

You Put Yourself There

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

"And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. 25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones." -- Joshua 7:24-25

This is just one of the sad stories that we find in scripture. They are in both the Old and New Testaments and tell of those who let their desires take them down the path of sin. Sin may seem fun and harmless as the person does what he wants to do. During this time there is no thought of the consequences of the actions being done. Then judgment comes and there is only regret and sorrow. So many times it brings sorrow and hurt, not only to the one directly responsible, but to their loved ones as well.

Achan thought only of the garment, the silver and the gold that he wanted. His desire for them caused him to forget the commands to not take any of the spoils of the city of Jericho. The silver and gold, along with the oth-

er metals, were to go into the Lord's treasury. In effect Achan stole them from the Lord and should have known that men may not know, but the Lord did. If only he had considered what his stolen goods would cost him.

His heart had to break when he realized that his family, animals, and everything that belonged to him was to die and be burnt along with him. If it had been possible he would have undone his deed, but it was too late. That is the way evil is, it lures the weak and foolish one along, with promises of pleasure and profit and blinds him to the cost of the sin. Achan had to watch his loved ones suffer along with him and perhaps the worst pain was the thought that he, and he alone, was the one who caused it to happen. His greed and his focus on the so-called riches of silver and gold brought this about.

Achan is only one of several that followed the path of sin and had to face the judgment for it. Think of Jonah and the troubles that he went through. Finding himself in the belly of the fish for three days and nights he grieved because of his situation, but who could he blame? It could be said, "Jonah, you put yourself there!" It was you who ran from God and refused to do his command to go to Nineveh to preach.

He let hatred, not greed, cause him to rebel against the will of God. Jonah actually ran in the opposite direction from Nineveh trying to do his own will and to

frustrate the will of the Lord. What a terrible thing he suffered and it happened because he wanted Nineveh to be destroyed. We can only imagine what it must have been like to be in the deep for those three days. He described it as being in the belly of hell. He had three days to think of how he came to be there. How sad that it took three days before he humbled himself to call on the Lord for help.

Moving to the New Testament we can see Judas and the decisions that he made. Once again it is plain to see that he would have undone his deeds if there were a way that he could have done so. A fact is that once a decision is made and a deed is done, it might be regretted, but it can't be undone. This is true of words or actions as I'm sure we all know. For greed Judas betrayed the Lord for thirty pieces of silver and aided the enemies of God. Judas found himself in great sorrow and tried to undo his deed, but found that he could not. As he hung himself with the weight of his sins about him he had to admit that he put himself in that position because of his desire for riches.

When a person finds himself in shame and sorrow because of his sin, who can he blame? As the scripture say, "We reap what we sow." We can't blame anyone else for our sins, for they belong to us. Others can tempt us, or cause us problems, but it is up to us as to how we respond and what we do.

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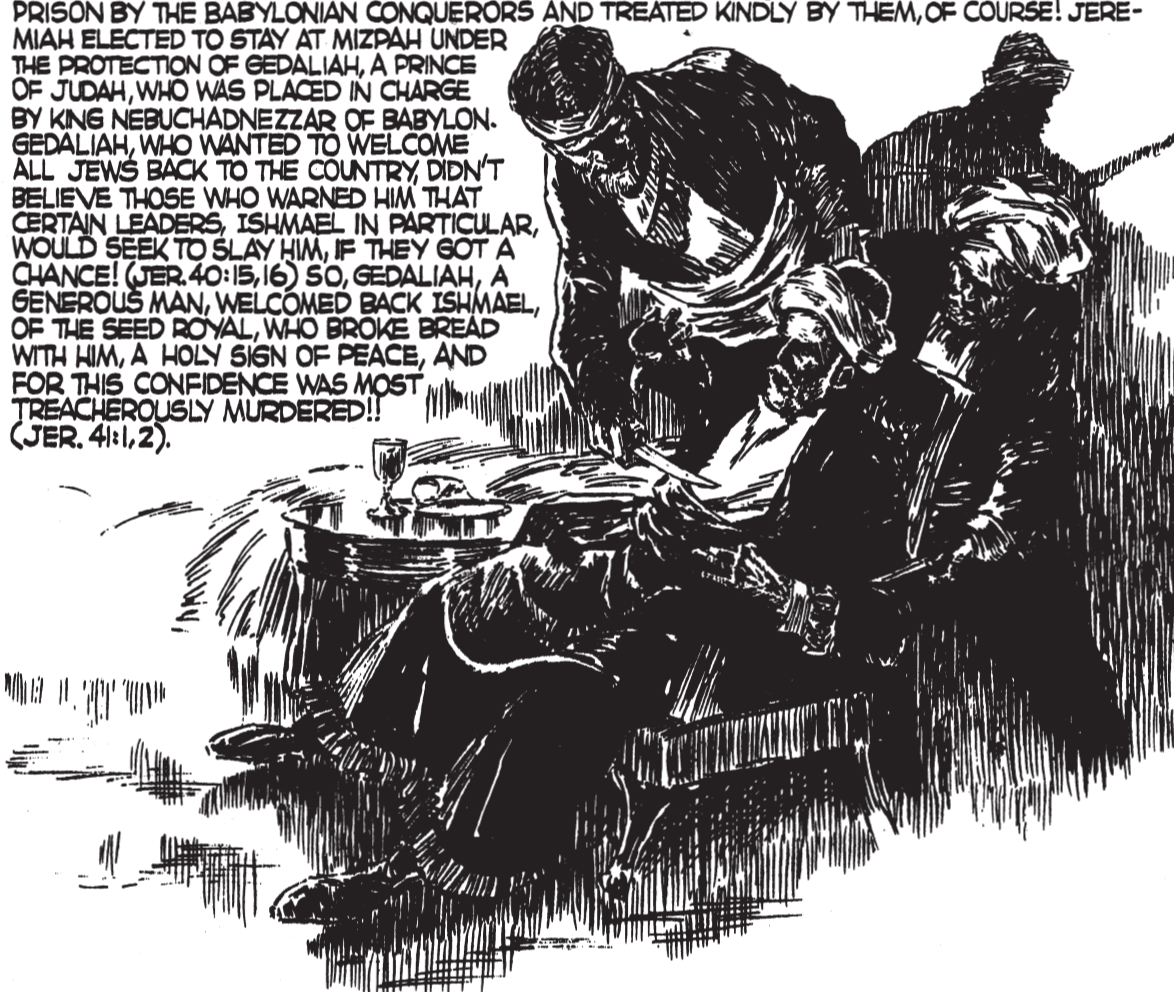
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ANCIENT POLITICAL RIVALS IN THE BIBLE!

THE POLITICAL POLICIES WERE THE GUIDING LIGHT IN THE LIVES OF THE LEADERS OF THE GOVERNING PARTY BOTH IN ISRAEL AND JUDAH - RELIGION WAS ONLY FOR THE PRIESTS AND PROPHETS! HOWEVER, IF A STRONG PROPHET, SUCH AS JEREMIAH, STIRRED UP THE PEOPLE, THEN THE GOVERNING LEADERS TOOK NOTICE - IN JEREMIAH'S CASE THEY PUT HIM IN JAIL! (JER. 37: 15, 16). WHEN JEREMIAH'S PROPHECIES CAME TRUE AND THE POLITICAL LEADERS, THAT PUT THEIR HOPES IN EGYPT OVER THE BABYLONIANS, HAD TO FLEE THE COUNTRY, JEREMIAH WAS RELEASED FROM PRISON BY THE BABYLONIAN CONQUERORS AND TREATED KINDLY BY THEM, OF COURSE! JEREMIAH ELECTED TO STAY AT MIZPAH UNDER THE PROTECTION OF GEDALIAH, A PRINCE OF JUDAH, WHO WAS PLACED IN CHARGE BY KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR OF BABYLON. GEDALIAH, WHO WANTED TO WELCOME ALL JEWS BACK TO THE COUNTRY, DIDN'T BELIEVE THOSE WHO WARNED HIM THAT CERTAIN LEADERS, ISHMAEL IN PARTICULAR, WOULD SEEK TO SLAY HIM, IF THEY GOT A CHANCE! (JER. 40:15,16) SO, GEDALIAH, A GENEROUS MAN, WELCOMED BACK ISHMAEL, OF THE SEED ROYAL, WHO BROKE BREAD WITH HIM, A HOLY SIGN OF PEACE, AND FOR THIS CONFIDENCE WAS MOST TREACHEROUSLY MURDERED!! (JER. 41:1,2).



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