

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Kings: The Kings Of Israel And Judah From Solomon To The Babylonian Captivity

II. The Divided Kingdom, 1 Kings 12:1-22:53

K. Thriving In Facing Dangerously Evil People

(1 Kings 17:2-6)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

2 Timothy 3:1-5a KJV predicts that in the latter days of Church History, we will face "perilous" times due to the rise of ungodly people who are actually dangerous to one's spiritual welfare. This occurs today, and we illustrate:

(1) When President Trump had Pastor Robert Jeffries of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas give the dedicatory prayer at the opening of the U. S. Embassy in Jerusalem, a nationwide radio talk show host complained that Jeffries believes only those who trust in Jesus Christ go to heaven! The talk show host asserted that the president should have chosen Billy Graham's son Franklin give the prayer since he is allegedly "more inclusive" in belief!

I believe that Franklin like his father believes salvation is only by faith in Christ, but Billy Graham's former ecumenical ties has misled unbelievers like this talk show host to think the Grahams hold there is more than one way to be saved, what produces enhanced hostility against those like us who believe that salvation is only through Christ!

(2) Such hostility is widespread, too: (a) the Pastor Jeffries story appeared on huffingtonpost.com with Willa Frej's provocative article, "Pastor Who Thinks Jews Are Going To Hell Speaks At Jerusalem Embassy Opening" that in turn cited (b) past Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney's tweet that said, "Robert Jeffries says 'you can't be saved by being a Jew,' and 'Mormonism is a heresy from the pit of hell.' He's said the same about Islam. Such a religious bigot should not be giving the prayer that opens the United States Embassy in Jerusalem."

(3) In addition, Jesus predicted Satan would place lost people right in organized Christendom (Parable of the Tares, Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) to try to unsettle the discipling of true believers, what occurs extensively today!

(4) Also, Satan influences ungodly believers to oppose God's messengers in the Church, 2 Timothy 2:24-26!

Need: So, we ask, "*How does God direct that we spiritually thrive amid the dangerously evil people we face?!*"

I. Since Elijah told Ahab there would be no rain or dew until he said otherwise, blessings Ahab believed his pagan god Baal provided, once the drought hit Israel hard, Ahab would be furious and try to kill Elijah.

II. Thus, after Elijah gave Ahab his prediction about the drought, God ordered Elijah to hide from Ahab at Cherith, and when Elijah obeyed this order, God met all of his needs (as follows):

- A. The Lord had Elijah withdraw from Ahab to Cherith to avoid Ahab's lethal retaliation, 1 Kings 17:2-3 ESV:
1. God's call that Elijah "depart" (ESV) adds the phrase, *mizeh*, lit. "from **here**," meaning Elijah was to **focus** on **leaving Ahab's Samaria**, Kittel, *Bib. Heb.*, p. 542; B. D. B., *A Heb. & Eng. Lex. of the O. T.*, p. 260ff.
 2. In **leaving Ahab's Samaria**, Elijah was to **hide** (*nistartta*, Niphal stem of *satar*, "hide," Ibid., p. 711), the Niphal here has the reciprocal idea, "hide *yourself*" **from Ahab** at Cherith east of the Jordan River, v. 2-3.
 3. The threat of Ahab to Elijah was great as seen in (a) his wife, Jezebel's killing God's prophets (1 Kings 18:4), (b) Ahab's governor Obadiah's fearing for his life were he to tell Ahab that Elijah had met him but not be able to produce Elijah for Ahab (1 Kings 18:7-12) and (c) Obadiah's later reporting how Ahab had made other nations about Israel take a solemn oath that they had not found Elijah, 1 Kings 18:10.
- B. When Elijah obeyed God, hiding himself from Ahab at Cherith, the Lord met all of his needs, 1 Kings 17:3-6:
1. In heeding God to withdraw from dangerous Ahab to Cherith, God met Elijah's **security** needs, 17:3-6:
 - a. The "brook" (KJV, ESV, v. 3) Cherith east of the Jordan River in the land of Gilead where God told Elijah to hide was actually a "wadi" (*nahal*, Ibid., p. 636), a steep "ravine that is dry except during the rainy season," *Ryrie Study Bible, KJV*, 1978, ftn. to 1 Kings 17:3; *Zon. Pic. Ency. Bib.*, vol. Five, p. 893.
 - b. Such steep ravines possess "numerous caves" where one can easily hide, Ibid., vol. One, p. 788.
 - c. Gilead where wadi Cherith was located was mostly a thickly wooded, well-watered hill country, so were Ahab to try to find Elijah, the **first** place he would check would be Gilead where Elijah had dwelt and knew well that also had many water sources and woods where he could easily hide in a severe drought! (Ibid., vol. Two, p. 723) However, the **last** place Ahab would look for Elijah would be at Cherith: such wadis dry up when the rains stop under **normal** conditions, so Ahab would think Elijah, who had lived in Gilead (1 Kings 17:1), would **not** hide by a stream he knew would **soon** go dry in a bad **drought!**
 - d. The many caves near Cherith supplied Elijah ample hiding places, shade from the sun and safe sleeping at night by a fire built near the cave door to keep away wild animals of the night, cf. 1 Samuel 17:34-36.

2. In heeding God to withdraw from dangerous Ahab to Cherith, God met Elijah's **livelihood** needs, 17:3-6:
 - a. God told Elijah to drink of the stream at Cherith and He would use ravens to feed him, 1 Kings 17:3-4.
 - b. God's use of ravens to feed Elijah was remarkable: (1) ravens "normally neglect their own young (Job 38:41)," and eat "(a)lmost any animal food, dead, dying or weak" versus Elijah's diet under the Law that forbade him from partaking of unclean animals and animals that died on their own, Lev. 11:1-47; Deut. 14:21! (B. K. C., O. T., p. 524) (2) Ravens are also very intelligent and independent: they "have been known to imitate wolves . . . to attract them to carcasses that the raven isn't capable of opening. When the wolf is done eating, the raven gets the leftovers . . . (R)avens make 'very sophisticated nonvocal signals' . . . to communicate with other ravens . . . one raven . . . will distract the other animal . . . and the other will steal its food. " (Joy Lanzendorfer, "10 Fascinating Facts About Ravens," mentalfloss.com, 1/7/2016)
 - c. Also, adult ravens pair for life and live apart from other ravens in territories while adolescent "teenage" ravens stressfully rove about in "gangs," Ibid. More than two ravens were likely needed to bring enough food per meal for Elijah, so God may well have used a "gang" of rowdy "teenage" ravens to feed Elijah!
 - d. [Since adult raven pairs are territorial (Ibid.), their flight range of getting food for Elijah likely limited to 10 miles or so, God may have used a rowdy teen gang of ravens to grab food from Ahab's kitchen 30 miles away and fly it due east to Elijah at Cherith (Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 523), fitting justice in God's eyes!]
 - e. Remarkably, then, each morning and evening, an intelligent, independent and likely rowdy teenage gang of ravens brought Elijah humanly edible, ceremonially clean meat of freshly killed animals and "bread," i. e., *lehem*, "food in general, possibly including berries, fruit, nuts, eggs, etc," Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 524!
3. In heeding God to withdraw from dangerous Ahab to Cherith, God met Elijah's **spiritual** needs, 17:3-6:
 - a. God's sending Elijah to wadi Cherith that Elijah knew would dry up even in normal weather, especially as Elijah who lived in Gilead knew of other nearby water sources with thick woods for hiding, left him having to **choose** to live by faith in God from the start of his stay at Cherith. This lesson on faith was to be used in Elijah's later competition with Ahab on Mount Carmel! (Ibid.)
 - b. Elijah also knew that as the drought intensified, food for the ravens became more scarce (1 Kings 18:5), what could leave the ravens with their high intellect and independent spirit **more** disposed to eat the food meant for God's prophet. Elijah had to trust God's sovereignty over the ravens regardless of the drought!
 - c. These lessons of faith were meant to equip Elijah to trust God for future victory at Mount Carmel, Ibid.

Lesson: *Because of the threat Elijah faced from Ahab for announcing several years of drought, God had him withdraw from Ahab to wadi Cherith, and there God met all his safety, livelihood and spiritual needs.*

Application: *In facing dangerously evil people in life, (1) may we trust in Christ for salvation from sin to become a child of God under His Much More Care, John 3:16; Romans 8:32. (2) Then, may we heed God's call for US akin to His call to Elijah to withdraw from dangerously evil parties as far as is necessary for our safety (2 Timothy 3:1-5a, 5b) and see God meet our safety, livelihood and spiritual needs.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) In our introduction, we told how a nationwide politically conservative radio talk show host criticized President Trump for asking evangelical Pastor Robert Jeffries who believes salvation is only by faith in Christ to give the dedicatory prayer for the new U. S. Embassy in Jerusalem. The talk show host suggested the president should have asked Franklin Graham, Billy Graham's son, to give the prayer as he would allegedly be "more inclusive."

I believe Franklin Graham like his father holds salvation is by only by faith in Christ, but years ago, we took a stand against involvement in the Billy Graham Crusades due to their ecumenical practices. But for the sake of safety, we believe in going further to avoid participating in ministries that are government-led functions of any kind. The biblical duty of pastors (1 Timothy 4:12-16 and 2 Timothy 4:1-4) is that we keep expounding Scripture in the local church. That minimizes the trouble pastors and congregations face from apostates in the world.

(2) In view of the Parable of the Tares where Christ predicted Satan would place unbelievers (tares) among believers (wheat) in the Church, Matthew 13:51-52 presents Christ's call that Bible teachers focus on bringing priceless truths out of Scripture to His people best to counter the debilitating influence of "tares" in their midst.

(3) We teachers must also gently teach the truth amid carnal believers in the Church who have been taken captive by Satan to oppose our ministries, being careful to do so at a safe personal distance, 2 Tim. 2:24-26 with 3:5b.

May we trust in Christ to be saved. May we heed God's call to withdraw in ways and degrees as God dictates from spiritually dangerous people and see God meet our all needs in life and ministry.