

## CHRISTMAS INTERLUDE

### God's Answers For Troubling Leaders

#### Part III: Handling Harmful Character Deficiencies In Leaders (Isaiah 9:6c)

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

This Christmas Season, many leaders are marked by harmful character deficiencies:

(1) Harmful character deficiencies exist in the leaders of our federal health agencies: “The sweeping 520-page report released” recently “by the U. S. House Select Committee on the Coronavirus Pandemic” revealed “that millions of people were killed by, and billions of dollars were spent to mitigate the effects of, a virus whose likely origin was covered up solely for the benefit of well-compensated and unduly venerated federal employees.” (“A cover-up confirmed,” Republican-American, December 6, 2024, p. 6A)

(2) Harmful character deficiencies exist in leaders throughout our financial system: An essay by “John H. Cochrane and Amit Seru of the Hoover Institution” titled “‘Ending Bailouts, At Last,’ in the Journal of Law, Economics and Policy” explained how “leverage has been rewarded: ‘If you saved and bought a house with cash, if you saved and went to a cheaper college rather than take out a big student loan, or if you repaid that loan promptly, you did not get any money.’ In today’s permanent central bank-run credit system, ‘Borrow. Borrow especially if you are big or part of a big and politically influential class of borrowers. As with student loans, borrow from the government.’ You might not have to pay it back . . . Societies get what they incentivize. Moral hazards – incentives for perverse, risky behaviors – are now sown throughout American life. Cumulatively, they might break the government . . .” (George F. Will, “What is the Federal Reserve for, exactly?”, *Ibid.*, December 4, 2024, p. 6A)

(3) Harmful character deficiencies exist in leaders in the legacy media: “There is about to be an outbreak of lawfulness in the United States, and Democrats and the press can’t handle it. President-elect Donald Trump’s talk of ‘mass deportation’ is being treated as a clear and present danger to the American order that blue jurisdictions need to mobilize to stop . . . It is a symptom of how perverse the immigration debate has become that it is treated as the norm to allow millions of people to defy our laws, but it’s a five-alarm fire if an incoming U. S. president vows to get serious about enforcing those same laws.” (Rich Lowry, “Mass deportations are appropriate,” *Ibid.*, p. 7A)

(4) Harmful character deficiencies exist in many elected officials at all levels: “On Nov. 5” in “California’s congressional races, . . . a . . . look at the reelected individuals show a sorry assortment of unindicted felons, power-crazed subversives, anti-American worker proponents and fervently pro-illegal immigration advocates.” (Joe Guzzardi, “Californians vote to accelerate their decline,” *Ibid.*, December 9, 2024, p. 6A) For example, “Nancy Pelosi . . . won her 20<sup>th</sup> term representing California’s 11<sup>th</sup> congressional district with 81% of the vote. The 11<sup>th</sup> is mostly San Francisco . . . now recognized for rampant smash-and-grab robberies and widespread homelessness . . . an ideal municipality for Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua to set up shop,” where since “2019, 47% of businesses in the area have shut their doors” and “(r)esidents, especially among the high wage-earning Gen Zers, have fled.” (*Ibid.*)

(5) Harmful character deficiencies in leaders in many business organizations is a big problem: Mary Crossan’s article, “Lessons from Boeing On Elevating Character Alongside Competence” (December 5, 2024; forbes.com) reported on the “‘Leadership on Trial’ study” that was “supported by the Ivey Business School,” and she noted it “revealed that leadership failures in many organizations was the result of weakness of character more so than competence. In fact, some of the greatest problems arose from strong competence and weak character.”

Need: So we ask, “This Christmas, how does God want us to handle harmful character deficiencies in leaders?”

- I. In Isaiah’s era, harmful character deficiencies in his people’s leaders led to big troubles for the people:
  - A. **The Kingdom of Judah lacked a king who brought them peace:** They were threatened by an invasion by the Israel-Aramea alliance and by an invasion by the Assyrian Empire (Isaiah 7:1-2a; 8:5-8).
  - B. **Judah’s king was himself terribly insecure:** News of a planned invasion by Israel and Aramea terrified him and Judah’s people, their hearts being moved like the trees of the forest in a strong wind, Isaiah 7:21-22a,b.
  - C. **God’s rulers and people were desperate for military protection:** Israel sought the protection of Assyria (Hosea 5:13) and Judah turned to Egypt for protection (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Jer. 17:5-8).
  - D. **Judah’s people were crushed in heart by a lack of edifying insight from their rulers:** Instead of being led by their kings to gain edifying insight from Scripture (Isaiah 8:20), they turned to mediums (Isaiah 8:19), ending up being frustrated and sinking into spiritual darkness and the hopeless gloom of depression (Isaiah 8:21-22).
- II. **These harmful character deficiencies in the rulers would be overcome by Messiah’s character, Isa. 9:6c:**

- A. Opposite the lack of edifying insight in their rulers, Messiah would be His people's ***Marvel of a Counselor***:
    1. The Hebrew word for "Wonderful" (KJV) is ***pele'***, meaning "extraordinary, marvel, wonder" (B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 810), so the Messiah would be a "Marvel of a Counselor," Ibid.
    2. For Judah's people who were crushed in heart by a lack of edifying insight from their rulers, the Messiah Jesus Christ would be a Marvel of a Counselor Who addressed all the spiritual troubles of His people!
  - B. Opposite the lack of military protection under their rulers, Messiah would be His people's ***Mighty God***:
    1. The only other place where the term "Mighty God" (***'El Gibbor***, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 621) appears in Isaiah is Isaiah 10:21 (Mandelkern, Vet. Test. Conc., 1978, p. 248) where God predicted that His Hebrew people would no longer rely on Gentile empires like Israel relied on Assyria for protection only to see that nation smite them in war, but upon ***'El Gibbor***, the "Mighty God" Who would reliably protect them!
    2. Messiah Jesus Christ would thus be His people's "Mighty God" of reliable military protection!
  - C. Opposite the lack of personal security in their rulers, Messiah would be His people's ***Father of Perpetuity***:
    1. The term ***'Ed***, rendered "Everlasting" (KJV) that modifies the noun "Father" translates the Hebrew substantive ***'od***, meaning "continuance, persistence" (Ibid., B. D. B., p. 728-729).
    2. This does **not** mean that Messiah Jesus Christ is God the Father, but that He has been and always will be a reliable father figure in place of His people's insecure leaders. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1053)
  - D. Opposite the lack of peace under Judah's ungodly kings, Messiah Jesus would rule as the ***Prince of Peace***.
- III. These character qualities in the Messiah would be the product of the Holy Spirit in Him, Isaiah 11:1-10.**
- IV. Today, believers are also indwelt by the Holy Spirit Who indwells Messiah Jesus (Romans 8:3-4) so they can rely on the Holy Spirit to function in godly character to handle the harmful deficiencies in leaders.**

***Lesson: The harmful character deficiencies in the leaders of God's people would be overcome by Messiah Jesus Who would be their Marvel of a Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Perpetuity and Prince of Peace. Believers today can also overcome the effects of harmful character deficiencies in leaders by relying on the same Holy Spirit.***

***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) May we look forward in hope to Christ's coming Messianic Kingdom and (3) rely on the Holy Spirit like Christ (Isaiah 11:1-2 with Romans 8:3-4) for the character qualities we need today to overcome the character deficiencies in our leaders today (as clarified in our Conclusion section.)***

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

We view Scripture on how our reliance on the Holy Spirit provides us the character qualities we need to overcome the problems created by the harmful character deficiencies in our leaders that we noted in our introduction:

(1) Re: the failures of health agency leaders, (a) we can rely on the Holy Spirit for the self-control needed to keep our immune systems strong via proper diet, exercise, rest, minimizing stress and good hygiene (Gal. 5:16, 22-23; Phil. 4:6-9; Lev. 11:32-36; Deut. 23:12-14). (b) We can also minimize our need for man-made medicines that are often produced by ungodly means and often have bad side effects while boosting use of home remedies (1 Tim. 5:23).

(2) Re: the failures of leaders in the economy to rein in extensive destructive indebtedness, (a) relying on the Holy Spirit provides us the self-control needed to obey Hebrews 13:5a to be content with what we possess that helps to keep us from runaway debt (Proverbs 22:7). (b) Also, heeding Christ's Luke 14:28-30 call to budget before spending and (c) save what excess supplies God gives us (John 6:12) equip us to avoid falling prey to runaway debt.

(3) Re: the failures of leaders in the legacy media to counter illegal immigration, relying on the Holy Spirit gives us the self-control to obey God's leading on ***whether*** we should ***legally*** relocate, and ***where, when*** and ***what*** we should ***do*** when we ***relocate***, James 4:13-17; 1 Peter 2:13a. Illegal immigration is solved by obeying these passages!

(4) Re: the failures of elected officials to address social ills in their districts, (a) relying on the Holy Spirit equips us believers to obey 1 Peter 2:11-17 to relate respectfully to fellow citizens and to rulers in our own districts, (b) what causes us to influence society as the grassroots in our districts toward law and order (Proverbs 28:2; 28:4).

(5) Re: the failures of leaders in businesses to be strong in character, (a) relying on the Holy Spirit equips us to exhibit love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control that is greatly needed in today's workplaces, Galatians 5:16, 22-23 ESV. (b) It also equips us to avoid gratifying the lusts of the flesh, the eyes and the pride of this life in worldliness (1 John 2:15-17) that keeps us from a host of character failures at work.

**May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we hope for Christ's Kingdom and rely on the Holy Spirit for the character qualities we need to be a blessing in a needy world.**