

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
XLIV. Handling A Crisis In National Stress
(Psalm 44:1-26)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

According to several reputable sources, many people in our country are facing a crisis in stress:

(1) “The CVS on West Main Street” in Waterbury, Connecticut “will begin offering mental health services” due to a “mental health crisis among Americans.” (Tracy O’Shaughnessy, “CVS in Waterbury to offer mental health care,” Republican-American, October 14, 2022, p. 1A) “A recent study . . . by CVS Health and Morning Consult revealed 74% of respondents ages 18-34 experienced mental health concerns for themselves, families or friends,” and in “October 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and Children’s Hospital Association declared a national state of emergency in children’s mental health.” (Ibid.)

(2) Major causes of this crisis were lockdowns and efforts to avert an alleged risk of climate catastrophes by shutting down the production of fossil fuels. (Michael Barone, “Democrats’ risk aversion is harmful,” Ibid., October 18, 2022, p. 6A) The lockdowns left children “two years behind in reading and math, suffering from mental health problems and isolated from peers,” and “President Joe Biden’s administration has been closing down fossil fuel production and distribution” (Ibid.), producing financial hardships (Rich Lowry, “Green’s self-destruction,” Ibid., July 21, 2022, p. 8A) “Savings are being eroded by inflation and stock market losses. Credit card debt is growing more costly due to rising interest rates. Just keeping a roof over one’s head is harder due to skyrocketing rents and home prices. And many businesses still struggle with tight labor markets and troubled supply chains.” (Alex Melkumian, “Dealing with Post-Pandemic Financial Upheaval,” Bottom Line Personal, November 1, 2022, p. 1)

(3) These stress-inducing issues have generated greater social problems: Connecticut’s spike in “shootings,” “car thefts,” “reckless driving and bad behavior generally . . . indicate social disintegration hastened by government’s crippling response to the recent pandemic.” (Chris Powell, “Hypocrisy on Saudis and a failure to curb crime,” Ibid., Republican-American, October 20, 2022, p. 8A).

(4) However, the CVS effort to address this national stress crisis by mental health services is itself a problem, for the field of psychology upon which secular counseling relies lacks scientific credibility: “In attempting to evaluate the status of psychology, the American Psychological Association appointed Sigmund Koch to plan and direct a study which was subsidized by the National Science Foundation. This study involved eighty eminent scholars in assessing the facts, theories, and methods of psychology. The results of this endeavor were then published in a seven volume series (1959 - 1963) entitled *Psychology: A Study of a Science*.” (Martin and Deidre Bobgan, Psychoheresy, 1987, p. 28) After the study, Mr. Koch summed, “‘The *hope* of a psychological science became indistinguishable from the *fact* of psychological science. The entire subsequent history of psychology can be seen as a ritualistic endeavor to emulate the forms of science in order to sustain the delusion that it already *is* a science.’” (Sigmund Koch, “The Image of Man in Encounter Groups,” The American Scholar, Autumn, 1973, p. 636; Ibid., Bobgan; Emphases his) In other words, eighty eminent scholars found that psychology that is the foundation for secular counseling is *not* an *actual science!*

Need: So, we ask, “*If secular counseling is not a credible solution to the national stress crisis, what IS?!*”

I. Psalm 44:1-26 is a lament psalm by the nation Israel in a time of national crisis and stress, for the nation had been experiencing a series of unexplained military defeats, Bible Knowledge Com., O. T., p. 826.

II. The psalmist thus expressed his troubled confusion over Israel’s inexplicable defeats, Psalm 44:1-26:

- A. He recalled how Israel’s forefathers had testified of the great victories in war they had experienced because God had accepted them and given them such victories, Psalm 44:1-3.
- B. The psalmist similarly testified that Israel’s own past victories in his lifetime had been the work of God, for Israel had not sinfully trusted in her own might in his days either, but in God for victory, Psalm 44:4-8:
 - a. God had directed Israel in Deuteronomy 20:1-3 that her soldiers were not to fear enemy armies that had chariots and horses or more soldiers than they had, for God was with her to deliver her in battle!
 - b. Indeed, Israel’s kings were not to rely on horses in battle themselves, but in God for victory, Deut. 17:16.
 - c. Thus, Israel had obeyed these divine commands, relying on the Lord, and thus had been victorious.
- C. However, in recent days, God had inexplicably let His people suffer humiliating defeats in battle, Ps. 44:9-16.
- D. Intensifying the problem was the fact that Israel had not knowingly violated God’s covenant so as to deserve to face His discipline of letting her suffer defeat like Deuteronomy 28:15, 25 had warned; Psalm 44:17-22.

III. In spite of this inexplicable national crisis, the psalmist kept trusting in God, urging Him to come to Israel's aid and to rescue her based on His "loyal love" (*hesed*, Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1013; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, vol. I, p. 305-307) for His people, Psalm 44:23-26.

Lesson: *When facing the stressful national crisis of suffering multiple defeats for no apparent sin on Israel's part, the psalmist kept trusting in God to deliver the nation based on God's Word about His promises to Israel.*

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) If facing a crisis in stress, instead of turning to psychology that even secular scientists have concluded is not a real science, may we keep trusting God and heeding His Word!*

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

(1) For **confidence** in using the Bible for **all** of our counseling needs, we have the following Biblical facts:

(a) Scripture is **sufficient** to **equip** us for **all** of our **counseling needs**: 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2 claims that all Scripture is God-inspired, that it thoroughly equips the man of God for all good works, what includes counseling.

(b) Scripture provides **all** the counseling **content** we need for counseling: (a) Isaiah 9:6a calls Christ the "Wonderful Counselor," and "wonderful" here "regularly means supernatural (cf. Judg. 13:18)," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Isaiah 9:6). Also, (b) Revelation 19:11-16 presents Christ as the Word of God personified!

(c) So, to counsel, we must just preach or teach Scripture, and Christ will supernaturally counsel through His Word!

(2) The **Bible** we should use for counseling is the **66-book Protestant Bible** according to **Jesus**: (a) His Luke 11:51 claim that the prophets ran from Abel in Genesis 4:8 to Zecharias in (2 Chronicles 24:20-22) certified that the Hebrew Old Testament consisted of the 39 books we have in our Protestant Old Testament: The Hebrew canon began with Genesis and ended with 2 Chronicles, consisting of the same 39 books we have in our Protestant Old Testament, but in a different order. (cf. Biblia Hebraica) Had the Apocrypha been canonical in Jesus' view, the last prophet He would have named would not be Zecharias, but one of the Maccabees! (b) On the 27-book New Testament, (i) Jesus in John 17:20 certified the canonicity of the words of His twelve disciples (minus Judas Iscariot, John 6:70-71), and since John 1:42 records Jesus as renaming Simon to be His disciple called "Peter," Jesus in John 17:20 condoned the canonicity of 1 & 2 Peter. (ii) Peter in 2 Peter 3:15-16 put Paul's epistles on par with the rest of Scripture, making Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon canonical. (iii) Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18 cited Luke 10:7 and put it on par with Deuteronomy 25:4 as Scripture, making Luke's Gospel canonical, and Luke 1:1-4 with Acts 1:1 then shows that Luke wrote Acts, making it canonical. (iv) Luke 6:12-16 names Jesus' disciples who would disciple others through their word as He said in John 17:20, and there Luke made Matthew, John, 1, 2, & 3 John, and Revelation canonical. (v) Matthew 13:55 with Acts 1:12-14 shows that the epistle of Jude by Jesus' half-brother was canonical. (vi) 1 Peter 5:13 covers the canonicity of Mark. (vii) In Revelation 2:10, Jesus mentioned the crown of life without explaining it, what only James 1:12 elsewhere clarifies is the reward for overcoming temptation. Jesus' reliance on James 1:12 to explain this crown implies its canonicity though we are not sure which James wrote the epistle of James. (viii) In Revelation 2:12, Jesus mentioned the two-edged sword without explaining it, what only Hebrews 4:12 elsewhere clarifies is the Word of God. Jesus' reliance on Hebrews to explain this sword implies the canonicity of Hebrews regardless who wrote it.

(3) On **how to use Scripture to address the national stress crisis**, Psalm 119:105-112 guides us: (a) We noted in our introduction that this crisis is marked by social alienation, educational decline, spikes in crime and financial trials, and stressed people can recklessly thrash about looking for quick solutions to their trials. The psalmist likewise faced life-threatening affliction from his foes (v.107, 109-110), likened to walking along an unlit path on a dark night (v. 105a), and with robbers and wild animals prowling about in his era, that could be lethal if done in reckless haste! (b) For the solution, he found Scripture to be like a Hebrew **ner**, a small, hand-held, bowl-like lamp containing olive oil with a lit wick (Ibid., Kittel, p. 1084; Ibid., H. A. W., vol. II, p. 565-566) to give him enough light to illumine his surroundings and also to inhibit or warn of imminent attacks by wild animals and robbers. As he took a step, the lamp moved with him to light his next step, and as he kept repeating the process, the lamp lit his entire path, v. 105b. Thus, the issues faced in the national stress crisis must be handled not by riskily thrashing about looking for quick relief, but by a safe, one-step-at-a-time intake and use of Scripture! (c) In practice, we can (i) attend Church where Scripture is taught (Heb. 10:25; 2 Tim. 4:1-2), (ii) get good study tools for Bible study (Deut. 17:18-20; 2 Tim. 4:13), (iii) use our Church web site search engine to find messages on issues of concern, and (iv) consult mature believers for help.

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. If facing a stress crisis, may we keep trusting God and carefully heed His Word to meet our needs.