

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XLVII. Josiah's Example For The Vulnerable "Little Guy"

(2 Chronicles 34:19-35:19)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Today's believer in Christ at the grassroots level is vulnerable to the actions of oppressive, influential people:

(1) In his letter to the editor in the September 10, 2020 Republican-American, p. 10A, Andy Stowers of Goshen reported, " . . . (T)housands of citizens have experienced significant hits to their incomes . . . They are working harder than ever to just stay solvent. Meanwhile . . . I haven't heard one word about re-evaluating how the state manages its departments, so as to drive down costs in light of what will be a 'new normal' . . ."

Terrence Ryan, a physician from Litchfield, added in his letter (Ibid.), "Today, members of both major political parties express concern that the values and institutions of our nation will be at risk if the other side wins the upcoming presidential election. Perhaps this disparity of opinion reflects the 'misinformation' age in which we live."

The wrongs the "little guy" faces from influential leaders in the secular realm are very great!

(2) Believers at the grassroots level now face a strong lure from an influential party to compromise Scripture with evolution: "Dr. Jordan Peterson, a clinical psychologist and professor" has recently spoken "boldly about the dangers of leftist ideology . . . He directs people to seriously [sic] consider the value of a Judeo-Christian worldview." (Roger Patterson, "Jordan Peterson -- A Closer Look as a Culture Warrior," Answers, July-August, 2020, p 44-45) Consequently, "many" professing "Christians" are "seeking to align themselves with his views." (Ibid.)

However, Dr. Peterson combines his belief in the Judeo-Christian worldview with evolution and "doesn't believe in the historical reality of Genesis" or the Bible, Ibid., p. 45. He states, "'The information that was first only embedded in our behavior became represented in our stories' . . . The Bible, he claims, arose as the best 'myth' we can use to structure society" and "Darwinian evolution, though it may be incomplete or have certain weaknesses, is the only way to explain our physical existence and the psychological factors that make us human," Ibid.

(3) We face it with the leaders of Black Lives Matter: millions of Americans support the BLM organization because they think its goal is to counter racism by supporting the value of African American lives. However, besides its "core group" of leaders being "made up of self-proclaimed Marxists" with a Marxist agenda, "Black Lives Matter . . . is guided and informed by . . . an occult religion called Yoruba/Odu Ifa, which originates with the Yoruba people in Western Africa. One of the major tenets . . . of Odu Ifa is divination -- calling up the supposed spirits of the dead and engaging in spirit worship." (Don and Joy Vienot, "The Occult Religion of #Black Lives Matter," September 10, 2020; midwestoutreach.org. The Vienots are endorsed by conservative evangelical apologist Dr. Norman Geisler)

My parents were missionaries among the Yoruba people in Nigeria for seven years, so I was stunned to learn that leaders of the prominent Black Lives Matter organization in this country practice Yoruba demonic spirit worship!

Need: *So, we ask, "How can we at the grassroots level flourish amid oppressive, influential people?!"*

- I. **When exposed to Scripture for the first time only to learn that Judah was overripe for punishment, Josiah sought counsel from a prophet of God on what to do to please the Lord, 2 Chronicles 34:19-21.**
- II. **The prophetess Huldah told Josiah that the Lord would surely punish Judah, but since Josiah repented in learning of Judah's sin, God would postpone His judgment until after Josiah's era, 2 Chron. 34:22-28:**
 - A. Josiah's officials found Huldah, a prophetess of the Lord, living in Jerusalem, and when they inquired of God through her in behalf of Josiah, she replied that God would surely punish Judah for its sins, 2 Chron. 34:22-25.
 - B. However, Huldah added that since Josiah had greatly humbled himself, tearing his clothes and weeping over Judah's past sins, God would postpone His judgment on Judah until after Josiah's time, 2 Chronicles 34:26-28.
- III. **With the narrow window of blessing on Judah granted in his lifetime, Josiah responded to God's message by doing his best to influence the people of Judah to follow the Lord, 2 Chronicles 34:29-35:19:**
 - A. Josiah realize he had inherited a bad situation -- coming to the throne of a nation doomed for punishment!
 - B. Nevertheless, since God had graciously postponed His punishment on Judah until after Josiah's era, Josiah made the most of the opportunity his reign offered the nation to influence it for God, 2 Chron. 34:29-35:19:
 1. Josiah first gathered the nation together to make a covenant before God to keep the Law, 2 Chr. 34:29-32:
 - a. He gathered the nation's elders, its priests, its Levites and its people, both great and small at the temple of the Lord and covenanted before them to observe God's Word wholeheartedly, 2 Chronicles 34:29-31.
 - b. Josiah then caused the people to stand to swear allegiance to that covenant themselves, 2 Chron. 34:32.

2. He then removed the idolatrous abominations in Judah and Israel, 2 Chron. 34:33; 2 Kings 23:4-20.
3. The highlight of Josiah's reign was his leading the people to observe the Passover in the eighteenth year of his reign: some of the Hebrews from Israel came south to celebrate the Passover with Judah, and so many were the sacrifices and so great the celebration that it surpassed all the Passover celebrations of the past kings in Judah and Israel dating back to the time of the prophet Samuel, 2 Chronicles 35:1-17, 18-19.

Lesson: *Though Josiah inherited the throne of a nation already destined for punishment, since God postponed that punishment until after Josiah's lifetime due to his repentance, Josiah did his best to influence Judah for the Lord.*

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 like Josiah take advantage of what opportunity God grants us at our level in society in our lifetime to live uprightly and influence those around us for the Lord.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We apply this message by viewing Scripture on how we at the grassroots level can use what opportunities we are given to live for Christ and influence others for Him relative to the issues we noted in our introduction:

(1) On handling our vulnerability at the grassroots level to oppressive, influential people in general, (a) we can counter the civil unrest and confrontational leaders we face by (i) maintaining order in our own lives and so influence others around us to be orderly also (Proverbs 28:2 ESV). (ii) We can obey the laws of man and God, what counters lawlessness in society (Proverbs 28:4 ESV). (b) To protect ourselves from harm by oppressive, influential people, Proverbs 30:24-28 ESV teaches steps we can take in illustrating how four animals that are at risk compensate for their vulnerabilities to harm (as follows): (i) Ants are not strong as they do not have an internal heat source, but they gather their food in summer when it is warm enough for them to move, illustrating **foresight**, Prov. 30:24, 25. In foresight, we can invest early in Roth IRAs to maximize long-term compounding while avoiding taxes at maturity; we can watch what we eat to avoid a shortened lifespan and lessen our medical costs; we can get our education before getting married and starting a family for financial stability, Prov. 24:27. Some extra costs and extra work are required in business ventures to make a good profit, so we should allow for them, Prov. 14:4. (ii) Rock badgers are vulnerable to beasts of prey, but they live in rock crags, illustrating **resourcefulness**, Prov. 30:24, 26. We can be resourceful by getting term life insurance [that is especially cheap right now], by investing in mutual funds with great long-term records to use good managers, by buying used certified versus new cars for value and by recycling plant waste for lawns/gardens. (iii) Locusts have no king, but they go in ranks, illustrating **organization**, Prov. 30:24, 27. We can be organized in making a budget for financial stability and as students in arranging our time to start studying for finals and writing term papers throughout the term to make better grades with less work! (iv) Lizards can be seized by hand, but they enter king's palaces, illustrating **opportunism**, Prov. 30:24, 28. We can opportunistically take on extra jobs, get more schooling or continuing education for better income and job placement to offset financial problems.

(2) On handling Dr. Jordan Peterson's combining the Judeo-Christian worldview with evolution, we can use the testimony of atheist Jacques Monod, a Nobel prize winner in molecular biology that he gave in a 1976 interview (as follows): "Selection (Darwinian evolution's "survival of the fittest" mechanism) is the blindest, and most cruel way of evolving new species, and more and more complex and refined organisms . . . The struggle for life and the elimination of the weakest is a horrible process, against which our whole modern ethic revolts. An ideal society is a non-selective society, it is one where the weak are protected . . . I am surprised that a Christian would defend the idea that this is the process which God more or less set up in order to have evolution." (quoted in David H. Lane, "Theological Problems with Theistic Evolution," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April-June, 1994, p. 167)

Monod's point fits the 1 John 1:5b claim that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all! Evolution's cruel "survival of the fittest" mechanism could not come from Scripture's infinitely righteous God, so Dr. Peterson errs!

(3) On the Yoruba/Odu Ifa cult practiced by the leaders of Black Lives Matter, in calling up spirits, they traffic in demons, and (a) 1 John 4:4 claims that the Holy Spirit Who is in us believers in Christ is greater than Satan Who is in this world, so we must not fear the occult practices of Black Lives Matter leaders. (b) Also, Romans 16:20 ESV claims, " . . . (T)he God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet," so we need to be in prayer for God's intervention regarding the influence of the leaders of Black Lives Matter. (c) James 4:7 calls us to resist the Devil and he will flee from us, and we resist Satan by being strong in our faith in God's Word (1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 2:14b).

Missionaries to the Yoruba people pray and apply Scripture, what we should also do with Black Lives Matter!

**May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive eternal life.
May we then use what opportunities God grants us to live uprightly and influence others for the Lord.**