

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XXIII. Guidance In Facing Sinfully Irresponsible, Destructive Leaders

(2 Chronicles 10:1-11:4)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The current coronavirus pandemic and its vast, destructive fallout is mainly the product of bad leadership:

(1) Li Yuan's story, "Coronavirus Crisis Shows China's Governance Failure" (February 4, 2020; nytimes.com) noted, "As the virus spread, officials in Wuhan and around the country" of China "withheld critical information, played down the threat and rebuked doctors who tried to raise the alarm" so that "by not issuing earlier warnings, the Chinese government potentially lost the window to keep the disease from becoming an epidemic."

(2) However, leaders in our own country have greatly erred, too: "(T)he Government Accountability Office . . . the federal government's leading internal watchdog" had been issuing "a steady stream of reports about poor pandemic planning" since "the early 2000s," and "U. S. intelligence agencies" have often warned, "(T)he United States and the world will remain vulnerable to the next flu pandemic or large-scale outbreak of a contagious disease that could lead to massive rates of death and disability" and "severely affect the world economy . . ." (Noam N. Levey, Kim Christensen and Anna M. Phillips, "A disaster foretold," Republican-American, March 21, 2020, p. 7A)

In spite of such warnings, government leaders did not prepare for the current pandemic, seen by its "exposing . . . (i)nadequate supplies of protective masks, ventilators, intensive care beds and other medical resources," Ibid. In addition, grocery stores have often run short on meat, dish detergent, bottled water, paper towels and toilet paper. (Andrew Larson, "Stores' early bird special lays an egg," Ibid., p. 1A) The stock market has been on a rollercoaster ride as investors fear a deep recession. ("Dow drops, ending worst week since 2008," Ibid., p. 4B) "Marijuana users . . . are on a buying spree . . . in search of relief during anxious times" (Ibid., "Home weed delivery surges amid outbreak") and economist Nancy Vanden Houten at the consulting firm Oxford Economics has claimed, "The U. S. economy will experience the largest contraction on record with the most severe surge in unemployment ever." (Ibid., Christopher Rugaber, "3.3 million seek U. S. jobless aid, new record," Ibid., March 27, 2020, p. 6A)

Need: *So we ask, "What guidance does God offer as we live under sinfully irresponsible, destructive leaders?!"*

- I. Rehoboam sinfully, irresponsibly made a terrible decision on how to treat his subjects, 2 Chron. 10:1-14:**
 - A. When Israel prepared to crown Solomon's son Rehoboam as king, the people under his father's former servant Jeroboam asked him to lighten his father's yoke on them as their condition to accepting his rule, 2 Chr. 10:1-4.
 - B. This request reveals that Solomon had failed to read Scripture daily so as to respect his subjects like Deuteronomy 17:18-20a taught Israel's kings, so he had become a sinfully oppressive king!
 - C. Rehoboam asked for time to consider their request, but in seeking counsel, he rejected the advice of his father's older counselors not to oppress the people like Deuteronomy 17:18-20a taught in favor of the sinful advice of the younger men that he oppress his subjects even more than Solomon did! (2 Chronicles 10:8b-11)
- II. Consequently, Rehoboam destructively split the Davidic kingdom, 2 Chronicles 10:12-19:**
 - A. When Rehoboam told the people that he would be more oppressive than his father, ten of Israel's tribes rebelled against him, leaving Rehoboam only two tribes to rule, 2 Chronicles 10:12-17; 1 Kings 11:29-32.
 - B. Rehoboam then unsuccessfully tried to get the rebellious ten tribes to submit to him in 2 Chronicles 10:18-19.
- III. God revealed He had sovereignly let the kingdom split in punishment for Solomon's sin, 2 Chr. 11:1-4a:**
 - A. Rehoboam mustered his army to fight the ten northern tribes, but God's prophet Shemaiah warned him not to fight against them because the division of the kingdom was permitted by God Himself, 2 Chronicles 11:1-4a.
 - B. Indeed, 2 Chronicles 10:15 explains this division had been predicted by God's prophet Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam as punishment for Solomon's great idolatry, cf. 1 Kings 11:29-39.
 - C. Rehoboam heeded Shemaiah's warning and refrained from fighting against the northern tribes at that time.
- IV. However, Scripture records how GOD has BLESSED INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS who OBEYED Him during the WHOLE ERA of the DIVIDED kingdom running from REHOBOAM down to the SECOND COMING of Christ even when such believers often lived under sinfully irresponsible, destructive rulers!**

Lesson: *Rehoboam sinfully and irresponsibly chose to oppress his subjects, destructively dividing the kingdom, and God sovereignly let him divide the kingdom to punish sin in the nation's leadership while also continuing to bless individual believers who obeyed the Lord though they still lived under sinful, irresponsibly destructive rulers.*

Application: (1) *May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) If we ourselves are in a leadership role, may we heed Deuteronomy 17:18-20a to read Scripture daily to be reminded of our need to respect our subordinates and not oppress them. (3) Since the ministries of the Old Testament prophets following Rehoboam's rule down through the earthly life of Christ applied God's blessings to individuals though they faced sinfully irresponsible, destructive rulers, and since we face sinfully irresponsible, destruct leaders in our current era, may we use those Scriptures on God's blessing to individual believers for guidance for our individual benefit today (as noted below).*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) On financial shortages, when Israel was under the rule of sinful and often irresponsible, destructive leaders of the divided kingdom in Jesus' era, Christ told Peter to cast a line with a hook on it into the Sea of Galilee and pull up a fish to find in its mouth a 4 drachma coin to pay for the temple tax of 2 drachmas each for Him and for Peter, Matthew 17:24-27; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 61. If Jesus supplied the exact amount of money He and Peter owed for this tax, God can and will meet our financial needs in our era as we heed Him according to Philippians 4:12-19.

(2) On material shortages in stores we visit to purchase goods, in 2 Kings 4:42-44 during the reign of Ahab's godless son king Jehoram (2 Kings 3:1), God took a donation of 20 loaves someone had given to the school of the prophets, what would feed only 20 men, and through His prophet Elisha multiplied it so all 100 of the prophets could not only be filled, but also have leftovers! God will meet our material shortages if we heed Him, Philippians 4:12-19!

(3) On paying for debts upon loss of income, in 2 Kings 4:1-7 under the reign of evil king Jehoram (2 Kings 3:1) when an unemployed widow was left with her late husband's debt and the creditor was about to take her sons to be his slaves to pay off the debt, she cried out to the prophet Elisha, and he had her borrow vessels from her neighbors and pour out what olive oil she had into the vessels. When God multiplied the oil to fill up all the vessels, she was to sell the oil, pay off the debt and live off the proceeds. May we obey the Lord and trust Him to meet our needs even in the loss of income when we face debts, not fretting about them, for He will meet our needs, Philippians 4:6-9, 12-19.

(4) On livelihood security amid stock market swoons, job layoffs and the shutting down of business income streams while have to be quarantined, in 1 Kings 17:1-16 under evil king Ahab who sought for Elijah to kill him for predicting a severe drought for his sin, as God had Elijah hid "quarantined" from Ahab by the brook Cherith, God used ravens that often forget to feed their own young (Job 38:41; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 524) faithfully to bring him bread (carbohydrates) and meat (protein) morning and evening. When the brook dried up, God sent Elijah to stay with a widow and her son and kept restocking her barrel of meal for the rest of the drought and Elijah's "quarantine."

(5) On individual trials of anxiety during the divided kingdom under godless Gentile rule, (a) when Peter asked Jesus if he could walk on the sea to meet Him, Jesus said, "Come!" Yet, when Peter left the boat and began to walk on the water, he saw that the wind was boisterous, so he became afraid, began to sink and cried out for Jesus to save him. Jesus quickly stretched out His hand, caught Peter and asked him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" When they got back in the boat, the wind stopped. (Matthew 14:28-32) (b) Then, in 2 Kings 6:1-7 under evil king Jehoram (2 Kings 3:1) when a prophet who served God was helping to build a shelter for the school of the prophets lost a borrowed axe head in the Jordan River, distressing him, the prophet Elisha miraculously made the axe head float so it could be retrieved. We can leave our anxieties with God, finding His peace, Philippians 4:6-9.

(6) On the trial of having to deal with sinfully irresponsible, destructive leaders themselves, in 2 Kings 8:1-6 under the reign of evil king Jehoram (2 Kings 3:1), the prophet Elisha told the Shunammite woman to leave her land and sojourn elsewhere to escape a coming seven-year famine of divine judgment. When she obeyed Elisha's word, leaving her land, others seized it, so when she returned, she had to beg evil king Jehoram for her property. When she arrived in the king's presence to speak with him, Elisha's sinful former servant Gehazi was just then telling Jehoram about Elisha's raising of the Shunammite woman's son from the dead. Jehoram was so impressed by the account that he ordered the Shunammite woman's land to be returned to her with its produce from the day she had left! God thus caused Elisha's ungodly former servant and the nation's ungodly king to restore the woman's land and all its produce! May we trust God to function for our blessing in sovereignty over even sinfully irresponsible, destructive leaders!

(7) On health concerns amid the pandemic, in 2 Kings 4:38-41 during a famine of God's judgment on the reign of evil king Jehoram (2 Kings 3:1), when a prophet had unwittingly added a poisonous plant's gourd to a pot of stew for the school of the prophets, raising an alarm when some of the men began to taste it, Elisha threw meal into the pot and God neutralized the poison. God does not always will to heal believers in the Church era (2 Timothy 4:20b), but we can trust Him to watch over our health so that we can fulfill His ministry assignments for us in our era just like He watched over the health of the school of the prophets so they might fulfill His assignments for them in Elisha's era.

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we study Scripture to be reminded to treat subordinates with respect and be encouraged to trust God to help us as we live under sinfully irresponsible, destructive leaders.