

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XXIV. God's Blessing Amid Our Vulnerability To Harm

(2 Chronicles 11:5-23)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many people today feel vulnerable to harm or death from the coronavirus pandemic, to financial harm from the effects of the pandemic and even to the effects of the responses of government officials to it all:

(1) Connecticut's Governor Ned Lamont on a March 27, 2020 news briefing said, "Look, there is fear and anxiety out there. I feel that, I hear that every day. I get the feedback." (Paul Hughes, "Lamont orders more social, business rules," Republican-American, March 28, 2020, p. 1A)

(2) As for the financial fallout, Chris Powell's column, "Suspension of legislature best for state" (Ibid., p. 8A) observed, "(O)ne-time stipends of \$1,200 or so from the federal government won't pay the rent or mortgage, or buy food and sustain medical insurance, for households whose breadwinners have been furloughed or laid off because of government-mandated 'social distancing.' Many of these people are on the verge of being ruined."

(3) Some fear the economic fallout from the government's spending trillions in response to the pandemic. "Steven Malanga . . . in the Manhattan Institute's City Journal on March 29" noted, "After the 2008-2009 recession, Congress extended unemployment benefits . . . four times the normal length," but "(s)udies" have "estimated . . . those extra benefits hampered the recovery." Accordingly, "(s)ome policymakers are worried that something similar will happen this time." ("Diminishing virtue of work," lead editorial, Ibid., April 1, 2020, p. 10A)

Regardless, the government may yet dole out more trillions: U. S. Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro, D-Ct., after the vote on the \$1,200 stipends said, "While this funding is crucial, let me be clear, it's a start." ("Quotable," quoted in the March 27 Connecticut Mirror Story, "House approved massive coronavirus bill," Ibid., March 30, 2020, p. 8A)

Need: So we ask, "If we feel vulnerable to physical and financial harm from the coronavirus pandemic and to the government's responses to it all, what would God direct?!"

- I. When Rehoboam began to rule, he felt vulnerable to physical and financial harm, 2 Chronicles 11:5-12:**
 - A. Soon after the Davidic kingdom of Israel had split, Rehoboam fortified 15 cities mainly to Jerusalem's south and west, 2 Chronicles 11:5-12; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Chronicles 11:5-12.
 - B. This action exposed Rehoboam's fear of physical and financial harm from Egypt due to the nation's split:
 1. Rehoboam knew that his foe Jeroboam in the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been sheltered by Egypt's Pharaoh when Rehoboam's father had tried to kill him, that Jeroboam was Pharaoh's friend, 1 Kings 11:40.
 2. Rehoboam thus realized that his foe Jeroboam might try to get Egypt to attack his realm of Judah, Ibid.
 3. After God kept Rehoboam from fighting Jeroboam to regain control of the ten northern tribes (2 Chr. 11:1-4a), Rehoboam with only two tribes feared he lacked the might to counter Egypt were it to invade Judah.
 4. Thus, fearing that Egypt might invade Judah from his southwest, causing him and his people extensive physical and financial harm, Rehoboam fortified his cities in Judah to his south and west.
- II. Yet, Rehoboam began to rule by generally obeying Scripture like David and Solomon did, 2 Chr. 11:17b.**
- III. Accordingly, God motivated godly people in Jeroboam's Northern Kingdom of Israel to move down to Judah, greatly strengthening Jeroboam's Southern Kingdom of Judah, 2 Chronicles 11:13-17a:**
 - A. Jeroboam of the Northern Kingdom of Israel formed a false religious syncretism to keep his subjects from traveling south to Judah to worship God, and in doing so, he removed the Aaronic priests and Levites in his kingdom from office, 1 Kings 12:26-33. Those priests and Levites thus moved to Judah, 2 Chron. 11:13-15.
 - B. Other devout believers throughout Jeroboam's realm also reacted negatively to his syncretism by also relocating south to the Southern Kingdom of Judah that they might worship the Lord there, 2 Chron. 11:16.
 - C. This inflow of godly priests and Levites along with other godly people from throughout Jeroboam's realm added a great, supportive populace to Rehoboam's Judah, greatly strengthening his reign, 2 Chronicles 11:17a.
- IV. Rehoboam thus flourished as a king when he generally obeyed the Lord, 2 Chronicles 11:18-23:**
 - A. Rehoboam married and had children, and though he violated Deuteronomy 17:17a in having many wives, he still married Hebrew women in Judah, not pagans who would lure him into idolatry, 2 Chron. 11:18-22.
 - B. Rehoboam also wisely administered his kingdom: he dispersed his many sons as officials throughout Judah and its fortified cities, he supplied them with ample provisions and acquired many wives for them to keep them loyal to his administration, strengthening his rule in Judah, 2 Chronicles 11:23.

Lesson: *Though he felt vulnerable to physical and financial harm from Egypt, Rehoboam began his reign by generally heeding the Lord like David and Solomon did, so God strengthened his rule by moving godly priests, Levites and people from the ten northern tribes to Judah to strengthen Rehoboam that he might flourish as a king.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) If we feel vulnerable to physical and financial harm from the coronavirus pandemic along with concerns over the long-term effects of reactions to it by officials, may we simply trust God and obey His Word regarding each concern and see Him equip us to fulfill His will.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Scripture offers applications to each issue of concern noted in our introduction, so, to apply this sermon, we view relevant passages to trust God's messages in them for us and to heed their direction for blessing (as follows):

(1) On the concern over being physically harmed by the coronavirus, Mark 5:39-43b tells how Jesus raised a 12-year-old girl from the dead who had died from a devastating illness. After raising her, Christ ordered that she be given something to eat, for her body needed to be strengthened due to the draining effects of her recent illness.

Since there is yet no actual cure for the coronavirus illness itself, we best nurture our immune systems to resist it similar to how Jesus wanted the body of girl He had raised from the dead to be replenished: we can ingest Vitamin C, avoid stress, sugar and starch foods to keep our blood sugar level from spiking (as elevated blood sugar hurts the immune system), get adequate rest, ingest ample fluids and especially fresh, uncooked vegetables and nuts along with other good foods, exercise and practice social distancing, washing our hands, etc., as recommended by the authorities.

(2) On the concern over the financial fallout from the virus, Luke 14:28-30 records Jesus as teaching that if one wished to build a "watchtower" for a vineyard (*purgos*, Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 738; cf. also Matthew 21:33 and Mark 12:1), he of necessity must sit down and calculate the cost of the project so that he would know before he began the construction whether he could complete it and thus not be ridiculed for starting and not finishing it. These watchtowers were built of loose rocks, a skilled labor-intensive project (*Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib.*, vol. Five, p. 883), requiring planning as to the time of year for the construction, the number of laborers involved and acquiring the savings for the project in advance of the work since the Mosaic Law required that laborers were to be paid at the end of each work day for that day's work (cf. Deuteronomy 24:15).

In application, we should avoid financial hardship in an emergency loss of employment by sitting down to calculate and set aside an emergency fund of *at least* 3 to 6 months worth of salary **before** a crisis *arises!* If we face financial hardship in the current crisis for not having such savings, one way to *start* an emergency fund is to set aside the \$1,200 the government will send us for short-term emergencies! (We may not be able to do that since we may need the money *now* for food or other pressing needs! However, in the current crisis when we realize the practical value of long-term savings, *now* is the time to **start budgeting**, to put it down in writing and to stick to it *at all* times.)

[We also need to follow God's leading on our employment and business as is taught in James 4:13-15. This passage teaches that there is always uncertainty in the business and job market, but the economy right now is in a state of great flux with far more uncertainties, so we need to be careful to **follow the Lord's leading at all** times.]

(3) On the concern over the effects of actions by government officials to the pandemic, Jeremiah is an edifying example. God had promised to protect him from all his enemies if he served the Lord, Jer. 1:17-19. When the Babylonian army then laid siege to Jerusalem in God's crisis judgment for sin on the nation, Judah's king Zedekiah placed Jeremiah in the safety of the court of the prison, giving him a daily ration of bread until all the bread in the city had been used up to guard Jeremiah from Judah's officials who had imprisoned him in a life-threatening cistern, Jer. 37:18-21. These princes then persuaded vacillating king Zedekiah to give them custody of Jeremiah again, so they put him into another cistern until Ethiopian slave Ebed-melech got permission from king Zedekiah to rescue Jeremiah from that second cistern, Jer. 38:1-13. Zedekiah then asked Jeremiah what God wanted him to do about the national crisis of the Babylonian siege, and Jeremiah told him that if he surrendered to Babylon, the Babylonians would not destroy the city of Jerusalem, Jer. 38:14-23. Zedekiah returned Jeremiah to the safety of the court of the prison where he was protected from enemy government officials until the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem, Jer. 38:24-28.

Zedekiah later disobeyed God's Word to him through Jeremiah, so the Babylonians eventually destroyed and burned Jerusalem, Jer. 52:1-30. Yet, when the Babylonians first invaded the city, they took Jeremiah from the court of the prison, granted him his freedom that he might go wherever he chose and gave him a food allowance and a gift, Jer. 39:11-14; 40:1-5 ESV. God thus kept His promise to provide for obedient Jeremiah's welfare regardless of the ungodly, threatening officials in Judah and the nationally-destructive decision of Judah's vacillating king Zedekiah. We must then trust God to provide for our welfare if we obey Him regardless what government officials might do!

May we trust in Christ for salvation of the soul. May we heed His Word for peace in our needy era!