

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

XL. God's Hope For A Humanly Hopeless Era

(2 Chronicles 28:1-27)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We need a message of hope from God today, for we live in an era that seems to be a humanly hopeless one:

(1) Nationally, we have "millions out of work . . . a potential wave of evictions ahead . . . (s)chools are delaying openings, states are clamping down with new stay-home orders and the fallout is rippling through an economy teetering with high unemployment and business uncertainty." (Lisa Mascaro, "White House, GOP agree to virus testing but aid bill shifts," Republican-American, July 23, 2020, p. 9A)

(2) The issue of distrust in politics and Big Tech is also big: "Professor Robert Epstein" who earned a Ph. D. from Harvard University and "said that he personally supported and voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016 -- testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday [July 14, 2020] . . . that Google election meddling gave Hillary Clinton at least 2.6 million additional votes in the 2016 election." (Alan Mastrangelo, "Robert Epstein: Big Tech Will 'Go All Out' With Election Meddling In 2020," July 17, 2020; breitbart.com) Dr. Epstein added, "In 2020 -- if all these [Big Tech] companies are supporting the same candidate -- there are 15 million votes on the line that can be shifted without peoples' knowledge, and without leaving a paper trail for authorities to trace," Ibid.

(3) Huge spiritual problems also exist in evangelicalism: Brannon S. Howse in his book, Marxianity, 2018, p. 242, reported, "Many mainstream evangelicals, pastors and so-called Christian organizations are tied to other organizations that receive funding from godless, progressive, globalist, and anti-Christian foundations."

(4) We face it locally: in the last eight weeks, I and others in our body have faced grave spiritual problems in fellow professing Christians we know with one member being so upset, she called me twice about a situation.

Need: *So, we ask, "What hope does God offer in our humanly hopeless era?!"*

- I. **When Ahaz assumed Judah's throne, he turned his back on God and practiced extensive pagan idolatry, so God administered severe punishments on him and the nation of Judah, 2 Chronicles 28:1-8, 16-27:**
 - A. Ahaz not only failed to follow the Lord like his forefather David, but he imported the Baal worship from the Northern Kingdom of Israel, he practiced child sacrifice and burned incense in the high places, 2 Chr. 28:1-4.
 - B. God thus let him suffer costly defeat to Aramea and even to fellow Jews in Israel, 2 Chron. 28:5. Ahaz lost 120,000 men to Israel and 200,000 women and children were taken captives with much spoil, 2 Chron. 28:6-8.
 - C. When Ahaz paid Assyria to help him against Edom and Philistia, Assyria's king did not help, 2 Chr. 28:16-21.
 - D. Desperate, Ahaz sacrificed to Aramean gods, thinking that since those gods had led Aramea to defeat him, he might gain their help by honoring them, 2 Chronicles 28:22-23. Ahaz added more idols and stripped God's temple of its valuables and closed it, infuriating the Lord and leading to Ahaz's demise, 2 Chronicles 28:24-27.
- II. **However, amid all the disaster of Ahaz's reign, the Lord graciously moved others to help sustain Judah:**
 - A. After the army of the Northern Kingdom of Israel had taken 200,000 women and children of Judah captive with much spoil, God's prophet Oded in Samaria went out to meet the returning army and rebuked them for intending to enslave the people they had taken captive from Judah for themselves, 2 Chronicles 28:9-10a.
 - B. Oded reminded the army of their *own* sins, charging that God's wrath had been incited against *them* for going **further** that just defeating Judah to take captives of Judah's people for themselves, 2 Chronicles 28:10b.
 - C. Oded called on Israel's army to return their captives to turn away God's fierce anger, 2 Chronicles 28:11.
 - D. Remarkably, several leaders of Israel's chief tribe of Ephraim sided with Oded's message, and they in turn urged the returning army of Israel to do just as Oded had taught them, 2 Chronicles 28:12-13.
 - E. Equally amazing, Israel's army obeyed their leaders: they left their prisoners and spoil with the leaders, and they in turn clothed the captives with the spoils, they gave them food and drink, anointed them to refresh them and carried all their weak and feeble people on donkeys to Jericho in returning them to Judah, 2 Chr. 28:14-15.
- III. **God's reason for sustaining Judah this remarkable way was His desire to fulfill two of His prophecies:**
 - A. In 1 Kings 11:36, **God** had *predicted* He would preserve the Davidic throne in honor of David.
 - B. Also, in 1 Kings 13:1-2, **God** *predicted* that David's descendant Josiah would destroy Israel's syncretistic altar at Bethel, a prediction yet to be fulfilled in 2 Chronicles 34:33 (as clarified in 2 Kings 23:15-16).
 - C. The Lord was committed to fulfilling these prophecies, thus giving Judah some unusual relief from destruction regardless of all destruction Judah faced in divine discipline for Ahaz's blatant idolatry!

Lesson: *God's prophecies regarding Judah and her Davidic kings were the hope that graciously led Him to sustain idolatrous Judah and her godless king Ahaz in their humanly hopeless era of great wickedness and deterioration.*

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) In our era of human hopelessness, may we confidently rest in God's prophecies regarding our era [as clarified in our conclusion below] and adjust to them for blessing!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In our era of human hopelessness, God has provided several key prophecies that give us hope and direction, so we view them in application of the sermon lesson above (as follows):

(1) **On general spiritual problems relative to what Bible teachers face today, we view Zechariah 11-14 with Matthew 13:1-52:** (a) Zechariah 11:10-14 predicted Messiah would react to being rejected by Israel by withdrawing His offer of His Messianic Kingdom, and Zechariah 11:15-17 predicted God would then assign antichrist to rule until Messiah's Second Coming to set up His Messianic Kingdom in Zechariah 14:1-5 *with no reference to the Church era.* (b) However, when Jesus fulfilled Zechariah 11:10-11 by withdrawing His Kingdom offer in Matthew 12:24-45, that very day (Matt. 13:1a) He gave parables to *reveal formerly hidden truths on God's program.* (Matt. 13:11; *Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 48-49; cf. Ephesians 3:1-12*) (c) The Matthew 13 parables thus explain God's program, *including the previously hidden Church era, between Christ's withdrawal of His Kingdom offer and His Second Coming to earth* (as follows): (i) God's Bible teachers will face varying responses to their ministry efforts due to opposition they will face from Satan (hard ground; birds), sin natures (stony ground) and worldliness (weedy ground), and even receptive folk will respond in varying degrees (30-, 60- & 100-fold) due to degrees of victory over Satan, the sin nature and worldliness, Matt. 13:2-23. (ii) Satan will then plant unbelievers among believers to try to thwart God's program (Matt. 13:24-30, 34-43). (iii) God will not quickly remove these unbelievers lest doing so harm the discipling of weak believers, Matt. 13:28-30. (iv) Thus, believers mixed with unsaved folk will grow into a big, evil group (Matt. 13:31-32; [evil] birds nesting in its branches) and turn doctrinally corrupt (Matt. 13:33; leaven and Mtt. 16:12). (v) To handle such trials, Bible teachers were so to value Old (used, buried treasure, Matt. 13:44) and New (as yet unused, new pearl in the market, Matt. 13:45-46) Testament truths on God's program that they expend every effort to gain knowledge of them to teach them (Matt. 13:51-52) for God's eternal reward. (Matt. 13:43; Dan. 12:3-4) (vi) In Matthew 13:30, 41-42 and 47-50, Jesus predicted God will separate the unsaved from the saved in the end to encourage Bible teachers to keep teaching amid the opposition they would face from the ungodly, the world and Satan. *God thus assures that though Bible teachers between Christ's withdrawal of His Kingdom offer in His earthly ministry and His Second Coming to earth will face much, varied opposition, God will judge all sinners in the end, so Bible teachers must highly value so as to keep expounding Scripture for God's eternal, great reward!*

(2) **On the timing of the rapture, we view Revelation 3:14-22; 4:1ff with 1 Corinthians 15:51-57:** (a) As the rapture occurs in Revelation 4:1 since that passage matches the 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 event, since Revelation 4:1 follows the current Revelation 3:14-22 era of Church History and since the Great Tribulation occurs in Revelation 5:1-19:21, *God will take the true Church to heaven via the rapture before the Great Tribulation Period begins!*

(3) **On issues we believers in our era face before the rapture occurs, we view Revelation 3:21 with 7:17:** (a) we before noted that Revelation 3:14-22 predicts our era, from around 1950 to the rapture, and that (b) this time will become marked by a mini-Great Tribulation where God causes Bible expositors to administer teaching balm to people afflicted by oppressive rulers in the government-religious-economic world complex and God's discipline much as Christ will minister balm to those who will come out of the future Great Tribulation, Rev. 3:21 with 7:17. *God thus assures us that though we in our era of Church History will face a mini-Great Tribulation to create a thirst in people for His nurturing Bible truths, we are to gain spiritual nurture through exposing ourselves to Scripture and then share the edifying information we possess with other spiritually needy, oppressed people as God directs.*

(4) **On secular issues we believers face before the rapture, we view Daniel 2:41-44a:** We before noted this passage predicts the revival of the Roman Empire in the future Great Tribulation, and today's Western nations largely already fit its description, namely, that (a) it will be divided (Dan. 2:41a), (b) it will be partly strong and partly weak (Dan. 2:41b-42), (c) its races will not mix (Dan. 2:43) and (d) these characteristics will continue on past the rapture into the Great Tribulation. (Dan. 2:41a [10 toes], 44a [kings] with Rev. 17:12 [10 kings]). *God thus assures that we will witness cultural tension between our past heritage and the weak, apparently progressive ideologies, but that Western nations will not utterly collapse as God will let some stability stay in them to make life livable in our era.*

May we trust in Christ Who died as our atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might have eternal life. May we then trust God's prophecies for our era and adjust our thinking and actions to align with them for blessing!