

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

III. The Latter Era Of The Divided Kingdom, 2 Kings 2:1-27:41

M. Resting In God's Long-Term But Sure And Perfect Justice

(2 Kings 8:7-15 et al.)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Last Sunday, two Church members independent of each other voiced to me their concerns over wrongs they see in today's world. I keep hearing such concerns from not only members of our Church, but also from people in the secular world, and the wrongs that concern people are often very great! We illustrate as follows:

(1) Bob Genovese of Naugatuck in his letter to the Republican-American, January 5, 2019, p. 6A expressed concern over a great wrong as it relates to our nation's immigration. He asserted: "My grandparents . . . emigrated to the United States . . . through Ellis Island and entered the United States legally . . . Members of my family . . . have served in the military, in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan . . . [but] (a)llowing mass migrations of undocumented immigrants to this country without proper vetting is a danger to all Americans, and grossly unfair to all those who have entered legally and hope to become citizens."

(2) The paper's lead editorial ("Protecting the unborn," Ibid.) expressed concern over a ruling made by our state Supreme Court: it heard a case where a "state's attorney . . . brought a death-penalty case against" Robert Courchesne for murdering Demetris Rodgers who was nearly nine months pregnant. Demetris's baby was delivered by doctors and kept alive for 42 days on life support until, due to extensive brain damage, life support was withdrawn and the baby died. The attorney tried charging Courchesne with a death-penalty crime for killing a woman and a child under age 16, but the court ruled that the baby, Antonia Rodgers, "never lived." (Ibid.) Courchesne was spared the death penalty, but later died in prison of natural causes in 2015. However, the court's ruling was very wrong!

(3) It occurs in evangelical realms: some Evangelical leaders calling for "social justice" are "demanding repentance and reparations from one ethnic group for the sins of its ancestors against another." (John MacArthur, "Social Injustice and the Gospel," August 13, 2018; gty.org/blog). Incidentally, "social justice" is a "masking term" for the economic philosophy of Marxism that involves "the redistribution of income." (B. Howse, Rel. Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 483-484) The argument of these evangelicals thus goes that since white Americans once owned black slaves, white Americans now owe financial reparations to black Americans for the sin of their forefathers. (Ibid., MacArthur)

Need: *So we ask, "How do we handle the concern we have over the great wrongs we witness in today's world?!"*

I. God sent Elisha to Aramea to announce the rise to the Aramean throne of the worthless, cruel man Hazael who as king would commit terrible atrocities against the people of Israel, 2 Kings 8:7-15:

- A. When Elisha went north to Damascus, the capital of Aramea ("Syria" KJV), its king Ben-Hadad was ill, so he sent his official Hazael with gifts to Elisha, the man of God, to learn if he would get well, 2 Kings 8:7-8.
- B. Hazael thus met and asked Elisha if Ben-Hadad would recover, and Elisha replied that Hazael was to tell his king that he would recover though the Lord had shown Elisha that Hazael's king would die, 2 Kings 8:9-10.
- C. With Hazael thus informed that Ben-Hadad would die, Elisha fixed his gaze on Hazael, staring at him until Hazael was embarrassed, 2 Kings 8:11a. Elisha was apparently just then receiving a prophetic revelation from the Lord that Hazael would himself kill Ben-Hadad (cf. 2 Kings 8:15), so Elisha was trying to hint to Hazael that he knew what he was plotting against the king, and that Hazael should stop that plotting!
- D. However, with additional insight coming in from the Lord, Elisha then began to weep, 2 Kings 8:11b.
- E. When Hazael asked him why he was weeping, Elisha replied that God had revealed to him the atrocities that Hazael would commit against Israel's people by burning their fortresses, killing their young men with the sword, dashing their little children to pieces and ripping up their pregnant women, 2 Kings 8:12.
- F. Pretending to be humble, Hazael claimed he could not do such great things, but Elisha announced that Hazael would become king of Aramea, what would explain his enabling to commit such atrocities, 2 Kings 8:13.
- G. Hazael returned to Ben-Hadad, telling him he would recover. However, the next day, Hazael took a bed cloth, dipped it in water, spread it over the king's face, suffocated him to death and seized the throne, v. 14-15 ESV.
- H. Worthless Hazael's cruelty as foretold by Elisha had begun to show itself! Even Assyria's king Shalmaneser III called Hazael "the son of a nobody" who had "seized the throne," Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., v. Three, p. 49.

II. The reason God let worthless, cruel Hazael rise to the Aramean throne to commit such atrocities against Israel was to punish the vile sins God's people had committed against the Lord and His prophets:

- A. God let Hazael rise to the Aramean throne as His instrument of punishment on the people of Israel:
1. Before Elisha's call to be a prophet of the Lord, the prophet Elijah had fled for his life from king Ahab's wife Jezebel, so God had asked him what he was doing at Mount Sinai. Elijah had then complained that he had been very jealous for God, but that the *people of Israel* had forsaken His covenant, thrown down His altars, killed His prophets, that he alone was left and they wanted to kill him, 1 Kings 19:10, 14 ESV.
 2. God's reply shows that Elijah's complaint was a valid one: the Lord then had Elijah anoint Hazael to be king over Aramea, anoint Jehu to be king over Israel and anoint Elisha to be prophet in his place, 1 Kings 19:15-16. The Lord explained that *Hazael* would *kill some* in *Israel* who had *sinned against God, slain His prophets and threatened Elijah's life*, Jehu would kill *more* of these sinners and that Elisha would kill the *rest* of them so that only a 7,000 remnant who had not bowed to Baal would be left, 1 Kings 19:17-18.
- B. The sins in Israel's people that God was judging were vile and extensive according to Scripture (as follows):
1. In king Ahab's era, Hiel the Bethelite rebuilt Jericho, defying Joshua's past curse that the man who rebuilt the city would lose his eldest son when he laid Jericho's foundation and his youngest when he set up its city gates, 1 Kings 16:34 with Joshua 6:26. Just as Joshua had predicted, Hiel lost both sons, not stopping when he had laid the city's foundation at the cost of his eldest son Abiram, but challenging God's authority in continuing to build until he also lost his youngest son Segub in setting up the city gates, 1 Kings 16:34!
 2. In addition, Elijah had asked Israel's people on Mount Carmel, "How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him," 1 Kings 18:21 ESV. Such dual allegiance to Baal and God left the people partly responsible for the exposure to the danger and death that God's prophets faced, for some of the people while worshiping Baal would have aided Ahab and Jezebel in their search for God's prophets versus hiding them, contributing to the prophets' sufferings!
 3. Also, God's letting Hazael commit the specific atrocities against Israel that Elisha had predicted he would commit is just in view of the idolatrous worship of the people: Baal was the god of "fertility in agriculture, beasts and mankind" (Ibid., *Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib.*, v. One, p. 432), so Baal worship was dreadfully sexually immoral. (Merrill F. Unger, *Arch. and the O. T.*, 1973, p. 175-177) Hazael's slaying of Israel's *young* men, dashing of their *children* to pieces and ripping up of their *pregnant* women judged the sexual acts the people had committed in Baal worship that would have led to the conception of much of such offspring!

Lesson: *Though God had Elisha tell worthless, cruel Hazael he would gain Aramea's throne and would commit terrible atrocities against His people, in view of the vile sins the people of Israel had committed in Elijah's ministry even before Elisha's call as a prophet, God let Hazael rise to power to fulfill His long-term, sure, perfect justice.*

Application: *(1) May we believe in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) As we witness great wrongs in today's world over which we have no control, may we recall that God's justice may be long in coming, but that it will indeed be administered, and that it will be sure and just. (3) May we thus not fret over injustices we see but cannot address, (4) but (a) let God handle them (b) and rather focus on fulfilling God's Biblical will for us.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We apply this message to the issues mentioned in our sermon introduction for edification (as follows):

(1) On our nation's immigration issue, at Acts 17:26 ESV, Paul claimed that God has made "every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth" and "determined . . . the boundaries of their dwelling place." Thus, instead of fretting over the wrongs of our nation's immigration situation, a fruitless exercise if we have no human power to affect change, God wants us to rest in His sovereign capacity to establish all nations and their bounds so that we can live ordered lives and fulfill His assigned calling. Then, we should focus on fulfilling God's personal calling!

(2) On the baby Antonia Rodgers's existence, David claimed his mother conceived him in sin in Psalm 51:5. One is a sinner only if he is a person, so Antonia started to exist at conception versus the state Supreme Court's ruling!

(3) On bearing the guilt of slavery by one's white American ancestors, Ezekiel 18:20 ESV claims, "The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father." Accordingly, God holds no person of any race or ethnicity today responsible before God for the sins of his ancestors!

Also, since Marxist ideology fuels the "social justice" pressure that teaches the unbiblical transfer of guilt from one generation to the next, and since Marxism itself violates Exodus 20:17, 15 in touting covetousness and stealing in the "Communist Manifesto" ("Goals, 'Communist Manifesto,' learn-usa.com), Marxism is to be opposed as evil.

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we then rest in God's long-term but sure and perfect administration of justice for all wrongs in today's world and focus on fulfilling His assigned calling for us.