

Covid Keys & Cures in 2 Chronicles

Please read 2 Chronicles Chapter 23

The Book of 2Chronicles from its start to this point traces the ebb and flow of God's kingdom through the successive reigns of kings from Solomon. Under his reign the kingdom achieved considerable prowess (Ch 1-9). Under Rehoboam, Solomon's son, it was divided. After an unsettled period, the kingdom's southern territories centred around Jerusalem were consolidated under Rehoboam's son Abijah who established dominance over Israel's northern territories which were ruled by Jeroboam (Ch 13). Rehoboam's son & grandson (Asa and Jehoshaphat) were largely good kings; however, the prophet Jehu rebuked king Jehoshaphat for a compromising alliance he made with the northern territories (19:2; 20:35). Tragically, Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram very quickly overturned the kingdom to wickedness (Ch 21). The most obvious token of his despotism was the murder of his own brothers (21:4) & the capitulation of the formal public worship of God to idolatry (Baal, High Places). Jehoram's son Ahaziah was likewise a renegade king who capitulated to Queen Athaliah (his mother)'s wicked counsel. Only one of Jehoram's sons was spared Athaliah's cruelty; he was kept hidden in a palace bedroom for several years until he was of an age to take up the reigns of political power.

Thus, the scene is set for chapter 23. The kingdom was divided. Under God's blessing the southern districts representing Judah & Benjamin enjoyed seasons of revival & good kings such as Asa and Jehoshaphat. At its zenith, under their direction, God's kingdom was augmented on earth and neighbouring empires were brought under tribute, etc. Alas, two or three generations of wicked/ungodly political rule had provoked God's covenantal wrath to be poured out upon the nation. Civil strife was rampant, and Queen Athaliah (the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel) usurped the male heirs tyrannically. To boot, the worship of God was reduced to Baal worship & was no longer lawfully supervised by Levites and priests. The northern tribes under Ahab & Jezebel were wholly apostate. What was to be done?

Please notice that both (i) godly *civil* jurisdiction of kings & (ii) godly *ecclesiastical* jurisdiction of priests and Levites was what brought about God's blessing on His people. It was ever the work of good kings to (A) re-establish the true worship of God – i.e. according to God's Law, (B) abolish idolatrous practices – i.e. Baal worship & the compromised worship of God in the high places & (C) re-establish true justice and equity in the public square. This was exemplary 'separation of powers (Church & State) in action.

We want to examine this 23rd chapter of 2Chronicles with a view to tracing the recovery of these characteristics. As Christ's ambassadors, we want to learn from the example of Jehoiada how we might likewise advance the cause of Christ's kingdom here on Earth in our own small corner of opportunity.

Notice then,

1. One man – Jehoiada – strengthened himself.... (v1)
Great works of God turn upon the presence of mind (stirred by the Spirit of God) to DO SOMETHING. *Jehoiada aspired to be a 'Jedi' Christian. How do you and I shape up?*
2. They summoned the Levites (2) who gathered at Jerusalem.
The Levites proper role was to assist the priesthood in the Temple and to help teach God's Law (vs 4-5).

Jehoiada worked hard to draw together kindred spirits – those whose hearts and minds were ready for a fight (struggle). Am I & are you collaborative & constructive in mustering others?

3. Jehoiada hatched a plan to return rightful rule (king Joash) and the recovery of civic righteousness and solemnized it before God by COVENANT (vs 3-6). It was a good and honourable aspiration. Jehoiada sought the welfare of all the people, not just himself. His concern was for righteousness & justice in the public square.
Many Christians comprehend their only struggle with their own personal sins; they have little or no sense of obligation to contest for truth & integrity in the public square. They're 'retreatists' believing Jesus reigns in a parallel 'spiritual realm' separate from the theatre of this world. *Their favourite mantra is "Jesus said, My kingdom is not of this world."*
What did Jesus really mean when He said this? How do we know that Jesus was concerned for righteousness & justice here on Earth?
4. In verse 7, we learn of Jehoiada's zeal for God's honour. Why should the Levites, with drawn swords (v7) be ready to put to death whoever comes into the Temple? The answer is: because God had ordered the construction & protocols of Temple worship to be strictly observed (like the transportation of the Ark of the Covenant on wooden poles), etc. Later on when Queen Athaliah barged in she showed contempt for God's Law and, by implication, for God Himself!
Have we, unwittingly, suffered God's Law to be held in contempt? [See Ps 79] What did Jesus imply when He taught us to pray, "Hallowed be Thy Name" (Matt 6:9)?
5. Jehoiada furnished the Levites with spears & shields which had belonged to king David several generations earlier (v9). Why? To remind them of their duties before God and to underscore the solemn & godly foundation of their responsibility.
Have we forgotten the great heritage of Christianity that is behind us? Have we suffered God's Name to be cursed and trashed by our secular establishment? What right have they to impose their humanism upon us? None, it is purely arbitrary. They cannot warrant their atheistic worldview. Alas, the Christian Church has tolerated such antitheism for decades in the name of 'multiculturalism.' Have you? Have I?
6. The new king (Joash) was ceremonially sworn in – perhaps with various solemn oaths, etc. But notice he was given 'the Testimony' – i.e. God's Law as prescribed by Moses (Ex. 25:16, 21; 31:18). This is significant. The king's rule is not without limits. The proper bounds of godly (legitimate) rule are set forth within God's Law. All jurisdictions are limited! God's own Law stands over and above (i) family/paternal government (ii) Church (ecclesiastical) government & (iii) civil government.
Have we allowed our own civil government to over-reach its proper jurisdiction? How would we know? What is the Church's responsibility in this matter?
7. How did Queen Athaliah react to what she saw? Why were 'all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets?' (v13). Because a great wrong was being righted!
Have you felt depressed and bowed down by the tyranny & oppression we're facing by Big Gov't? What would really make you happy & joyful?
8. Athaliah cried, "Treason, Treason!" (v13) Was she right? No, in fact her judgement was completely topsy-turvy.
Have we allowed ourselves to hear the cry of our own authorities? Is theirs a bogus claim? By what principle may we legitimately call them out?
9. Justice was swiftly prosecuted. Two things were observed: (i) the death of the tyrant Queen (in accordance with Deut 13:5) and (ii) protocols of reverence/solemnity for the House of the Lord were adhered to. Jehoiada was scrupulous in observing God's commandments. No detail was omitted.

Have we been careful to observe all that the Lord has commanded of us? Are we ever tempted to turn a blind eye / deaf ear to certain 'inconvenient' truths?

10. Immediately after their successful coup we read that 'Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, the people, and the king, that they should be the Lord's people' (v16). How very lovely is this? What a rich & blessed occasion!
11. The pursuit of God's Truth necessarily involves the overthrow of false religion. Baal worship was (still is) essentially worship of 'nature' (= Mother Earth/Gaia). Those who refuse to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord/King of Creation by default are worshippers of the creature rather than the Creator (Rom 1:25). Today, the generality of people who subscribe to Big Bang cosmology & Darwinian evolution are essentially Pantheists who believe that atoms & molecules somehow possess self-building properties, etc. All such nonsense is bogus 'Science' falsely so called. Jehoiada made full and speedy work of destroying these idolatrous practices with their attendant falsehoods within the community.

Have you / I been seduced by David Attenborough, Richard Dawkins or Brian Cox? Have you been bewitched to think that life sprang out of non-life? Have you raised your children/grandchildren to recognise the unmistakable tokens of God's signature in all of Creation?

12. Finally, we learn of Jehoiada's recovery of the true worship of God according to God's own prescriptions in His Law (v18-20). It is significant that having undertaken such a renaissance of authentic spirituality (i.e. Christianity!) we read that 'all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet' (v21).

Do you want peace in the land? Did Jesus come to furnish us with peace? Jerusalem means City of Peace. Do you want rest and relief from strife & trouble on account of mischief-makers in high office? Christianity is the only cure. God's Word, God's Law & God's Truth revealed to us in Scripture is the only remedy. Let us avail ourselves of it by God's grace and with the enlightenment of His Holy Spirit. Amen!

Covid Keys & Cures in 2 Chronicles – Questions from Ch 23:

- *How might we muster others?*
- *"Jesus said, My kingdom is not of this world." What did Jesus really mean when He said this?*
- *What did Jesus imply when He taught us to pray, "Hallowed be Thy Name" (Matt 6:9)?*
- *What's wrong with the mantra, "Don't impose your morality upon me/us."*
- *Why have Christian Churches been unable to push back against secular humanism in the public square?*