandemic is to keep our immune systems healthy, what God calls us to do with natural and home remedies in 1 Timothy 5:23, while also getting the rest, exercise, and diet we need along with reasonable precautions.

(5) On spiritual blindness regarding our political motives as Christians, 1 Peter 2:13-15 directs us to be subject to every human institution for the sake of our testimony, the exception of course being our need to obey God over man when they differ, cf. Acts 5:29. We must live "as people who are free" but "not using" our "freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God," 1 Peter 2:16 ESV. "For this is the will of God, that by doing good" we "should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people" who make slanderous remarks about our motives. (1 Peter 2:15, 12 ESV) Peter wrote these words "just before the outbreak of Nero's persecution" of Christians (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1757: "Introduction to the First Letter of Peter"), so his words are applicable even in hard times.

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. Then, may we heed God's Word lest we face severe trials He allows to deliver us from blindness.