

Follow the Leader October 23, 2016

It is a proven fact that nations that honor God are blessed. Kings and rulers that give honor and glory to God are exalted by God and have special protection. If you read the Scriptures, you will find amazing truths that prove that God's love and protection are with those who honor and obey his commandments. Today I want to take you some Scriptures that show the character of God in dealing with his people. There are so many events that show God's power and authority over the universe that my hope is that your faith will be strengthened and you will be encouraged as the works of Satan increase in the coming days.

In 1 Chronicles chapter 29, King David, king of Israel, planned to turn the palace over to his son Solomon after he died. He had wanted to build a house for the LORD, but God didn't allow him to do but told him that Solomon would be the one to build the house, yet David planned ahead for it and collected the materials that Solomon would use to construct the house for the Lord. King David stated that the palace was not for man, but for the LORD God. God had prospered David: Look at the items that he had saved for his son to use in building the house. Gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, onyx stones, and stones to be set, all manner of glistening stones with many different colors, all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance.

Because David had made the house a top priority because of his love for God, he gave over and above amounts of 3000 talents of gold and 7000 talents of silver from his own wealth to be added to the collection of materials for Solomon to use to complete the project. He then asked the people, "Who is willing to consecrate himself to the LORD?" The leaders of the people donated generously so the people followed David and their leaders and gave willingly and generously to the cause. Jehiel, the Gershonite, was in charge of delivering the offerings to the treasury of the temple. Verse 9 says that the people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king rejoiced greatly.

David, in the presence of the congregation praised the LORD. This is the contents of his prayer. He praised the LORD, God of their father Israel from everlasting to everlasting. King David acknowledged that greatness, power, glory, majesty and splendor for everything in heaven and in earth belong to the LORD. The kingdom belongs to the LORD for he is exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from the LORD for he is the ruler over all things. From God's hands come strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. David gave thanks and praise to God's glorious name.

David then asked a question, "Who am I and who are my people that we should be able to give so generously to this cause? Everything comes from you and we are only giving back what you have given to us. He and his people were aliens and strangers in God's sight, just as the generations before them. Their days on earth were numbered like a shadow

without hope. David thanked the LORD for providing so generously to all the people that they were able to give to treasury so that the house of the LORD would be a reality. He acknowledges that everything came from God and the temple would be built for God's Holy Name. It all came from the hand of God and belonged to the LORD.

David then said, "I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent." Now he was joyful to witness people following his lead with the same willingness that he had in his giving. He asked the LORD to keep this desire in the hearts of his people forever and keep their hearts loyal to God. David prayed that his son, Solomon, would serve the LORD with his wholehearted devotion, to keep God's commandments, requirements and decrees and to do everything to build the temple for which David had provided.

David ended his prayer by praising God and leading the congregation in praise to the LORD.

The following day they worshipped the LORD with sacrifices and were filled with great joy as they ate and drank in his presence. Solomon was honored as their new king and he took the place of his father, David upon his throne. He prospered and all of Israel obeyed him. All the officers and mighty men, as well as King David's sons pledged their submission to King Solomon. The LORD highly exalted Solomon in the sight of Israel and bestowed on him splendor such as no king over Israel had ever had.

David died after serving as king over Israel for 40 years and he died at an old age having enjoyed long life, wealth and honor and his son succeeded him as king.

In contrast I would like you to consider the difference in this servant of God who enjoyed the benefits of being king over God's people and other kings who were self-serving and worshipped idols and had no respect for the God of the universe. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, made slaves of the Hebrews and killed the baby boys as soon as they were born. This lasted for 400 years until God honored the faith of a Hebrew mother as she hid her baby boy for 3 months to keep him from death. God allowed this special baby to be brought up in the palace of the king of Egypt as his daughter adopted the baby and raised him as a prince of Egypt. Years later, Moses attempted to bring relief to the slaves but when he attempted to help, his efforts failed and the king sought his life to kill him. He fled from Egypt and for 40 years he tended sheep for his father-in-law, Jethro. God spoke to him from a burning bush and sent him to deliver the people from slavery in Egypt. When Moses spoke to Pharaoh about letting the people go into the desert to hold a feast unto God, the arrogant king exclaimed, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD and neither will I let Israel go?" Because of his lack of respect towards the God of heaven, plagues came to Egypt and the Egyptians and their lands were left in ruins. God will have the last word and the kings of the earth are under his authority whether or not they acknowledge Him. Those who are disobedient and self-willed bring suffering, disgrace and sorrow to those who they rule over.

The Children of Israel suffered because they refused to keep God in their knowledge. They turned to worship the gods of the heathen and because they strayed from God and forgot who took care of them, they were given over to foreigners to be ruled over.

In Jeremiah 7:21, God spoke to his people concerning obedience. He promised that if his people would be obedient to his commandments that He would be their God and they would be his people. If they would make straight paths for their feet it would go well with them. But they refused to listen and lived the way that they chose and according to the evil imaginations of their hearts and went backward instead of forward. Things went from bad to worse and they refused to listen to the prophet Jeremiah whom God had sent to counsel them. In verse 28, God said, "This is a nation that obeys not the voice of the LORD their God nor receives correction: Truth is perished and is cut off from their mouth. These people even put their idols in the temple that was for the purpose of worship to Jehovah God. God warned them that He would not tolerate their disrespect and their land would be desolate because of disobedience."

In Acts 12:19, King Herod intended to kill Peter, the disciple of the Lord. However, the church prayed, an angel went and rescued Peter from prison and when the daylight came, there was a great stir among the prison guards because Peter was not to be found. When Herod sought for Peter and couldn't find him, he questioned the soldiers and wasn't happy with their response so he ordered them to be killed. He went down from Caesarea and there he abode. He had some political business to take care of and on a set date he dressed himself in royal apparel, sat upon his throne and made an oration unto them. The people shouted, "It is the voice of a god and not of a man". Immediately the angel of the Lord smote him because he didn't give God glory and he was eaten of worms and there he died.

Notice that the next verse says, "But the word of God grew and multiplied.

Pilate thought it was by his own power that he had to either release Jesus or to give the command to put him to death. However, Jesus told him the truth. When Jesus refused to answer Pilate's question concerning his origin, Pilate asked him if he didn't understand that he had the authority to free him or to crucify him. Jesus replied, "you could have no power over me at all if my Father didn't give it to you."

It has been argued that America has never been a Christian nation. However, history proves that the Bible was respected as truth, our laws were based on the 10 commandments and freedom of religion was guaranteed to all citizens. The church was welcomed in communities and was the center of the town square. Education was taught in the churches and the pastors were respected and appreciated in communities. The clergy founded the universities and colleges and hospitals were established by people who acknowledged God and looked to him for guidance. Many missionaries were sent from America to other parts of the world to help people come out of darkness into God's light. Be careful how you vote at the polls. Do your homework and ask God for guidance.