

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
LXXXV. Overcoming Repeat Sinful Failure
(Psalm 85:1-13)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A number of the troubles we face in today's world are caused by repeat sinful failures:

(1) It occurs in the realm of government fiscal policies: (a) “The cumulative effects of inflation-indexed entitlement programs – Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and others – are the primary sources of persistent deficits, yet they’re considered off the table even during the most rancorous debt-ceiling skirmishes.” (Mickey D. Levy, “We’re Still Paying for the Federal Reserve’s Blunders,” *The Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 25, cited in “Quotable,” Republican-American, October 26, 2023, p. 8A) (b) Also, “the American dream” of “(h)ome ownership . . . has turned into a nightmare, thanks in large part to the Biden administration and the big spenders in Congress . . . During the pandemic . . . Biden and a spend-thrift Congress rammed through trillions of dollars in additional spending while the Federal Reserve continued creating money to finance the deficit spending. The predictable result was 40-year-high inflation . . . But inflation caused people’s real (inflation-adjusted) earnings to fall and forced interest rates to rise. This was a deadly combination for home-ownership affordability.” (E. J. Antoni, “Home ownership: American dream to American nightmare,” *Ibid.*, October 25, 2023, p. 7A)

(2) It occurs with the issue of speech-suppression: (a) “U. S. District Court Judge Terry Doughty of the Western District of Louisiana in a decision released July 4 that included an injunction preventing a bevy of high-ranking government officials from pushing censorship” stated, “. . . (A)ll of the free speech suppressed was ‘conservative’ free speech. Using the 2016 election and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government apparently engaged in a massive effort to suppress disfavored conservative speech.” (Katrina Trinko, “Will Supreme Court take down ‘Biden’s vast censorship enterprise?’” *Ibid.*, October 27, 2023, p. 6A) (b) However, speech-suppression still occurs by the mainstream media: “The (Associated Press) prefers that we refer to members of Hamas as ‘militants’ . . . because the words terror and terrorist ‘have become politicized.’ Really?” (Jazz Shaw, “AP Won’t Let Reporters Call Hamas a Terrorist Organization,” *Hot Air*, Oct. 23, cited in “Quotable,” *Ibid.*, October 24, 2023, p. 6A)

(3) It occurs with the repeat mishandling of Bible prophecy: We recently received a report from Christians in Israel who face the Gaza War, and they wrote, “Somehow, we expect a period of Israel’s peace and safety, which will eventually lead to the great War of Gog and Magog (see Ezek. 39).” These believers hold to one version of the Mid-Tribulation Rapture belief where the Church is thought to face the antichrist and the Gog and Magog War before Christ takes the Church to heaven in the rapture! Thus, this view readily creates uncertainty and leads to anxiety in Christians who hold it. However, we noted in a recent sermon that Jesus exemplified in Mark 12:18-27 how to interpret Scripture in its literal, grammatical, and historical contexts, and using that interpretation method leads us to see Daniel 9:26 with 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 as predicting that throughout Church History, Israel will face war and desolation. However, **after** that, God will take the Church to heaven in the pretribulation rapture, which occurs **before** the *entire* seven-year Tribulation of Daniel 9:27 with the antichrist! (We will explain this in greater detail in our Conclusion.)

Years ago, I shared this premillennial, pretribulation, dispensational view of ours with the believers who are now in Israel, but they did not accept it then! Now they face uncertainty and are ripe for anxiety as well!

Need: *So, we ask, “What is the answer to repeat sinful failure?!”*

I. Psalm 85:1-8 utilizes the Hebrew verb *shub* with its multiple meanings to describe how Israel faced repeat sinful failure in her history:

- A. In the psalmist’s past, God had shown favor to His people Israel, and “restored” (*shub*, Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1050; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 996-1000) their fortunes by forgiving their sins so that He had “turned” (*shub*, *Ibid.*, Kittel; *Ibid.*, B. D. B.) from His fierce anger against them, Psalm 85:1-3.
- B. However, Israel had again fallen back into sin, so she had again faced God’s anger, leading the psalmist to plead for God’s renewed expressions of mercy and restoration toward the nation, Psalm 85:4-7:
 1. The psalmist thus asked God as Israel’s God and Savior to “restore” (*shub* again) the nation, to put away His fury toward her, asking if He would be angry with Israel forever for her repeat sin, Psalm 85:4-5.
 2. He asked if God might graciously “restore” (*shub* again) His people that they might rejoice in Him, v. 6-7.
- C. Having given this petition, the psalmist claimed that he would listen to what the Lord God would say in response to his request, for he knew that God speaks peace to His people who are His holy ones, Psalm 85:8a.

- D. What God said in response was that He did not want His people to “return” (*shub* again) to their folly, v. 8b!
- II. The great lesson on overcoming such repeat sinful failure is to REVERE the Lord, Psalm 85:9:**
- A. By use of the verse’s introductory adverb ‘*ak* that means “surely” in its restrictive sense to emphasize what follows (Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 36), the psalmist claimed in Psalm 85:9 that God’s deliverance from His national discipline is near to those who *revere* Him, that His glory might “dwell” (*shakan*, Ibid., Kittel; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, vol. II, p. 925) in their land.
- B. The verb *shakan* that is rendered “dwell” emphasizes the “nearness” of God’s glory (Ibid.), suggesting God’s comforting fellowship versus Israel’s past isolation from Him when He expressed His anger toward her!
- III. Having learned to REVERE the Lord so as to AVOID SIN that leads to His DISCIPLINE, the lesson Moses voiced in Exodus 20:18-20, the psalmist closed the psalm at Psalm 85:10-13 with hope in God’s restored fellowship and livelihood blessings in line with His covenant promises of Deuteronomy 28:1-14.**

Lesson: *The solution to Israel’s repeat sinful failure that led to God’s repeat painful discipline was His people’s learning to revere the Lord so as to avoid sin that they might enjoy God’s continued fellowship and blessing.*

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 revere the Lord (by relying on the Holy Spirit to do so, Galatians 5:16) to avoid sinning that we might enjoy His continued edifying fellowship and blessing.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

For additional guidance, we provide Scripture passages to address the issues of concern in our introduction:

(1) On dysfunctional fiscal policy with government entitlement programs, we know from 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 that working as independently as we can from depending on anyone else, including government programs, is God’s desired directive. Understandably, one has a right to collect funds from Social Security if he has been required to pay into that system in his wage-earning years, but even while drawing from that program in retirement, a believer is best to try to have other income stream(s) for security, for dysfunctional fiscal policy by officials is rampant since it is generally influenced by the officials’ desire to be re-elected above doing what is best for those who elect them!

(2) On dysfunctional government fiscal policy that puts home ownership out of reach for many, (a) Hebrews 13:5-6 directs that we not covet so as to spend a lot of money on material possessions, and God will provide for our material needs. (b) Also, in 1 Timothy 6:8 KJV, God calls us to be content with “food” and “raiment,” and a better translation from the original Greek text is “the means of sustenance” (*diatrophe*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 189) in place of “food” and “protective housing and clothing cover” (*skepasma*, Ibid., p. 761) in place of “raiment.” God thus wills to provide for us so that we can live and function in reasonable living conditions. This implies provision for retirement needs along with medical, insurance, transportation, etc. issues that make for a decent life. We thus need to trust God to make these things available to us and to follow His lead in acquiring them.

(3) On speech control issues in the government and mainstream media, even in the Roman Empire where there was no Bill of Rights that provided “freedom of speech,” etc., Paul directed that our speech should “always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person” who is outside the Christian faith, Colossians 4:5-6. If we speak graciously and yet with penetrating conviction, we need not be troubled over the responses we will receive for our speech, for the **way** we speak can win a hearing with almost anyone!

(4) On the misinterpretation of Bible prophecy that has led to the unsettling Mid-Tribulation Rapture view, we note that 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 KJV was written to settle Christians who had heard that the “Day of the Lord” (like the better manuscripts read, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Thess. 2:2), what includes the Tribulation Period, had arrived, 2 Thess. 2:1-2! Paul claimed in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 that this era would **not** arrive (a) **until** a great apostasy, a vast turning away from Bible truth, had occurred (2 Thess. 2:3), (b) **until** the Restrainer of sin, Who can logically only be God the Holy Spirit in Christians whom He seals, had been removed at the rapture (2 Thess. 2:6-7 with Eph. 1:13-14 and 1 Thess. 3:13-18), and (c) **until** the antichrist was revealed, whom God in judgment will use to send a Christ-rejecting world the strong, condemning delusion that the antichrist is God (2 Thess. 2:8-12; B. K. C., N. T., p. 717-721). No true Christian is guilty of rejecting Christ, so no true Christian can face the antichrist’s condemning deception, meaning that God will take the true Church out of the world before the antichrist is revealed. Thus, the **entire** 70th prophetic 7-year period of Daniel 9:27 is God’s judgment, not just the last part like the Mid-Tribulation Rapture view holds, so God will take true Christians to heaven **before** the **entire** Tribulation Period **starts!**

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 revere God that we might avoid sinning and continually enjoy His fellowship and blessing.