

CHRISTMAS INTERLUDE
God's Answers For Troubling Leaders
Part IV: Handling The Instability In Leaders
(Isaiah 9:7a)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

This Christmas Season, many leaders are unstable, creating unsettledness in many of their subordinates:

(1) Leadership instability affects the international scene: (a) "(A)fter rebels overthrew President Bashar Assad . . . streams of refugees crossed back into Syria from neighboring countries, hoping for a more peaceful future and looking for relatives who disappeared during Assad's brutal rule." ("Syrian government services come to a halt after rebel takeover," Republican-American, December 10, 2024, p. 4B) However, "the rebel alliance . . . is led by a former senior al-Qaida militant who severed ties with the extremist group years ago and has promised representative government and religious tolerance," but just to be safe, "Israel . . . (has) carried out airstrikes on suspected chemical weapons sites and long-range rockets to keep them from falling into the hands of extremists." (Ibid.) (b) In South Korea, President "Yoon's martial law decree on Dec. 3 . . . brought special forces troops onto Seoul's streets, plunged South Korea into political turmoil and caused worry among its key diplomatic partners and neighbors." ("S. Korea's Justice Ministry imposes a travel ban on President Yoon," Ibid.) (c) "NATO declared Ukraine on an 'irreversible' path to membership" at its July summit in Washington, but "(t)he United States and Germany have balked at Ukraine joining NATO while at war with Russia," and "Ukraine's forces are weathering a monthlong onslaught by Russia." ("Zelensky open to Western troops providing security for end to war in Ukraine," Ibid.)

(2) Leadership instability affects our own country: (a) "Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut has called for mysterious drones spotted flying at night over sensitive areas in New Jersey and the Mid-Atlantic region to be 'shot down, if necessary . . . We should be doing some very urgent intelligence analysis and take them out of the skies' . . . he said . . . as concerns about the drones spread across Capitol Hill" (Blumenthal: Mysterious drones should be 'shot down, if necessary,'" Ibid., December 13, 2024, p. 12B). (b) Marine veteran Daniel Penney "who used a choke hold on an agitated subway rider was acquitted . . . (The deceased rider Jordan Neely had been) diagnosed with depression and schizophrenia, was repeatedly hospitalized, and used the synthetic cannabinoid K2 and realized it negatively affected his thinking and behavior, according to medical records seen at the trial." (Ibid.) After "six years" of his case not being adequately handled by city authorities, Neely "boarded a subway under Manhattan on May 1, 2023," and had started threatening passengers, what led to Mr. Penny's trying to restrain him and Jordan Neely's subsequent death. (Jennifer Peltz, "Daniel Penney is acquitted in NYC subway chokehold case," Ibid., December 10, 2024, p. 4B) (c) Here in our state, "the atrocities in the cities pass without comment from the governor, state legislators, and other leaders, who behave, along with journalism, as if the social disintegration sweeping Connecticut . . . is . . . natural." (Chris Powell, "Rallies aren't stopping violence; and racism didn't elect Trump," Ibid., December 5, 2024, p. 8A)

(3) Leadership instability affects even Biblical churches: On a regular basis, I hear reports from other believers and I witness myself grave issues of concern in churches caused by failures in church leaders or leaders in the home. As a regular part of my own ministry, I spend time in Scripture and prayer just to keep my own thinking straight and my inner man encouraged in the Lord to offset the leadership instability I witness at many levels in evangelicalism!

Need: *So we ask, "This Christmas, how does God want us to handle leadership instability?"*

- I. After announcing the arrival and character of the Messiah Jesus Christ in Isaiah 9:6, God's prophet Isaiah described the profoundly edifying stability of His future kingdom's administration in Isaiah 9:7a:**
 - A. The Messiah's "rule, dominion" (*misrah*, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 976) along with resulting peace will "increase" (*marbbeh*, Ibid., p. 916) without "end" (*ges*, Ibid., p. 893-894). Christ's rule will be so effective that it will lead to His endless dominion and its consequent endless peace for His subjects.
 - B. Messiah will rule on Israel's throne of David in fulfillment of the angel Gabriel's Luke 1:32-33 declaration.
 - C. Christ will administer "justice" (*mishpat*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 621; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 1048-1049), i. e., upright verdicts, in accord with "righteousness" (*sedaqah*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 842), God's set laws.
 - D. Such an administration will "firmly establish" (*kun*, Hiphil (causative stem), Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 465-467) and "support" (*sa'ad*, Ibid., p. 703) His reign from its inception on into eternity!
- II. The Messiah would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to produce such stability, cf. Isaiah 11:1-10:**
 - A. The sevenfold description of God the Holy Spirit described in Isaiah 11:1-2 would come upon Messiah Jesus, equipping Him for ministry, and this event occurred at Christ's baptism by John the Baptist in Matthew 3:16.

B. Christ's ministry of offering Himself as Israel's King occurred in His First Advent according to the Gospels, but His future reign as Israel's King is described in Isaiah 11:3-10 where He will faithfully, righteously judge the afflicted and the wicked (v. 3-5), the Adamic curse will be removed so that there will be peace and safety for even vulnerable little children (v. 6-9) and the world's nations will rally around Christ in glorious peace.

III. Believers today are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit Who indwells Messiah (Romans 8:3-4) so they can rely on that Spirit to function with edifying stability to offset the instability of today's ungodly leaders.

Lesson: (1) *Instability in leaders will be overcome by Christ Who will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to see His Messianic reign endlessly increase with great peace for His subjects, for He will sit on David's throne in Israel administering just verdicts in alignment with God's fixed laws, firmly establishing and forever supporting His administration.* (2) *Since today's believers are indwelt by the same Spirit, if they rely on Him, they like Christ can function in ways that fill needs for them and others around them that have been caused by ungodly leaders.*

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 (a) hope for Christ's coming great eternal Kingdom of blessing and (b) rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit to function in faithful alignment with God's revealed righteous standards in Scripture, producing stability in our lives and influencing other people for their stability.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We view Scripture's directives on God's righteous standards relative to the issues of concern in our introduction that we might apply them to those issues for blessing in our lives and in the lives of others around us:

(1) On the instability at the international level in Syria, South Korea and Ukraine, (a) 2 Timothy 3:13 and 4:3-4 reveal that social and spiritual evils will go from bad to worse due to the growing departure from God both in society and even in churches. (b) The antidote given in 2 Timothy 3:14-4:3 is the faithful proclamation of God's Word with application to human need in the local church. Local church pastors, church leaders, Sunday School and Bible Class teachers are responsible to function as lighthouses of Biblical truth in teaching Scripture that believers can shine forth God's edifying truth in a dark world that needs it (cf. Philippians 2:12-16).

(2) On the instability created by many recent drone sightings, (a) we believers in Christ should not be anxious about anything, but by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present our requests of concern to God. If we do so, the peace of God that transcends all understanding will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7). (b) Then, if we focus on what is true and righteous, applying these things in our lives, the God of peace will be with us in our daily lives (Philippians 4:8-9). (c) Also, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 teaches that since the Great Tribulation to come on the world occurs after the rapture of the Church, God wants us to be encouraged to stay preoccupied with every good deed and word instead of becoming fearful over strange or unusual events that occur in our current lives!

(3) On the instability created by government agency failures to intercept mentally ill and potentially dangerous people, (a) 2 Timothy 3:1-9 NIV predicted that there would be "terrible times in the last days" of Church History with all sorts of abusive people existing in society, and that we must "have nothing to do with them" (v. 5b NIV). (b) In thus living cautiously, we need to focus on every good word and work as 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 teaches, living affirmatively. We can thus influence others around us to be more stable and positive in their outlook, 1 Peter 2:13-17.

(4) On the instability in our state created by social disintegration and the inability of local government agencies to address it, (a) besides applying the anxiety-countering passage of Philippians 4:6-7, 8-9, besides applying 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 on focusing on good works and words in ministry and besides applying 2 Timothy 3:1-9 to withdraw from troubling people, we must (b) put our hope in the life to come, the life we will have with our Lord at the rapture of the Church when God takes us to heaven (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). In addition to this call, (c) 1 John 2:15-17 orders us to stop loving this world and its lusts of the flesh, the eyes and pride of this life and to do God's will for His eternal reward. (d) We also need to witness to a lost and dying world of the hope that is in Christ that people around us in a decadent society might trust in Christ to be saved from a condemned world, Matthew 28:19-20!

(5) On the instability in leaders in evangelicalism, the warning of "terrible times in the last days" (2 Timothy 3:1 NIV) was actually given in the context of trials in local churches (2 Timothy 2:24-26). (a) Satan tries to trouble believers in their marriages, their homes and their churches because they are lights of truth in a world of spiritual darkness (2 Timothy 2:26; Ephesians 6:10-18). (b) We must then put on the whole armor of God [i. e., think and apply relevant Bible truth in life] and ***always watch*** for Satanic activity and ***address*** it by ***prayer***, Ephesians 6:18!

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 reign and rely on the Holy Spirit to meet needs left by unstable leaders.