

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

T. Trusting God To Stay Holy In Our Associations

(1 Kings 20:22-43)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many evangelical churches and schools feel pressured to compromise in doctrine and associations to survive:

(1) Brannon Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 209-210, wrote that the "Hegelian Dialectic Process" is being applied to churches especially in "the seeker-sensitive church growth movement" where "an antithesis (unbelievers)" is brought into the Church "to oppose the thesis (believers), in order to move towards *consensus* (compromise), and move the believers *away from their moral absolutism* (resistance to change)," so "change agents" are pushing . . . hard for change to occur in the church."

Also, "(m)any church-growth conferences are sponsored by people and organizations such as the Rockefellers and the Council on Foreign Relations." (Ibid., p. 210) Many churches thus feel pressured to compromise their beliefs or risk eventually closing as their people are lured away to mega-churches that have been impacted by godless men.

(2) Many Christian colleges "are under increasing pressure to elevate human opinions about homosexuality above God's Word," for "(i)n 2016, President Obama notified colleges that his administration included sexual preference in the anti-discrimination provisions of Title IX" in the 1972 Education Amendments. ("A New Kind of Student," Answers, July-August 2018, p. 46) "Dale Kemp, chief financial officer at Wheaton College, says, 'The fear is so large in many institutions because 40 or 50 or maybe even 60 percent of their budgets are really coming from the federal government.' Losing that funding would threaten their survival," Ibid.

"(T)he Trump administration repealed President Obama's order," but "the situation could change in one election cycle," so many Christian colleges would be left having to support homosexuality to avoid shutting down.

Need: *So we ask, "How does our Church handle pressures to compromise in beliefs and associations to survive?"*

- I. **We learned in our previous message in this series that God gave Ahab victory over Ben-hadad's larger army to show Ahab that He and not Baal was the Lord, 1 Kings 20:1-21.**
- II. **Then, for the SECOND time, God gave Ahab GREATER victory over an even GREATER army of Ben-hadad's AGAIN to show Ahab that He and not Baal was the Lord, 1 Kings 20:22-30:**
 - A. A prophet of God told Ahab to prepare for another Ben-hadad attack (1 Kings 20:22) since Ben-hadad thought Israel's God was a deity of the hills but not of the plain, that Ahab was vulnerable on the plain, 1 Kings 20:23.
 - B. When Ben-hadad returned, his army was so large, Israel's army looked like two little flocks of goats, v. 24-27.
 - C. However, a prophet told Ahab that God would again give him victory to teach the Arameans that He was also God of the plain as an omnipresent deity, and to show Ahab that He and not Baal was the Lord, 1 Kings 20:28.
 - D. Consequently, Israel slew 100,000 Arameans in one day, the rest fled to the city of Aphek where God made a wall fall on 27,000 of them, and Ben-hadad fled to hide in an inner chamber in the city, 1 Kings 20:29-30.
- III. **However, Ahab faithlessly failed to destroy Ben-hadad (1 Kings 20:31-34), for he wanted to form an alliance with him to fight the greater army of the Assyrians:**
 - A. Instead of slaying Ben-hadad, Ahab made an alliance with him, 1 Kings 20:31-34.
 - B. Scripture does not explain Ahab's motive in this compromise, but Shalmaneser III of Assyria records a battle he fought against Ben-hadad and "Ahab the Israelite" at Qarqar (853 B. C.) where they repelled Shalmaneser III. (Ibid., Bib. Know. Com., O. T., citing James B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 1974, p. 278f).
 - C. Thus, Ahab's mercy shown to Ben-hadad at Aphek arose from his unbelief that God could or would help him defeat Assyria, leading him to make an alliance with Ben-hadad to fight their mutual, great Assyrian foe!
- IV. **Ahab's compromise was not only unbiblical, but it failed to consider God's past precedents both in Israel's history and in his own experience with Ben-hadad, making his compromise inexcusable:**
 - A. Scripture at Deuteronomy 20:1 called Israel not to fear facing larger armies, for God Who had delivered her from the Egyptian chariot army at the Red Sea without Israel's using a single sword would give her victory.
 - B. Also, Scripture at Deuteronomy 20:12-14 taught Israel that if she went to war, her soldiers were to slay all the enemy men, not to let them live like Ahab did with Ben-hadad who had fought against Israel **two** times!
 - C. Ahab's experience with Ben-hadad also recalled the precedents of Joshua's victories, giving Ahab direction:
 1. God's dropping the wall at Aphek on 27,000 foes recalled God's dropping of Jericho's walls in Joshua 6.

2. Ben-hadad's flight into an inner chamber so Ahab could capture and slay him recalled the Joshua 10 flight of five Canaanite kings into a cave so Joshua could later slay them in obedience to Deuteronomy 20:12-14.
- D. Also, God had *twice* given Ahab victory over Ben-hadad's vastly *superior* forces, indicating He not only **could** but **would** give Ahab victory over formidable Assyria where he to have to face that nation's army!
- V. **Thus, God judged Ahab to be destroyed and his nation of Israel defeated, 1 Kings 20:35-43:**
- A. Ahab's compromising alliance with Ben-hadad was condemned by God via an illustration, 1 Kings 20:35-36:
1. A man of the school of the prophets of God told a fellow student prophet to strike him, 1 Kings 20:35a.
 2. However, the second man refused to strike him, so God sent a lion to kill him, 1 Kings 20:35b-36.
 3. This event illustrated that God condemned Ahab to die because he had failed to execute Ben-hadad!
- B. When the first prophet urged a second man to strike him, he obeyed, wounding him, so the obedient man was not punished by being killed by a lion, and the wounded prophet went to meet Ahab, 1 Kings 20:37-38a.
- C. The wounded prophet disguised himself and then met Ahab, giving the story that he had come from the battle, but that he had failed to guard a prisoner of war so that the prisoner had escaped, and that he had been told by his superior officer that he would be executed for that error or pay a steep fine, 1 Kings 20:38b-39.
- D. Ahab replied that the presumed wounded soldier should die for not keeping his prisoner (1 Kings 20:40), so the prophet removed his disguise to reveal he was a prophet of God and applied Ahab's judgment to Ahab himself: Ahab would lose his life and his people be defeated for letting Ben-hadad go free when God wanted him executed, 1 Kings 20:41-42. Ahab thus returned home "sullen and angry," 1 Kings 20:43 NIV.

Lesson: *For not trusting God to give him victory over greater Assyria regardless of (1) Scripture's teaching, (2) its precedents and (3) God's past help to him, Ahab compromised his associations, so God severely punished him.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) May we recall Scripture and God's past precedents and help to us that we trust Him so as not unbiblically to compromise in doctrine or associations.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

This message provides significant applications for our Church relative to the issues raised in our introduction:

(1) On the issue of many evangelical colleges facing pressure to sanction homosexuality or risk closing their doors since they rely heavily on government aid, **Scripture** at 3 John 6-8 directs us not to receive moneys from the unsaved world, but only from believers in Christ. Heeding this directive equips us to avoid the trial many Christian colleges face since we do not receive government funding, so the government cannot tell us what to teach.

(2) On the issue of seeker-sensitive, church growth movement impacted by godless parties as the Rockefellers and the Council on Foreign Relations, **Scripture** at Acts 2:42-47 claims **God** adds people to the local church so that **true** church growth is **entirely God's** work! Also, **Scripture** at Matthew 13:24-30 with 34-43 and 31-33 explains how once Satan in our era plants unbelievers amid weak believers in organized groups such as churches (parable of the Wheat and Tares), he pushes numerical growth (parable of the Mustard Seed) and doctrinal compromise (parable of the Leaven) on the groups to thwart true discipling. The seeker-sensitive church-growth movement thus readily fits Satan's agenda, what complicates discipleship efforts for Bible expositors. These beliefs have led me as pastor and in turn us as a Church to **avoid** seeker-sensitive, church growth seminars and conferences, what has saved us from their pressures to compromise. [These beliefs have also left me leery of importing programs from outside our Church or wary of sudden numerical or financial increases in our body as often theological or divisive issues come with them.]

(3) In view of the concerns of many evangelical churches and schools expressed in our sermon introduction, one may then ask how we can expect our Church to survive if we do not receive funding from the government and if we do not take the seeker-friendly church-growth route in ministry. The answer, in keeping with this sermon's lesson, is found in **Scripture** and **God's precedents:** as for (a) **Scripture**, in John 10:27, Jesus claimed that His sheep hear His voice and they follow Him, and Revelation 19:11-16 claims His "voice" is personified in His written Word, the Scriptures. Then, 2 Timothy 4:1-2 calls us to preach that written Word. As for (b) **God's precedents**, over the decades, people have often told us that the reason they attend our services is primarily due to its Bible exposition and the effects of that exposition on their lives body life of this Church. In other words, what has **upheld** our contributions so we can function and what has **held** our people here for decades has been **God's** leading **His flock** to follow **His "voice"** as His written Word has been expounded throughout the Church's various ministries!

It only follows that we should STAY with that Bible exposition FOCUS!

May we trust in Christ for salvation. Then, as individuals and as a body, may we heed Scripture and God's past precedents in our lives to avoid compromising our doctrine and associations, and God will bless!