

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

#### **XXIX. Safety In Heeding Scripture Above All Else**

##### **(2 Chronicles 17:1-19:3)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

We believers in Christ today face opposing claims from various sources that can greatly affect our welfare:

(1) We face it regarding our spiritual welfare: George Will's column, "'1619' undeserving of Pulitzer" (Ibid., May 7, 2020, p. 12A) critiqued The New York Times' articles that claimed "the nation's real founding was the arrival of 20 slaves in Virginia in 1619," meaning "(t)he nation is *about* racism." Mr. Will countered this assertion, writing that America was founded on "the moral majesty of the first modern nation's Enlightenment precepts proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence and implemented by the Constitution."

However, the Enlightenment that extolled human reason eventually led to Liberal Theology's denial of the divine inspiration of the Bible! (gotquestions.org/Enlightenment-Christianity.html; Compton's Ency. Dict., 1971, s. v. "enlightenment.") One must then watch that countering The New York Times' "1619 Project" view by exalting the eighteenth century Enlightenment does not lead to the sanctioning of unbiblical Liberal Theology!

(2) We also face opposing claims that can affect our physical welfare: Jonah Goldberg's column, "The unmasking of idiocy" (Sunday Republican, May 10, 2020, p. 14A) reported, "Various cable-TV and talk-radio hosts have embraced the idea that wearing a mask" in this pandemic "is a concession to tyrannical social engineers and a 'symbol of fear,' in the words of Rush Limbaugh." Mr. Goldberg took the opposing view, claiming that "(w)earing . . . a mask" is done "to ensure you won't kill someone's grandmother." (Ibid.)

The debate is both huge and consequential. A letter by Tina LaPorta of Essex, Connecticut (Ibid., May 9, 2020, p. 8A) opposing the shutdown asserted, "Not even 1 % of the population of this state has been hospitalized or died from the Wuhan virus, yet we have destroyed an economy in a few months" over it. Yet, estimating that 1 % of our state's population is 35,000 and Governor Ned Lamont has said, "In a really bad flu season we lose about 100 people," his claim that COVID-19 has killed 3,000 state residents suggests the virus is still 30 times more deadly than the worst flu season even if the virus has not hospitalized or killed even less than one-tenth of 1 % of our state's people! (Paul Hughes, "Death toll passes 3,000," Republican-American, May 12, 2020, p. 1A)

Adding fuel to the flame, I've recently heard several local and national radio-talk show hosts claim the shutdown was just a political power-grab, that governing officials really don't care about the economy or the people.

Need: *So we ask, "What does God direct if various sources sharply differ on issues that affect our welfare?!"*

#### **I. Judah's good king Jehoshaphat made an alliance with Israel's wicked king Ahab that so impacted Jehoshaphat's thinking, he made a foolish, dangerous decision, 2 Chronicles 17:1-18:28:**

- A. When Jehoshaphat came to Judah's throne, he generally led the nation to follow the Lord, 2 Chron. 17:1-19:
  1. Jehoshaphat began his reign by strengthening his nation militarily, what actually violated God's Deuteronomy 17:16 directive that His people's kings rely on God for that need, 2 Chronicles 17:1, 12-19.
  2. However, Jehoshaphat sought the Lord instead of idols contrary to what the kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel were doing, so God graciously blessed him, 2 Chronicles 17:2-4, 5-6a.
  3. He even sent princes, Levites and priests out to teach his subjects God's Law, so God richly blessed the nation, causing Gentile nations around to respect Jehoshaphat and to bring him gifts, 2 Chron. 17:6b-11.
- B. However, Jehoshaphat then made an alliance with Israel's wicked king Ahab, 2 Chronicles 18:1.
- C. Ahab took advantage of the alliance to manipulate Jehoshaphat into joining him in war against Aramea, v. 2-3:
  1. Israel's king Ahab invited Jehoshaphat to a great feast that was given in his honor, 2 Chronicles 18:2a.
  2. Ahab used this event to persuade Jehoshaphat to join him in battle against Aramea, 2 Chronicles 18:2b-3.
- D. Jehoshaphat agreed to help Ahab providing they sought God's will from a prophet of the Lord, so Ahab gathered 400 of his false prophets who all agreed that Ahab would defeat the Arameans, 2 Chronicles 18:4-5.
- E. Jehoshaphat knew these prophets were false, so he insisted on hearing a true prophet of God, and Ahab reluctantly agreed to summon Micaiah, a true prophet who always criticized him, 2 Chronicles 18:6-8.
- F. Micaiah revealed that were the coalition to fight Aramea, Ahab would die, that God had let a demon lead Ahab's 400 prophets to predict that it was safe for him to go to battle against the Arameans, 2 Chron. 18:9-22.
- G. Micaiah's message angered false prophet Zedekiah, so he slapped Micaiah in the face, and Micaiah predicted that Zedekiah would later hide himself when his prophecy about Ahab's victory was proven false, v. 23-24.

- H. Ahab reacted to Micaiah's prophecy, ordering that he be imprisoned until Ahab returned from battle, v. 25-26.
  - I. Micaiah replied that if Ahab returned safely, he was not a true prophet of the Lord, 2 Chronicles 18:27.
  - J. Remarkably, Jehoshaphat foolishly chose **not** to believe God's prophet and went with Ahab into battle, v. 28.
- II. Jehoshaphat's bad, dangerous decision nearly cost him his life, 2 Chronicles 18:29-19:1:**
- A. Ahab thought there might be some truth to Micaiah's prophecy, so he chose to disguise himself while Jehoshaphat wore his royal robe as they went into combat, another foolish decision by Jehoshaphat, v. 29.
  - B. The Arameans initially believed Jehoshaphat was Ahab by his clothing, so they prepared to attack him until Jehoshaphat cried out and God graciously caused the Arameans to cease confronting him, 2 Chron. 18:30-32.
  - C. Then, an Aramean randomly shot an arrow that fatally wounded Ahab, fulfilling Micaiah's prophecy, v. 33-34.
  - D. Jehoshaphat safely returned home from the battle, likely stunned by all that had happened, 2 Chronicles 19:1.
- III. Accordingly, God's prophet Jehu critiqued Jehoshaphat's errant way, 2 Chronicles 19:2-3:**
- A. Jehu critiqued Jehoshaphat for helping wicked Ahab and loving those like him who hated the Lord, so Jehoshaphat would face God's wrath to some extent in his future as king, 2 Chronicles 19:2.
  - B. Nevertheless, since Jehoshaphat had done some good things like removing false idols and preparing his heart to seek the Lord, Jehu predicted that God was still disposed to bless him, 2 Chronicles 19:3.

***Lesson:*** *Though Jehoshaphat was generally a good king, his union with wicked Ahab led him to be badly deceived into believing a demonic lie instead of believing God's prophet Micaiah, and it nearly cost Jehoshaphat his life.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we heed God's command to believe in His Son Jesus Christ for salvation, Acts 17:30; John 3:16. (2) For our safety, may we (a) avoid ungodly associations that can lead us to be deceived into disobeying the Lord and (b) obey His Word above all other sources to the contrary, cf. 2 Timothy 3:15-17 with Romans 3:4a.*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . . )

To illustrate this message, we apply its lesson to the issues presented in our introduction (as follows):

(1) On **both** George Will's promotion of the Enlightenment's "moral majesty" **and** the claims of *either side* of the COVID-19 **debate** on how guarded we should be against the virus, Isaiah 8:20 ESV states: "'To the teaching and to the testimony!'" or in today's lingo, "Let's get back to the Bible!" The verse goes on to state, "If they will not speak according to this word [saying], it is because they have no dawn," that is, they lack even the hope of gaining greater insight like the dawn's light that brings promise of a brighter daylight to come. Thus, if we do not say, "Let's get back to the Bible!" we live in such great darkness that we have no hope of even gaining future true insight even if looking to any human source [like Jehoshaphat looked to Ahab and his false prophets] instead of God's Word.

Regarding both the eighteenth century Enlightenment and COVID-19, we must **not** rely on just our own judgment or that of anyone else, but on **Scripture** for God's guidance lest we walk in dangerous spiritual darkness!

(2) Accordingly, we view **Scripture** on George Will's alleged "moral majesty" of the Enlightenment in the Declaration of Independence and note that that declaration violated Romans 13:1-2 by its stated rebellion against the King of England! The rights we enjoy as Americans are a blessing, but our nation was formed in sin! Psalm 119:105 thus claims we are in a world of darkness, the Enlightenment included, so we need Scripture to guide us in the truth.

(3) Also, we view **Scripture** on COVID-19 and note that (a) we before saw 1 Timothy 5:23 calling us to use home remedies and practice good hygiene. (b) Also, Romans 13:1-2, 1 Peter 2:1-17 and Proverbs 21:1 call us to obey governing officials. Here's why: (i) Romans 13:1-2 and 1 Peter 2:1-17 were written to believers living under Nero who persecuted Christians (Ryrie St. Bib., KJV, 1978, p. 1593, 1757; Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., v. Four, p. 410-411), so those passages order us to obey rulers **even if they are evil!** (ii) So, ***even if governing officials err or infringe on our rights or intentionally hurt our economy***, these passages teach God is still sovereign over them, so we must heed them until those officials **tell us to do what violates Scripture**, and **then** Acts 5:29 calls us to heed **Scripture over them**. (iii) We also before learned that Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 reveals we are in a "mini-Great Tribulation" era when God punishes sinners, so He **may** let ***even demons foment lies on the general public*** (as in 2 Chronicles 18:18-21) to punish those (like Ahab and his false prophets) who sin! (iv) So, ***to be safe, we must heed governing officials until they tell us to do what violates Scripture!*** (c) However, if governing officials provide the general public mixed signals on their mandates or recommendations or if such officials contradict themselves or counter one another as officials, Proverbs 1:4 calls us not to be "naive" (*peti*), but to use "sensibleness" (*'ormah*), to rely our own best good judgment, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 907.

**May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin. Then, for safety in today's world, may we avoid ungodly alliances that influence us to disobey Scripture and heed God's Word above all other sources to the contrary.**