

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XXXVI. God's Justice Versus Man's Injustice

(2 Chronicles 24:17-27)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A lot of injustices are being committed today even by progressives who promote "social justice" causes:

(1) It occurs in a number of "social justice" demonstrations: ". . . (P)rotesters in Madison, Wis., pulled down a statue of Hans Christian Heg, an abolitionist immigrant who died fighting for the union. For good measure, they also toppled a statue commemorating women's suffrage and beat up a 60-year-old Democratic state senator. It seems that, in the battle against white supremacy, attacking any white person will do . . ." (Sean Collins, Spiked Magazine, June 26, "Who's behind the war on statues?" as cited in "Quotable," Republican-American, July 2, 2020, p. 8A)

(2) It happens with the issue of gay marriage: Megan added, "If you had told me 10 years ago that same-sex marriage meant Christian bakers being legally required to bake cakes for same-sex weddings, I, or any supporter of marriage equality, would have dismissed this as conservative propaganda . . . Then, shortly after the U. S. Supreme Court ruled, activists began declaring that of course those bakers had to bake those cakes. Privately . . . a lot of same-sex-marriage advocates . . . thought this went too far. But, publicly, they found other things to talk about," Ibid.

(3) It takes place with the issue of religious liberty: "A federal judge . . . blocked New York state from enforcing . . . restrictions limiting indoor religious . . . gatherings to 25% capacity when other types of gatherings are limited to 50% . . . Judge Gary Sharpe . . . noted that both [Governor] Cuomo and [New York City Mayor] de Blasio have expressed approval for protests against racism and police brutality . . . while continuing to support restrictions on religious gatherings." (Ibid., "Judge blocks 25% capacity rule for religious gatherings," June 27, 2020, p. 9A)

(4) It even transpires in the matter of valuing black lives: "Black people constitute about 13% of the U. S. population," but "in 2014, 36% of all abortions were performed on black women." (Cynthia M. Allen, "Unborn black lives matter, too," Ibid., July 1, 2020, p. 11A) "(T)he statistics hold up even when controlling for income. Black unborn of all socioeconomic backgrounds are disproportionately erased from existence," and "(e)ven for abortion-rights advocates, those numbers should be appalling," Ibid. Yet, we never hear about it from "social justice" warriors!

Need: *So we ask, "In view of great wrongs by even promoters of 'social justice,' what should we do, and why?!"*

- I. **After the high priest Jehoiada died, king Joash and Judah's leaders turned to idolatry, and as Jehoiada's son Zechariah announced God's punishment against them for their sin, they killed him, 2 Chr. 24:17-21:**
 - A. With the vacuum of influence on king Joash left by the death of his father-figure, the high priest Jehoiada, Judah's officials led Joash to abandon the Lord and follow after false pagan gods, 2 Chronicles 24:17-18a.
 - B. This apostasy angered the Lord, so He sent prophets to warn them to repent, 2 Chronicles 24:18b-19a.
 - C. The king and men of Judah did not repent, so the Holy Spirit came upon Zechariah, Jehoiada's descendant, and he told the people at the temple that since they had forsaken God, He had forsaken them, 2 Chron. 27:19b-20.
 - D. Joash, his officials and the people reacted by stoning Zechariah to death in the temple court, 2 Chr. 27:21-22a.
- II. **When Zechariah lay dying, he entrusted the wrong that was being committed against him to the Lord, saying, "May the Lord see and avenge!" (2 Chronicles 24:22b ESV)**
- III. **God indeed avenged this wrong with fitting punishment for Zechariah's killers, 2 Chronicles 24:23-27:**
 - A. Within a year, God applied His 2 Samuel 7:14 Davidic Covenant promise to punish wayward Davidic kings with the rod of men by bringing the Gentile Arameans against Judah, and they killed all the officials who had influenced Joash to abandon the Lord and delivered the spoil to the Aramean king, 2 Chronicles 24:23.
 - B. In fulfillment of Deuteronomy 28:15, 25, God let a small Aramean army defeat Judah's larger force, v. 24.
 - C. The Arameans also badly wounded Joash, so God used two of his servants, sons of Gentile women, to kill Joash on his bed, 2 Chronicles 24:25a, 26a,b. For Joash's forgetting that Jehoiada's wife had saved him as an infant, hiding him in a storage room for mattresses and couches (2 Chronicles 22:11; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Kings 11:2), God fittingly let foreigners fulfill 2 Samuel 7:14 in killing Joash on his mattress!
 - D. Unlike Jehoiada's honorable burial with Judah's kings, Joash was not buried with them, 2 Chr. 24:25b; 24:15.
- IV. **In addition, Church History reveals SEVERAL reasons WHY God let Zechariah's martyrdom OCCUR:**
 - A. In Luke 11:51 [and Matthew 23:35], Jesus said God would avenge the prophets who had been martyred beginning with Abel and going down through history to Zechariah who was slain in the temple court.
 - B. In view of **Church History**, this statement by Jesus is **extremely important to us Christian believers:**

1. Though the Jews had long possessed the Apocrypha, they never made it canonical. Then, in the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Church sought a defense against Protestant critics for its belief in purgatory, and came to think 2 Maccabees 12:40-45 in the Apocrypha offered such a defense. There, Judas Maccabeus paid for a sacrifice for men who had died while guilty of the sin of idolatry, so the Catholic Church used this passage to support prayers for the dead and purgatory. (L. Boettner, Roman Catholicism, 1978, p. 83)
2. This was a stretch even for the Roman Catholic Church, for "idolatry is a mortal sin, and according to Roman Catholic doctrine those dying in mortal sin go directly to hell. Only those who are guilty of venial sin go to purgatory and so only they can be helped by masses and prayers," *Ibid.*, p. 83-84!
3. Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic Church's Council of Trent, even against objections from some of its own members, made the Apocrypha canonical, *Ibid.*, p. 83.
4. This issue creates another great crisis of faith: belief in purgatory contradicts the claim in 2 Corinthians 5:5 that for the believer's soul to be absent from his body in physical death is for his soul to be present with the Lord in heaven, **not in purgatory!** If the Apocrypha is canonical and purgatory exists, 2 Corinthians 5:5 errs in opposing belief in purgatory, leaving us with an errant Bible and undermining the Christian faith!
5. However, Jesus' words about Zechariah in Luke 11:51 [and Matthew 23:35] solves all of these problems:
 - a. The Hebrew Old Testament canon consists of the 39-book canon of Scripture held by Protestants, but in a different order of books: the Protestant Old Testament starts with Genesis and ends with Malachi where the Hebrew Old Testament starts with Genesis and ends with 2 Chronicles. (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1-1434)
 - b. Had Jesus held the Apocrypha to be canonical, instead of naming Zechariah as the last martyr, He would have named a martyr from the Apocrypha since a number of its martyrs died long after Zechariah lived.
 - c. Thus, by naming Zechariah who was slain in 2 Chronicles 24:21-22 as the last of the martyred prophets, Jesus *denied* the **canonicity** of the **Apocrypha** and **supported** the canonicity of the Hebrew **Old Testament 39 books!** (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fns. to Luke 11:51 and Matthew 23:35)
 - d. In settling this issue of canonicity, Jesus also removed the threat to the **divine inspiration** and **authority** of 2 Corinthians 5:5, meaning if a believer is absent from the body, he is **truly** present with God in heaven!
- C. So, God's **letting** Zechariah's martyrdom **occur**, as bad as it was, worked the **greater good** of equipping Jesus to claim Zechariah was the last Old Testament martyr, thus clarifying the true Old Testament canon, leading us to avoid believing in prayers for the dead and purgatory and affirming the divine inspiration of Scripture!

Lesson: *Though Judah's officials and Joash wickedly slew Zechariah, when Zechariah relied on God to avenge his death, the Lord both avenged it and used his martyrdom to guard the truth for future believers in the Church on not offering prayers for the dead and not believing in purgatory while holding to God's inspiration of Scripture!*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) If we see or face injustice, (a) may we entrust the matter to God (Romans 12:19-20) and (b) recall from God's USE of Zechariah's martyrdom that He will nevertheless work through the injustice involved to produce a far greater good for His glory!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Just as God mightily used Zechariah's martyrdom, so He used Stephen's martyrdom in Acts 6:8-7:60:

(1) Stephen's Acts 7:2-53 message before the Jewish Sanhedrin is the longest message recorded in the book of Acts, for it prepared the way "for the gospel to reach outside the pale of Judaism," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 369.

(2) Stephen's speech and martyrdom also affected Saul of Tarsus, the lead witness at Stephen's execution (Acts 7:58). It led to Saul's conscience being sorely pricked until Jesus appeared to him and mentioned this pricking of his conscience, what in turn led to Paul's conversion and becoming the greatest missionary in the Church, Acts 26:14b.

(3) Also, as we explain in our work, "Making Sense of God's Election" on our Church web site, in the section, "The New Testament Greek Word, Tasso," Stephen's Acts 7 message to the Sanhedrin includes his potent uses of the verbs **apothéo** and **strepho** that appear together elsewhere in the New Testament **only** in Paul's Acts 13:46 climax of his message to Pisidian Antioch Jews. Paul's use of those verbs there implies his verb **tasso** in Acts 13:48 should **not** be seen as a **passive** to read "as many **were ordained** to eternal life believed," a Calvinistic translation, but that **tasso** is to be seen in the **middle** voice to read, "as many as **had marshaled themselves on the side of** eternal life believed"! God so used Stephen's message and martyrdom to affect Paul's vocabulary in Acts 13:46 that we can see from it all our need to correct a long-time mishandling of the Acts 13:48 verb **tasso** and so correct centuries of errant doctrine!

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we entrust injustices we face to God, knowing He allows them to occur for a much greater good to the glory of God!