

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
XXXI. Handling Harmful Brainwashing Efforts
(Psalm 31:1-24)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We face significant harmful brainwashing efforts today:

(1) We face it in our politics: (a) A letter to the editor by Mark Godburn of Norfolk (Republican-American, July 5, 2022, p. 8A) commented that “people are canceled for their beliefs . . . speakers are disinvited, students railroaded, professors fired for not adhering to woke ideology” and the “Justice Department targets parents as extremists for disputing leftist school board policies . . . (T)he left’s draconian society is becoming more rooted every day, whether it’s regarding masks, abortion, environment, critical race teachings, trans athletic competition, etc. Whatever the issue, the left demands complete compliance or you’re slandered, hounded, and outed from every leftist pulpit in the press, Hollywood, academia, and government.” (b) Another letter by Jean Bieluczyk of Woodbury (Ibid., July 6, 2022, p. 7A) added, “I am appalled at the (Associated Press’s) level of radical left-wing opinion masquerading as ‘news’ . . . (T)he AP is so decayed it can no longer tell the difference between actual news and its deranged ‘woke’ opinions.” (c) In sharp contrast, on the morning of July 4th, I found my street littered with pamphlets from a white supremacist group that was soliciting people to join them. I know that Marxists try to infiltrate opposing parties to stir up strife between them to create social unrest and promote socialism (Brannon S. Howse, Marxianity, 2018, p. 9), so I wondered if this pamphlet incident was a “fake anti-woke” brainwashing effort by Marxist agitators!

(3) We face brainwashing pressures in regard to our spiritual beliefs: (a) A recent Supreme Court ruling held that “the Clean Air Act does not give the Environmental Protection Agency broad authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.” (Mark Sherman, “Supreme Court limits EPA in curbing power plant emissions,” Ibid., p. 9A) “In a dissent, Justice Elena Kagan wrote . . . ‘The Court appoints itself . . . the decision-maker on climate policy. I cannot think of many things more frightening.’” (Ibid.) However, in Genesis 8:22, God promised to keep the climate moderate enough for man to live on earth as long as it remains, but now a Supreme Court judge has been so swayed by climate change ideology that she has expressed alarm over a threat that doesn’t even exist! (b) Also, the editorial, “Liars they are not” (Ibid., June 30, 2022, p. 8A) noted the “U. S. Supreme Court’s decision . . . which overturned *Roe v. Wade*” has led “liberals to insist that the justices in the *Dobbs* majority . . . lied in their respective confirmation hearings” by saying “that *Roe* was a precedent worthy of respect.” Actually, “there is nothing to the lying accusation,” for “judicial precedent carries sizeable weight,” but “it is not absolute. If it were, the infamous ‘separate but equal’ precedent set by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) still would be the law of the land,” Ibid. Yet, the pressure is on to have us think that the Court’s majority lied so as to get us to tolerate abortion!

Need: *So, we ask, “How does God want us to handle the harmful brainwashing efforts we face?!”*

- I. **In Psalm 31:1-24, David faced life-threatening stress due to the efforts of his enemies to brainwash others around him to David’s eventual harm. This stress is evidenced by the way that David’s thoughts as to subject matter are somewhat scattered throughout the psalm.**
- II. **We organize the psalm’s subject matter to understand David’s crisis and God’s solution, Psalm 31:1-24:**
 - A. David faced slander that was meant to turn others against him so his foes might kill him, Psalm 31:13, 18, 20.
 - B. This slander successfully created a relationship barrier between David and others around him, Psalm 31:11-12:
 1. David’s neighbors expressed utter contempt for him because of the deceit by his foes, Psalm 31:11a.
 2. Even David’s friends dreaded to contact him, fearful of associating with him, Psalm 31:11b-12.
 - C. David’s solution was to entrust his life and welfare to the Lord, to seek refuge by trusting in God, Psalm 31:1-10, 14-17, 19. This solution is confirmed by David’s final testimony that occurs in Psalm 31:21-22.
 - D. After God rescued him, David shared with God’s people advice for similar crises they faced, Psalm 31:23-24:
 1. David advised God’s people who might face similar trials to love the Lord, for He preserves the faithful and pays back the punishment that is due to those who wickedly afflict the righteous, Psalm 31:23.
 2. Accordingly, God’s people need to handle harmful brainwashing threats by their foes by taking courage in God’s goodness and power and waiting on the Lord to act in their behalf, Psalm 31:24.

Lesson: *When David faced the threat of enemies who slandered him in order to brainwash his associates into opposing him that they might kill him, David relied on God to preserve him and to recompense his foes in justice.*

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 handle harmful brainwashing efforts by relying on God and His ample spiritual resources and ministries described in Scripture to preserve us and to handle our foes.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) First, we rely on Scripture to avoid being deceived by the harmful brainwashing efforts mentioned in our introduction: (a) On the “woke” issues opposed by Mark Godburn’s and Jean Bieluczyk’s letters, such issues are pushed by Marxists who secretly fuel conflicts between different groups in society to create social unrest in order to offer Marxist solutions to that very unrest. (Ibid., Howse, p. 42-43 with 21-33) To overcome such deceit, (i) Proverbs 20:12 claims that God has given us our ears and eyes to reveal reality over what others try to make us think to the contrary, and (ii) 2 Timothy 3:13-17 calls us to use Scripture for discernment! (b) On handling the white supremacist pamphlets that were scattered on the street, regardless who disbursed them, Galatians 3:26-29 claims that in Christ’s salvation, race, gender, and ethnic barriers are removed, that all who trust in Christ are of Abraham’s spiritual seed! (c) On “climate change,” as we noted, Genesis 8:22 shows God promised to keep the earth habitable for man as long as the earth remains. (d) On the leftists’ charge that the Supreme Court majority “lied” in their confirmation hearings by saying they respected the Roe v. Wade precedent though they overturned it once they got on the Court, (i) the majority actually ***followed*** the Court’s ***precedent of overturning*** its ***infamous*** 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson “separate but equal” ruling! And Roe v. Wade ***was infamous***: the Supreme Court in 1973 rejected the Hippocratic oath that explicitly forbids abortion and they overlooked Christianity (likely due to separation of church and state) to rely on ancient pagan religions to condone abortion. (*The Rebirth of America*, DeMoss Foundation, 1986, p. 86) Justice Samuel A. Alito in the majority opinion that overturned Roe claimed its “reasoning was exceedingly weak, and academic commentators, including those who agreed with the decision as a matter of policy, were unsparing in their criticism” of it. (Ibid., “High court gets it right”) (ii) Also, Exodus 21:22-23 clearly prohibits abortion on demand!

(2) Second, 2 Timothy 1:13-14 directs us to preserve through the Holy Spirit Who indwells us believers the form of sound words given to us by the Scripture’s writers, what guards us from harmful brainwashing. To take advantage of the Holy Spirit’s ministries to that end, we describe them (as follows): (a) All believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9b; 1 Corinthians 6:19), but to enjoy the edifying ministries of the Spirit, (i) we must have the sins we commit as believers confessed to God (1 John 1:9) and (ii) rely on the Spirit’s motivational promptings of righteousness (Philippians 2:13a) to carry out His Biblical directives that He equips us to perform. (Philippians 2:13b) (b) When we are thus truly fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit, since every believer has been “anointed” by the Spirit to be equipped to discern spiritual truth from error (1 John 2:20, 27), as we rely on the Holy Spirit, we will discern spiritual truth from error. (c) The Holy Spirit then will teach us Biblical truths (John 14:26a; Ephesians 6:17b). (d) In times when we need His help to offset harmful brainwashing efforts, the Holy Spirit will remind us of helpful Bible truths we have read (John 14:26b with Ephesians 6:17b), showing the need for daily Scripture reading (1 Timothy 4:13 NIV, ESV with Deuteronomy 17:18-20). (e) The Holy Spirit will then guide us in understanding Bible prophecy of future events (John 16:13b), what thus guides and settles us in living, and (f) He will guide us into understanding all Biblical truth (John 16:13a). This last ministry is critically important in that Scripture gives us all the information we need to function with every good work until the rapture (2 Timothy 3:15-4:2), equipping us thus to handle every harmful brainwashing effort we will ever face until we are with the Lord! (g) Also, the Holy Spirit will lead us in our daily lives in accord with revealed Bible truths (Romans 8:14), doing so by circumstantial evidence that aligns with Scripture (cf. Acts 16:6-10) or simply by Scripture itself (Ephesians 6:17b). (h) The Holy Spirit will experientially “parent” us so that we are not left to function as spiritual orphans in a world that is full of harmful deception (John 14:16-18 NIV, ESV; 2 Timothy 3:13). (i) The Holy Spirit will assure us that we are God’s true children, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ in hope of the glory in eternity to which we are destined (Romans 8:16-17). (j) The Holy Spirit will “fill” (meaning “control”) us in causing us to produce upright behavior in marriage, family, and workplace relationships (Ephesians 5:18-6:9). (k) The Holy Spirit will also equip us to use the spiritual gift for service He gave us at salvation that we might effectively serve God (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). [Bible passages listing the spiritual gifts (of today – not the temporary sign gifts of tongues, interpreting tongues, healing, prophecy, and apostleship that are misunderstood and misused by some Christians!) are Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:10-11.] (l) The Holy Spirit prays for us and our needs to God (Romans 8:26-27).

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life. May we then handle harmful brainwashing efforts by relying on the Lord and His ample spiritual resources and ministries as explained in Scripture to preserve us and justly to recompense our foes.