

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

#### XXXI. Avoiding Ungodly Unions For God's Blessing

(2 Chronicles 20:31-37)

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

(1) The Washington Post reports that a third of Americans now show signs of clinical anxiety or depression due to the coronavirus pandemic and its shutdown. (Alyssa Fowers & William Wan, "A third of Americans now show signs of clinical anxiety or depression, Census Bureau finds amid coronavirus pandemic," May 26, 2020; washingtonpost.com) Financial insecurity plays a big part in this state of affairs.

(2) However, to lessen the strain, the federal government's Paycheck Protection Program offers "forgivable" loans to help small businesses avoid laying off employees and going out of business, and they are also available to churches as "40 percent of" the "nation's protestant churches" have "applied" and "(m)ore than half qualified." (Dave Summers, "PPP Loan Applicant Pool Included Thousands of Churches," May 8, 2020; nbcсандiego.com)

(3) The huge question is: Should a church obtain a PPP loan?! Consider the following views on this issue:

(a) Chuck Bentley, CEO of Crown Financial Ministries asked, "'What's it going to look like in terms of the optics in the long-term, that [the federal government] is where the church went for a rescue?'" (Kate Shellnutt, "Is It Manna from Heaven, Money from Washington, or Both?", April 7, 2020; christianitytoday.com)

(b) In addition, this "program to rescue small business initially directed hundreds of millions of dollars in loans to publicly traded companies while many smaller firms were frozen out." (Jesse Drucker, Jessica Silver-Greenberg and Sarah Kliff, "Wealthiest Hospitals Get Billions in Bailout for Struggling Health Providers," May 25, 2020; The New York Times; cited on msn.com) What then happens to a church's testimony if it obtains a PPP loan at the cost of small businesses in its community that were denied such loans and went out of business?

(c) Then there's the matter of government control. (i) One charitable group claims there should be no concern for a church here as "a faith-based organization that receives a loan will retain its independence, autonomy, right of expression, religious character and authority over its governance . . ." ("Faith-Based And Church PPP Loans - Easter Week 2020," April 4, 2020; insidecharity.org) (ii) However, Dave Ramsey of Financial Peace University on YouTube claims the loan forgiveness is in the hands of the government, that if another administration gains power, it may pass a bill requiring a church with a PPP loan to comply with "politically correct" ideology or it will call the loan and force the church to compromise its ministry or close its doors due to the church's inability to pay off the loan.

Jon Costas, a former Republican mayor in Indiana, reflecting this concern, said "'the decision to apply for and receive PPP funds is one of the most important issues the church will face in this decade. It . . . may, in time, hinder the mission of the church when strings attached to government funds are not consistent with Scripture.'" (Lauren Vella, "Thousands of Catholic churches received PPP loan: report," May 8, 2020; The Hill, cited on msn.com)

Need: *So we ask, "Amid all the anxiety and depression pressure, how should we respond to the PPP loan offer?!"*

- I. **After God rescued and financially blessed him in 2 Chronicles 20:1-30, Jehoshaphat made an alliance with Israel's king Ahaziah to obtain gold from Ophir, 2 Chronicles 20:35a with 1 Kings 22:48.**
- II. **However, Ahaziah "acted wickedly" (2 Chronicles 20:35b ESV), worshiping the idols of his evil parents Ahab and Jezebel and following Jeroboam's syncretistic religion, 1 Kings 22:51-53; 12:26-33.**
- III. **Remarkably, Jehoshaphat had been critiqued by God's prophet Jehu for joining Ahaziah's evil father Ahab in battling the Arameans, what had nearly cost Jehoshaphat his life, 2 Chronicles 18:1-19:3. He SHOULD have learned from that PAST ungodly alliance NOT to join in a venture with an evil man!**
- IV. **Nevertheless, Jehoshaphat joined wicked Ahaziah in a venture that ITSELF ALSO violated Scripture!**
  - A. Jehoshaphat joined Ahaziah to build ships at Ezion-geber that were large, seafaring vessels [of "Tarshish," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 1 Kings 22:48] to sail for gold from the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba to the land of Ophir, 2 Chronicles 20:36; 1 Kings 22:48. Jehoshaphat meant to copy his ancestor king Solomon who sailed ships from the same port to Ophir for gold (1 Kings 9:26-28).
  - B. However, this venture violated God's Deuteronomy 17:17b call that Israel's kings **not** go after silver and gold!
- V. **Besides, 2 Chronicles 20:25 tells how Jehoshaphat and Judah were granted great spoils of war when God rescued them from invaders, so they had no need to obtain more wealth if they relied on the Lord!**
- VI. **Accordingly, God's prophet Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah then told Jehoshaphat that since he had allied himself with wicked Ahaziah, the Lord would break his works, 2 Chronicles 20:37.**

- VII. Jehoshaphat's ships were then wrecked at Ezion-geber so they could not sail for gold, 1 Kings 22:48b.
- VIII. After that calamity, THEN ('az, "thereupon," Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 556; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 23) Ahaziah offered to have his men join Jehoshaphat's men in the ships to sail for gold.
- IX. However, (A) the destruction of his ships and the message of the prophet Eliezer (B) along with memory of Jehu's warning after his near-death experience in battle with Ahab (2 Chronicles 19:1-3) FINALLY led Jehoshaphat to AVOID ALL ungodly alliances, so he refused Ahaziah's offer, 1 Kings 22:49!

*Lesson: After repeat warnings and calamitous results of allying himself with evil men, Jehoshaphat finally learned to avoid all ungodly unions for any venture and instead be content to rely on God for blessing.*

*Application: (1) May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) To enjoy God's blessing and avoid His discipline, may we heed God's Word regarding all alliances for all ventures.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . . )

We apply the lesson(s) of this message to the issues of concern in our introduction (as follows):

(1) We believe we should **NOT** take out a Paycheck Protection Program loan for the following Scriptural reasons: (a) 3 John 5-8 teach us not to receive financial help from non Christians lest we appear to "sell" the truth and lead the lost to think salvation is gained by money, Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to 2 John 7. We should thus receive donations only from Christians, not from unsaved individuals or institutions. (b) The borrower is slave to the lender (Proverbs 22:7), and taking out a PPP loan can lead to the government's forcing us to propagate apostate "politically correct" views in violation of 2 Timothy 4:1-5! (c) Galatians 2:10 directs us personally to help the poor, but taking out a PPP loan tends to hinder other businesses from getting the government loans they need to survive! (d) 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 clarifies what God sought to teach Jehoshaphat, that we are not to be unequally "yoked" with the ungodly!

(2) **Steps** we can take to *avoid HAVING to get a loan* are as follows: (a) Jesus told His disciples to pick up the leftover food from the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:12), so we should save the money we have for future needs, avoiding the need to take out loans with adverse risk. (b) Jesus as Master of His disciples led in the John 6:12 effort to save the leftovers, exemplifying how business leaders and pastors should take the lead in saving up money in their businesses or personal incomes for short-term emergency protection of the incomes of subordinate employees or supported missionaries who are less-equipped financially than such leaders to cope with sudden financial downturns. (b) Ultimately, instead of trusting in the government or any other human entity to bail us out of financial trouble, our trust should be in the Lord like Jeremiah 17:5-8 teaches. (The background for these verses that put a curse on trusting in man versus a blessing for trusting in the Lord was Judah's sinful efforts to rely on Egypt instead of God for protection from Babylon, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Jeremiah 17:5-8.)

(3) God's call that Jehoshaphat and all Israel's kings in Deuteronomy 17:17b not multiply silver and gold to themselves is repeated in principle for us Christians in 1 Timothy 6:9 ESV. There Paul warned that *aiming* to get rich leads to "a snare" and "many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction." Rather, God wants us to be content with meeting our basic livelihood needs as 1 Timothy 6:8 directs and that we use what excess money God provides to be ready to share with others in need where it will minister for the Lord, 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

(4) Since the pressures of the pandemic can lure us to feel anxious and depressed, tempting us to make rash, errant decisions like taking out a government loan as a church as a placebo, may we deal with the pressures in Biblical ways (as follows): (a) regarding finances, may we heed Hebrews 13:5-6 ESV that directs, "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper' I will not fear; what can man do to me?'" We must trust God's sovereignty and follow His leading a-step-at-a-time! (Psalm 119:105) (b) To offset depression and anxiety in general, may we heed Psalm 119:25-32 [Daleth] and (i) limit our exposure to error-filled, godless mainstream media reports and commentaries that produce anxiety and depression (Psalm 119:25 with 29) and (ii) instead stay absorbed in God's Word that counters error and that in turn produces mental health (Psalm 119:31-32 versus the state in Psalm 119: 25). (c) As deception produces depression, if *greatly deceived* and thus *greatly depressed*, we can apply Psalm 119:169-176 [Taw] and (i) call unto God for deliverance from error (v. 169a, 170) and (ii) turn to Scripture for discernment (v. 171), (iii) applying God's Word for blessing (v. 172-176). (d) As for fear itself, Psalm 119:161-168 [Sin and Shin] directs us (i) to revere God more than anything else that causes us to fear (v. 161a,b, 168), to which reverence (ii) God Himself will respond by revealing edifying truths in Scripture that edify the inner man (v. 162, 164, 165).

**May we trust in Christ for salvation of the soul. May we avoid ungodly unions for any venture and instead be content to revere and rely on the Lord for His help and blessing, being absorbed in His Word.**