

**2 Chronicles 15:1-7**  
***“Punishment or Persuasion?”***

**Intro.**

**I. Is the coronavirus part of/a form of God’s judgment?**

A. Matthew 24; Mark 13 – warning signs of Christ’s return.

B. Amos 4:6-13 – God tried getting Israel’s attention through judgment.

- 1.) N.Y. passed a law legalizing abortion right up to birth & then celebrated that decision by lighting up Empire State building with pink lights.
- 2.) Abortion legalized in some capacity in every state but one (Alabama).
- 3.) 1.21 million violent crimes in the USA in 2018.
- 4.) 50% divorce rate in USA.
- 5.) Acknowledgment of or prayer to the God of the Bible as the One, true, living God is at best ridiculed/condemned and at worst outright banned in our classrooms, courtrooms and society.
- 6.) Absolute truth is mocked, while relativism, universalism, atheism, antagonism, agnosticism and empiricism are readily accepted, promoted, praised and encouraged.
- 7.) Homosexuality isn’t simply an acceptable lifestyle, but is now being celebrated and openly flaunted in public society, with homosexual marriage being legalized nationwide on June 27, 2015, leading then President Obama to say: *“This is a victory for America”*.

**II. Real question: why would it NOT be judgment from God?**

A. *Whether or not it’s God’s judgment, it’s certainly God’s persuasion; i.e. He’s trying to get our attention!*

**Body** – Asa (and southern tribe of Judah) returning from battle against the Ethiopians (outnumbered 3:1), when he is warned/encouraged not to make the same mistakes of northern tribe/kingdom of Israel. **8 kings reigned in Israel during Asa’s rule over Judah and all were evil.**

**III. 2 Chronicles 15:1-7 – definite *persuasion* of God: He’s trying to get our attention. (slow us down; strip us of our idols, etc.)**

A. V.2 – God’s personal presence contingent upon our personal obedience & desire to be with Him – v.15; Matt. 8:34-9:1; Mark 5:17-18; Jer. 29:13; Prov. 8:17; Deut. 4:29.

- 1.) *“Each of us is as close to God as we choose to be.” – Oswald Sanders, director of Overseas Missionary Fellowship/China Inland Mission, 1950-60.*
- 2.) *Many desire the personal presence of God, but don’t want the personal commitment to God. They want God to respond to them on their own terms.*
- 3.) *While God desires our attention & affection, he will not grovel for it!*

B. V.3 – three main issues:

- 1.) Without ***the true*** God for a long time.
  - a.) *There are an innumerable amount of gods within the societies of America/our world. The problem is none of them are the One, true God. This means many are guilty of idolatry = spiritual adultery – Jer. 2:26-29; 3:1-10. Many of them are what God has stripped us of during this pandemic/quarantine: sports, entertainment/movies, shopping/greed, making money, relationships, academics.*
  - b.) Jeremiah 2:32 – “...***MY*** people have forgotten Me days without number.”
    - i.) Scary part is a lot of **Christians** have forgotten God days without number & don’t realize it; they’re living in a demented state that they’re in a good place with God.
  - c.) **How do we know if we’re in a place where we’ve forgotten God?**
    - i.) We **question** His word/authority.
    - ii.) We **minimize** His word/authority (leads to minimizing sin).
    - iii.) We **shun** His word/authority – Mal. 2:17; 3:8-10, 13-15; Ezekiel 18:23-32; Rom. 1:28-32.
- 2.) Without a ***teaching*** priest – 2 Chron. 17:7; Neh. 8:7-8; Deut. 17:8-13.
  - a.) *One of the main, God given responsibilities of priests/leadership is to ensure a steady diet of God’s word (2 Tim. 2:15). The other side to that is people need to receive the instruction they’re given – 2 Tim. 4:1-4.*
- 3.) Without law.
  - a.) *In short, everybody wanted to live however they felt like without consequence, which resulted/results in chaos – Judges 17:6; 21:25; Prov. 16:25.*

C. V.4 – main solution: repentance – when they “***turned***” to the Lord God of Israel & “***sought***” Him.

- 1.) Repent = to think differently; to change one’s mind or purpose; a shift or reversal of thought; to move back to the point of departure; a deeply seated & thorough turning from self to God – Ezekiel 18:23; 33:11; Mal. 3:7.
  - a.) *A main obstacle to repentance is many aren’t willing to change their opinion = stubbornness; pride.*

D. V.5 – the consequences = the complete absence of peace.

- 1.) **Isaiah 26:3** = if the result of keeping our minds on God is perfect peace, then the consequence of ***not*** keeping our mind focused on God is imperfect chaos.

E. V.6 – the **cause** of the tumultuous trouble & turmoil: “...*for God troubled them with every adversity.*” – Is. 45:6-7.

- 1.) ***Is this punishment or judgment from God? Perhaps.***
- 2.) ***Is God trying to get our attention? Absolutely!!!***

F. V.7 – personal responsibility to God’s persuasion

1.) ***“But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!”***

a.) **2 Timothy 4:5** – *“But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”*

b.) **Heb. 12:25-29**

i.) *We need to stop focusing on when our lives will return to “normal”, what God is doing with other people/other nations and start focusing on/praying about what God wants to do with us during this time. Don’t ignore the voice that is speaking directly to you!*