

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS

"Part X: 1 & 2 Kings - Personally Enjoying Rich Thanksgiving Blessings In An Apostate Era"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) I received a telephone call on November 1st from Kristie Casciani who requested prayer regarding some legislation that had come before the U.S. Senate. It sought to end the harvesting of organs for fetal research from infants who are killed while coming down the birth canal to be born as full term babies! **I was sickened to see that this land to which the pilgrim forefathers came 375 years ago is NOW a place where such acts are done in the name of medicine!**

(3) The Federal government largely shut down this past week over an impasse between a Republican Congress and a Democratic President, and a contributing feature was a personal tiff between President Clinton and Newt Gingrich. On the plane trip to Rabin's funeral, Newt Gingrich was seated far from the President, making Newt upset that he was snubbed, and causing him to dig his heels in on the budget conflict! **How is the average governmental employee supposed to accept his income being put on hold in part due to personal tiffs between national leaders in Washington, D.C.?!?**

(4) The shutdown came initially over what to do with the nation's spiraling Medicare costs! The Democrats wanted to stick with their planned **increase** of Medicare allotments while the Republicans wanted to **lessen** this **increase** proposal, and the press wrangled over whether or not the Republican proposal is a budget **CUT!** While the wrangling went on, people called in to talk shows all over the country, complaining that the "little guy" gets caught in the treadmill of big budget decisions in Washington! **Well, how can the average American deal with the rising costs of taxes to fund Medicare and the possibility of losing his current job due to economic "downsizing" in businesses at the same time, all while debates go on in Washington and the press fueled by desires for reelection and publication sales, and that at the cost of the LITTLE guy?!**

(2) When the pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, they gave **thanks** to God **with** the neighboring **Indians**. This Thanksgiving Day you can find Americans **playing** for a **haul** from slot machines **at Indian** gambling **casinos** only hundreds of miles from Plymouth Rock! **We've come a long way, spiritually! Well, in view of the apostasy of our nation as a whole, is there any hope that we here at Nepaug can enjoy God's richest blessings this coming Thanksgiving?!**

Need: *"Though the pilgrims gave thanks to God with the Indians for their blessings, we Americans NOW spend Thanksgiving playing for a haul at a slot machine in an Indian nation's gambling casino! Can WE enjoy God's Thanksgiving blessings in our apostate era?!"*

- I. **1 & 2 Kings is a tragic record of God's coming to punish Israel by national captivity for falling into the very Nimrodian apostasy she was assigned to counter as God's agent for world renewal.**
 - A. Though God created the world and set man up as His earthly deputy, sin deposed him, so Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
 - B. The Lord renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
 - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy to oppose God's rule that we know as witchcraft, Gn. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rev. 17:5-6.
 - D. God thus chose Abraham to start a nation to stop this evil, Gn. 12:1-3.
 - E. After many challenges en route, that nation ended up in the Promised Land, but **she herself** slipped into the apostasy of the **very** Nimrodian error in Canaan that she was supposed to **counter**, Gn. 12:4-Ruth!
 - F. God set up kings to check that problem, but these monarchs were **also** sinners **themselves**, making this change equally futile, 1 & 2 Samuel!
 - G. With growing apostasy, Israel so violated the conditional Mosaic Covenant that God disciplined her with the Babylonian Captivity:
 1. 1 & 2 Kings shows Israel's decline from regal glory into captivity as the kings after David became increasingly evil, B.K.C., O.T., 591:
 2. David's **son, Solomon** adopted **idols** via his foreign wives, 1 K. 11:1-8. In discipline, God divided his kingdom, giving most of Israel's tribes to Solomon's **servant**, Jeroboam, 1 Kings 11:9-13.
 3. But **Jeroboam** started an idolatry to keep his people from returning to Solomon's side! That led later kings to sin so God sent Jeroboam's nation into **captivity**, 1 K. 12:25-2 K. 17:41!
 4. The kingdom left to David's seed even placed **idols** in **God's temple**, leading to the Babylonian Captivity, 1 K. 12:1-2 K. 25:30!
- II. **However, DURING this time of national apostasy, God richly blessed INDIVIDUALS who trusted Him and obeyed His Word:**
 - A. God's upright **servants** enjoyed God's richest **personal** blessings:
 1. Elijah's ministry was divinely blessed in to turning a generation back to God when he called fire down from heaven, 1 Kings 17-18!
 2. After repenting over fleeing from Jezebel and wishing to **die**, God blessed Elijah by taking him to heaven **alive**, 1 Kings 19; 2 Kings 2!

3. Elisha, who gained Elijah's role was the first in **history** to **raise the dead**, even doing so **after his passing away**, 2 K. 4:1-8:15; 13:21!
- B. But **ordinary** believers **also** received God's blessings, cf. Lu. 4:25-27!
1. Under Elijah's ministry, a **Gentile widow** living in the apostate **homeland** of Jezebel (1 K. 16:31) enjoyed **rich** divine blessings:
 - a. She survived **famine** miraculously by faith in God, 1 K. 17:9-16.
 - b. By faith in God she witnessed the **first resurrection** in **history**, the **raising of her own son** from the dead, 1 Kings 17:17-24!
 2. In Elishah's ministry, **everyday** people enjoyed God's rich blessings:
 - a. A **childless** Shunammite woman **gave birth** to a son and saw him **raised** from the **dead** by Elisha, 2 Kings 4:8-37.
 - b. By faith, she was rewarded her **land AND all its produce freely AND retroactively** by a **godless** king after she had obediently sojourned **7 years** in Philistia **due to a FAMINE**, 2 Kings 8:1-6!
 - c. A **Gentile commander** was cleansed of his dreaded **leprosy** for obeying God by dipping in the **muddy** Jordan, 2 K. 5:1-27!
 - C. People **influenced by** the godly received God's help to meet **all** their **livelihood** needs in **hard** times, 1 K. 17:2-16; 2 K. 4:38-44; 6:24-7:20.
 1. Aside from **personal** livelihood needs for Elijah, God supported a needy **partial family unit WITH** him, 1 K. 17:2-7 with 17:8-16!
 2. God provided **good** and **enough** food for the prophets' school, even multiplying husks of grain and loaves, 2 K. 4:38-41 and 4:42-44!
 3. God provided such needs for a **city** through Elisha, 2 K. 6:24-7:20.
- III. **God's "thread of redemption" 1 & 2 Kings shows His interventions in those apostate times to keep David's line intact for the Messiah!**
- A. God used Jehosheba to hide a **sole** surviving, **infant** heir to David's throne during Athaliah's attempted **purge** of David's **line**! She hid him in a sound-absorbing, mattress storage in the temple so he would not be discovered due to his cries, 2 K. 11:1-16! (Ryrie St. Bib., KJV ftn.)
 - B. David's heir was treated well in **Babylonian Captivity** by a **pagan ruler** as **GOD** kept David's line intact for Messiah, B.K.C., O.T., 588!

Application: *To enjoy God's Thanksgiving blessings in an apostate era, (1) believe on Christ as Savior (Jn. 3:1), (2) confessing our sins to God (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) relying on the Spirit for the power (Gal. 5:16-23) to (c) obey Scripture, 1 J n. 2:3. (3) Then, REST in His promise to disclose Himself to us in life (Jn. 14:21, 23 et al.), and expect God to supply all we and our partners need to attain His will!*

Lesson: *Though our ERA may be evil, God richly blesses PERSONAL godliness TODAY (Jn. 14:21-23) while progressing with His eternal plan!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the lesson . . .)

. He said I was stepping out of God's will by transferring to Dallas! The further I traveled, the more I wondered if I was in sin! The more I wondered, the gloomier I felt!

Ten miles west of Lordsville, New Mexico the car began losing power until it finally stopped cold two miles east of Deming! The next service station was 40 miles down the road, so I figured I'd better trek back to town. As I started to walk along the expressway, I concluded that God was indeed chastising me for heading off to Dallas Seminary!

Only repair shop in town. The mechanic there towed my car in with his wrecker.

One fuel filter left in stock that fit my 11 year old Lincoln, and the mechanic was intrigued enough by this fact that he charged me only for the **filter**, throwing in the **labor AND tow FREE!** He refused to take any more money though I offered to pay! I filled up with gas at the **only** service station in town, and, all within the hour was off down the road toward El Paso, elated at how God had solved my problems! **God could easily have blocked my attending Dallas! It was His will for me to go, and nothing in the nation's woes, the past seminary miseries, my lack of cash or a job or the old Lincoln could hinder that purpose! In a wilderness experience in the New Mexico desert, I was uplifted by God to keep on going!**

I learned there that God showers personal Thanksgiving blessings in an apostate era upon those who obey Him!