

## Covid Keys & Cures in 2 Chronicles

*Please read 2 Chronicles Chapter 19*

In this chapter we encounter Jehu the son of Hanani the seer who rebuked Jehoshaphat, king of Jerusalem, for making an alliance with Ahab king of Israel:

*Jehu.... met King Jehoshaphat and said, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Therefore, the wrath of the Lord is upon you. (v2)*

This passage is pertinent to the discussion we had yesterday evening together on Zoom. How are we to reconcile this plain instruction with Jesus' admonition for us to love our enemies, etc? Here's how. It is possible to differentiate between (i) the person and (ii) their cause. Jesus' admonition applies to the former; Jehu's rebuke applies to the latter. St Paul urges the Christians in Rome to

*Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. (Rom 12:9)*

The very first part of this verse is noteworthy. It tells us that there exists a false notion of love. 'Love' cannot be abstracted from its context. I often hear people (even Christians!) say something like Lennon & McCartney: "All you need is love." But it's not true. The paedophile & rapist do what they do with a misconstrued notion of love. Gamblers love what they do, likewise, because they get their kicks that way. The writer of the Book of Hebrews talks about the 'pleasures of sin.' So deceitful & desperately wicked is the carnal heart that it readily calls good evil & evil good (Is 5:20). So then, the object of the verb is all important. Love is vacuous in and of itself. What matters is the target of our affections. Here, Jehoshaphat acted wrongfully because the object of his kindness was the CAUSE of Ahab.

The second important lesson we learn from this passage is the priority Jehoshaphat rightly gave to the administration of justice throughout the land. Did you notice that? Re-read the passage (vs 4-10). Alas, British law courts are awash with injustice. The poor are exploited, the vulnerable are abused, the defenceless are culled and the wicked are emboldened, etc. God's word provides us with a perfect set of weights & measures. God's law contains the equity by which we may evaluate crime & its proper punishment. That is truly a crime which God says is a crime (not, therefore so called 'hate speech'); that is the due penalty for a crime which God says is the due penalty (typically restitution, etc.) It was the establishment of true justice throughout the land that God approved. Notice verses 5-7:

*Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, "Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Now therefore, let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes."*

How much instruction have we received on this from our pulpits? Could you have taken on the role of one of God's judges in Israel? Would you have been confident dispensing true justice at the city gate? What can you do to remedy that? Is it even an important consideration to you?

*He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law." (Isaiah 42:3-4)*

**Covid Keys & Cures in 2 Chronicles – Questions from Ch 19:**

- *Why is it naïve to suggest that ‘all we need is love?’*
- *Is it OK to harbour hatred in your heart? (See Ps 139:21-22)*
- *How should our hatred for sin manifest itself?*
- *Does God hate? (see Ps 7:11)*
- *How might we determine (a) the nature of crime (in God’s eyes) & (b) a proportionate punishment (again from God’s perspective).*
- *Is all crime sin? Is all sin crime? Did Jesus die for our sins or our crimes?*