

## Following the Lead of Wicked Rulers

The Bible says, "In the three and twentieth year of Joash, the son of Ahaziah king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years: And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, all their days. And Jehoahaz besought the Lord, and the Lord hearkened unto him for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. (And the Lord gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime. Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, but walked therein: and there remained the grove also in Samaria)" (2 Kings 13:1-6).

What peril people are under when the leaders are wicked! Wicked rulers have the potential to lead an entire nation into sin, and in the case of the northern kingdom, that is exactly what happened. However, the lesson should be that even though rulers may be wicked, individuals have a responsibility not to follow their wicked lead. Israel did not observe that principle, and as a result they incurred the Lord's anger. A succession of wicked rulers has an even more devastating effect. Even though God provided Israel with a saviour to deliver them from the hands of the Syrians (v. 5), Israel persisted in evil. Surely a part of that persistence was because of the influence of a succession of evil rulers since Jeroboam. How sad that they had deteriorated so far that even oppression would not deter them from sin. Finally in 722 B.C., because of their wickedness, the northern kingdom fell to Assyria. They failed to learn from the lesson of oppression, and maintained the grove in Samaria.

In the last five decades, America has been "served" by administrations and representatives who have compromised with communism and humanism. Since 1944, almost every United States President has belonged to an organization called the Council on Foreign Relations. Additionally, many high level administrative appointees, including a large number of cabinet members, have belonged to the CFR. This organization follows a pro-communist agenda, promotes the humanistic tenet of one-world government, and its members live by the humanistic philosophy of live and let live. As a result of this leadership, it is politically correct to overlook wickedness, and taboo to speak against evil. In such a climate, what is a Christian to do?

First, one can continue to live according to the standards of God's Word, regardless of how others live. Note the examples of Joshua and Caleb. Standing for morality and biblical values may become more and more unpopular, but even if one finds himself all alone in doing right, he must still do it. Christians are lights of the world, and their lights must shine (Matt. 5:14-16).

Second, Christians can give their support to political candidates who hold to true moral values. These include those who honor the sanctity of the life of the unborn, and those who recognize the abomination of perverted lifestyles. As one politician recently said, Americans must quit voting on the basis of their wallets. Well, that is probably the last we will hear out of him! The argument is often made that a leader's character should not influence the public's view of how he does his job. There was a time, and we hope it will come again, when the qualifications for holding a public office included the type of character that would bring dignity and respect to it. As those who abide by God's standards, we should demand behavior from our leaders which supports, not subverts, godly principles.

Third, Christians must attempt to influence others. We are to be the salt of the earth (Matt.

5:13). Since that is true, we must do what salt is supposed to do — preserve and influence! The way for us to do that is refuse debate on the playing field of human reason and argue that the principles of the gospel are incumbent upon all. Only by changing the hearts of men by making them aware of sin, its consequence of death (Rom. 6:23), and Christ's atonement for it (Heb. 2:9), will men really be changed.

Finally, Christians can keep their eyes on the real and eventual goal. Even if we fail to rescue our beloved America from such deeply deplorable and continual sin as that in which she now persists, and she goes the way of Israel and ruin, by living faithfully to God we may be saved despite what others do. Nations come and nations go, but heaven and hell are for eternity. Far be it from us to sell our souls to the torment of eternal flame by supporting those who promote wickedness just because we believe they will stuff our coffers.

In this great land we have been blessed abundantly, but if we sit idly while evil increases, or even worse, support the side of evil, the foundation of morality upon which we were founded as a nation will continue to erode. If wickedness reaches a certain level, our country will not be able to survive it, and we shall not be much longer upon this earth as a free land. Look about you, see what needs to be done, and do what you can.

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