

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XXVII. Relying On God Versus Man's Governments

(2 Chronicles 14:1-15:19)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The COVID-19 pandemic has involved a massive failure of human governments on a worldwide scale:

(1) The story, "State supply sparse and dated before virus" in the Republican-American, April 24, 2020, p. 9A, told how the virus hit hard due in part to a medical "supply shortage." Gerard Anderson, a professor at John Hopkins University, said, "(I)n almost every state, in every locality, and" in "the federal government level" officials were "depleting the resources, depleting the inventory, and hoping when you" needed them they would somehow "be available," Ibid. Governments worldwide failed, too, seen in the "worldwide competition for scarce supplies," Ibid.

(2) The results have been catastrophic: (a) "Huge lines have formed at food banks from El Paso, Texas, to the Paris suburbs" as the Internet was filled with stories of farmers euthanizing pigs and chickens meant for meat plants and dumping milk due to logjams in the supply chain and illness in many plant workers (David Crary, Regina Garcia Cano and Angela Charlton, "Unemployment highest since Depression," Ibid.) (b) "Unemployment in the U. S. is swelling to levels last seen during the Great Depression of the 1930s" and (c) "European Union leaders" plan to infuse \$1.1 to \$1.6 trillion worth of euros to "rebuild the 27-nation bloc's ravaged economies," Ibid. (d) In the U. S., "the shock from the . . . shutdown could accelerate the depletion of the Social Security trust fund by about six months," but "(i)f a recession extends into next year, it could mean that depletion would come a full year earlier," by 2034! ("Social Security and Medicare funds at risk even before virus," Ibid., April 23, 2020, p. 11A) (e) Dave Ramsay of Financial Peace University on a recent radio show claimed that if we want to buy term life insurance, we had better do so now since insurance rates are escalating due to the pandemic, and that we might not even be able to qualify for coverage!

(3) Veronique De Rugy's piece, "Preparing for the next crisis" (Ibid., April 25, 2020, p. 10A) explained the failure occurred in our government due to its lack of "market discipline that every private-sector business faces if it doesn't perform" and since "bureaucrats and politicians carelessly spend other people's money." Her point is well taken: Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi last Monday suggested a "guaranteed income" for all Americans due to the pandemic with no word about how it would affect the national debt or future taxes! (Jason Silverstein, "Pelosi says 'guaranteed income' for Americans is worth considering for coronavirus recovery," April 27, 2020; cbsnews.com)

Need: *So we ask, "If governments worldwide have failed their people, what would God want us to do?!"*

- I. In acting independently of God, Judah's king Asa vastly underestimated the danger Judah could face:**
 - A. Asa heeded the Lord in opposing idols, so God kept the nation of Judah free from war, 2 Chronicles 14:1-5.
 - B. However, instead of **truly trusting God** for Judah's defense like Deuteronomy 17:16 implied Israel's kings were supposed to do, Asa tried to protect Judah **himself** by fortifying its cities and stockpiling arms while simultaneously claiming God had kept Judah from facing war since they had sought the Lord, 2 Chron. 14:6-8.
 - C. However, a 1 million-man army from Ethiopia then came out against Judah's army of 580,000 men, what Asa's arms and fortifications could not withstand, exposing the futility of His defense plans, 2 Chr. 14:8, 9-10!
- II. Realizing that he was in a grave crisis, Asa cried out unto the Lord for deliverance and God gave him a great victory in shattering the Ethiopians, with Judah taking much spoil, 2 Chronicles 14:11, 12-15.**
- III. Consequently, the Lord sent His prophet Azariah to admonish Asa to learn from this battle in light of Judah's past history that he needed to obey the Lord fully to enjoy God's blessing, 2 Chronicles 15:1-7.**
- IV. Asa heeded this word and purified the nation of idols instead of fortifying Judah, 2 Chronicles 15:8-18:**
 - A. Asa first purged his nation and the land he had taken from Israel of all its idols, 2 Chronicles 15:8a.
 - B. He then repaired the altar of the Lord in the temple, 2 Chronicles 15:8b ESV.
 - C. Third, Asa gathered all his subjects from the tribal lands of Judah and Benjamin along with many Hebrews from the Northern Kingdom of Israel who had moved to Judah upon hearing God was with him, and they all sacrificed to the Lord in His temple and made a covenant to follow God wholeheartedly, 2 Chronicles 15:9-14.
 - D. This event produced great joy in Judah, and the Lord gave the nation rest from war, 2 Chronicles 15:15.
 - E. Asa even deposed his grandmother Maacah from being queen mother, for she had made an idol of the goddess Asherah, and he destroyed the idol, 2 Chronicles 15:16; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 Kings 15:13.
 - F. The high places were not removed, but Asa put his father's and his own sacred gifts in the temple, v. 17-18.
 - G. So, **without** trying to **fortify** Judah, but **truly trusting** the **Lord**, Asa saw God give him peace, v.19 with 15c.

Lesson: *When Asa acted independently of God to fortify his nation's defense in violation of Scripture, he badly underestimated the danger his nation of Judah could face! However, when he relied on God and obeyed His Word, the Lord greatly delivered his nation from a catastrophe and then kept it free from war.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin and hell, John 3:16. (2) May we not rely on man, be it ourselves or man's government, independently of the Lord, but trust God and heed His Word for blessing.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

To apply this message, we address each of the issues in our introduction by **avoiding** reliance on our own wisdom or that of any or all government officials independently of the Lord. Instead, we choose to rely on the Lord and closely heed His Word like Asa learned for God's blessing (as follows):

(1) On our national security, Psalm 127:1-2 teaches that unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman in vain stays awake to prepare to warn of an enemy attack. We must rely on the Lord for our nation's security.

(2) On the government's insufficient medical supplies and medicine for the pandemic, we once again recall God's 1 Timothy 5:23 call to use common sense and home remedies to guard our health. Social distancing, self-made masks, sleep, exercise, gargling with iodized salt in warm water at the first sign of a sore throat, ingesting fluids, fresh cut vegetables, nuts, seeds, etc. while avoiding sweets, starches and stress to keep our blood sugar levels moderate to help our immune systems -- all are practical ways to avoid needless illness.

(3) On long lines at food banks, many people in those lines lack savings. We should then work for an income (2 Thess. 3:10) and save **some** of it for an emergency fund for dependents (2 Cor. 12:14b) and ourselves (2 Cor. 9:10a), then budget (Luke 14:28-29), avoid debt (Prov. 22:7) and be content with what we have to avoid needless spending (Heb. 13:5-6). For **long-term** stability, Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 calls us to invest **some** of our income boldly, long-term with diversification (like stock mutual funds with great, long-term records) and add to our investments, what guards us against the eroding value of the dollar that is caused by excess government spending and/or inflation.

(4) On term life insurance possibly becoming unavailable, heeding "(3)" above will be absolutely necessary!

(5) On the threat of the diminishing benefits of Medicare and Social Security, (a) heeding 1 Timothy 5:23 as explained in "(2)" above will go far in preserving our health and savings regardless of cutbacks in Medicare. (b) On the shrinking Social Security trust fund, God told Elijah to hide by the "Brook" Cherith east of the Jordan River in the land of Gilead and to drink from that "Brook," 1 Kings 17:1-4. The Hebrew word for "Brook" there is ***nahal***, "torrent-valley, wadi" (B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 636), "a valley or ravine that is dry except in the rainy season," Zon. Pict. Ency. Bible, vol. Five, p. 893. Since Elijah himself lived in Gilead and he had just prophesied a severe drought for the nation (1 Kings 17:1), he **knew** God was sending him to drink from a wadi in Gilead (1 Kings 17:3) that was due **soon to dry up!** However, God's faithful supply of bread and meat by normally irresponsible ravens (Job 38:41) at that wadi (1 Kings 17:4-6) indicated God would somehow provide for Elijah's water needs even when the wadi dried up, for God clearly wanted Elijah to stay alive as evidenced by God's use of the ravens to feed him! When the wadi **did** dry up, God then sent Elijah to Zarephath to live with a poor widow and her son, a well being in that town to meet the water needs of the household. However, Elijah and the widow now needed **food security**, so God miraculously sustained the widow's barrel of meal for the rest of the drought, 1 Kings 17:7-16.

Thus, God knows about the diminishing levels of both Medicare and Social Security like He knew that both Wadi Cherith would dry up and that the widow's barrel of meal needed sustaining, so He will provide for our needs even if both Medicare and Social Security benefits are reduced. (c) Also, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 calls us to earn a living independently of others, and Psalm 92:12-15 claims the godly will be productive even in old age, so we should plan to work and/or provide for income throughout our lives in addition to government programs! (i) For example, when Paul was on "death row" (2 Timothy 4:6) near the end of his life, he still wanted to study Scripture and minister to others, so he had Timothy bring him copies of the Old Testament and papyrus rolls for writing! (Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to 2 Timothy 4:13) Paul did not "retire," but served the Lord to the end of his life! (ii) Also, 80-year-old Barzillai of Rogelim in Gilead, "a very old man" for his day who suffered some loss of taste and hearing, made an emergency trip 30 miles south from Rogelim to David's people at Mahanaim to bring them livelihood provisions like bedding, bowls, pottery, wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils, honey, curds, sheep, and cheese from cows' milk when David fled from Absalom. Barzillai went another 30 miles with David, crossing the Jordan River to escort him back toward Jerusalem before crossing back over the river and traveling another 60 miles back home! (2 Samuel 17:27-29; 19:31-38 NIV; The Carta Bible Atlas, 2002, map 109) This elderly, godly man worked hard late into his life!

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we not rely on the wisdom or power of man, be it ourselves or others, but truly trust the Lord for all matters at all times, and closely heed His Word for blessing.