

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

T. Overcoming The Auld Lang Syne Syndrome

(2 Kings 13:1-25)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

With the increase of apostasy in today's world, it's easy for us to long for "the good old days" when there was more righteousness and more and stronger, upright leaders around to help counter the evil we face. We illustrate:

(1) A letter by William R. Bellotti of Middlebury in the March 4, 2019 Republican-American (p. 6A) lamented, "(I)n today's democracy, wealth has become a tool for politicians to use in getting re-elected and furthering their careers for maintaining power and wealth. As such . . . all three branches of government" are "incapable of making policy beneficial for the overall population" and "(o)ur liberal education system" is "(s)ubverting our nation's youth with biased curriculums based upon revisionist history."

(2) It occurs in evangelicalism: Terry Mortenson's article, "Why Is The Church So Confused About Adam?" (Part 3, Answers, March-April, 2019, p. 62) reported, "Without [belief in] the biblical foundation of the first male and female made in God's image [due to accepting evolution], we are now witnessing an alarming increase in the number of professing evangelicals who doubt or deny the Bible's teaching on gender, marriage, and sexuality." (brackets ours)

(3) Nationwide radio talk show host Dr. Michael Savage on his show on March 4, 2019 claimed that the American people have largely lost trust in *all* of their nation's institutional leaders, be they in government, in business, in education or in religious realms, so people are turning elsewhere for the truth.

Need: *So, we ask, "Though tempted to long for 'the good old days' of more righteousness and upright leaders to help stem the tide of wickedness, since we cannot go back in time, what does God want US to do TODAY?!"*

- I. When Jehu's descendants came to Israel's throne, they kept holding to Jeroboam I's syncretism and thus faced a lack of God's blessing and repeat failures to counter Aramean invasions, 2 Kings 13:1-13:**
 - A. When Jehu's son Jehoahaz began to rule the Northern Kingdom of Israel, he like his father held to Jeroboam I's syncretism, so Jehoahaz suffered God's discipline of defeat by the Arameans, 2 Kings 13:1-3.
 - B. Jehoahaz sought God's help, so the Lord mercifully sent a deliverer to ease Israel's oppression, but Jehoahaz still did not abandon Jeroboam I's syncretism, so some Aramean oppression remained, 2 Kings 13:4-9.
 - C. Jehoahaz's son king Joash also held to Jeroboam I's syncretism, so he also lacked blessing, 2 Kings 13:10-13.
- II. During Joash's reign, Elisha, the long-time prophet of the Lord, became terminally ill, so Joash visited him, grieving over his coming loss of Elisha to help stem the oppression Israel faced, 2 Kings 13:14 ESV:**
 - A. Hearing that Elisha was terminally ill, Joash visited him and wept over him, crying, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" This statement revealed that Joash believed Elisha was the real power and defense of the nation by means of his long-term, spiritually effective ministry as God's prophet.
 - B. Elisha himself had voiced these same words when grieving over the loss of his own great mentor, the godly prophet Elijah when God took him to heaven in a whirlwind, 2 Kings 2:12; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 563.
- III. Joash's grief, a longing for "the good old days," what we term "the auld lang syne (Scottish for 'old long ago' according to Webster's Dictionary) syndrome," was then countered by Elisha, 2 Kings 13:15-19:**
 - A. Elisha responded to Joash's lament by telling him to pick up his bow and arrow and draw the bow back in the firing position, and then the ailing prophet who was near death put his frail hands on Joash's hands and told Joash to open the window to the east and shoot the arrow out of the window, 2 Kings 13:15-17a.
 - B. After Joash shot the arrow, Elisha announced that this event symbolized the Lord's arrow of victory over Israel's Aramean foe, that Joash would fight the Arameans until he had made an end of them, 2 Kings 13:17b.
 - C. Elisha then directed Joash to take his other arrows and strike the ground with them, likely indicating he was to shoot the other arrows into the ground, 2 Kings 13:18a; Ibid., p. 564. Having taught Joash that his shooting of the first arrow symbolized his victory over the Arameans, Elisha intended that Joash empty the rest of his quiver of arrows into the ground to indicate his faith in God's help for a complete destruction of the Arameans.
 - D. However, Joash faithlessly shot only three more arrows, angering Elisha, for it meant that God would give Joash only three more victories over the Arameans instead of his putting an end to them, 2 Kings 13:18b-19.
- IV. Nevertheless, God's instruction for Joash had STILL not ended: He used Elisha's dead body to repeat this lesson that Joash by FAITH might finally OVERCOME the Arameans, 2 Kings 13:20-21:**

- A. When Elisha eventually died, he was buried likely in a cave or a tomb that had been hewn out of a rock, and over the mouth of the cavern was placed a stone to seal it, 2 Kings 13:20a; Ibid.
- B. Later as a band of marauding Moabites was invading the land and another Hebrew was being buried near Elisha's grave, the burial party spotted the Moabite band approaching, so they hurriedly threw the body into Elisha's tomb, and as soon as the body touched Elisha's bones, the dead man arose, 2 Kings 13:20b-21!
- C. This miracle would have caught Joash's attention and emphasized the same lesson that Elisha had given him:
 1. When Elisha had placed his hands over Joash's hands at the shooting of Joash's first arrow, Elisha was a bed-ridden, terminally ill man, so there was little strength in Elisha's hands! (2 Kings 13:14-17a) This act aimed to teach Joash **not** to **depend** on **Elisha** for victory, but on the **Lord** Who had **empowered Elisha** in his ministry just as **Elisha** himself had learned that it was the **Lord** Who had **empowered** his mentor **Elijah** when Elisha used Elijah's mantle to part the Jordan after God took Elijah to heaven, 2 Kings 2:14!
 2. Thus, when the dead man's body touched the lifeless Elisha's bones and the dead rose and stood up on his feet, **God** was urging Joash to **rely fully** on the **LORD** for victory over Aramea! (Ibid., p. 564) Joash was to realize that in **EVERY** generation, be it in Elijah's, Elisha's or even in Joash's generation, one could be **empowered** by **GOD**, that **JOASH HIMSELF** could be a **GREAT VICTOR** by **TRUSTING** in **GOD**!

Lesson: After generations of oppression by primarily Israel's Aramean foes, and king Joash grieved over the coming loss of Elisha, **FIRST Elisha AND then the LORD sought to get Joash HIMSELF to become a GREAT VICTOR by TRUSTING FULLY in GOD as OPPOSED to holding to Jeroboam I's syncretism AND to God!**

Application: (1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) If tempted to adopt the "auld lang syne syndrome" of longing for "the good old days" of spiritual giants and their victories of the past, (a) may we recall that all spiritual giants of the past were giants by **FAITH in GOD**, (b) that **WE OURSELVES must TRUST the LORD and His WORD to counter the sin and evil we face today that WE might be VICTORIOUS in OUR era!**

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

This sermon applies to the "climate change" issue that both our spiritual forefathers and we have long faced:

(1) Forty-four years ago back in 1975, Peter Gwynne's article, "The Cooling World" in Newsweek, April 28, 1975, p. 64 claimed, "(O)minous signs" show "the earth's climate seems to be cooling down. Meteorologists . . . are almost unanimous in the view that the trend will reduce agricultural productivity for the rest of the century. If the climate change is as profound as some of the pessimists fear, the resulting famines could be catastrophic."

(2) This view was reversed by 1989: The Wall Street Journal on March 8, 2019 ("Notable & Quotable: Warning," p. A17) cited a June 29, 1989 Associated Press dispatch as saying: "A senior U. N. environmental official says entire nations could be wiped off the face of the Earth by rising sea levels if the global warming trend is not reversed by the year 2000 . . . He said governments have a 10-year window of opportunity to solve the greenhouse effect before it goes beyond human control." We are now 19 years beyond that official's predicted point of no return!

(3) Nevertheless, Dr. Howard Winston, who holds a doctorate in physics from Brown University and teaches physics and engineering at the University of Connecticut, in a letter to the Republican-American, March 6, 2019, p. 7A, claimed in support of the global warming view: "(P)olls show climate science deniers are losing credibility with the public. Their false arguments contradict what people experience and read about with increasing frequency. It's time to shift the dialogue to how we should mitigate and adapt to climate disruption. The stakes are enormous."

(4) To the contrary, James Barranto, a retired college professor of physical chemistry, in his article, "Scant wisdom from people on the street," Ibid., March 8, 2017, p. 7A, asserted, "Many people . . . believe that if all the glacier ice in Greenland melts, the oceans will flood the coastlines of the continents," but "(d)uring the Medieval Warm Period (approximately 900 A. D. to 1300 A. D.), there was little glacier ice in the North Atlantic. No writings of this time period indicate that any coastal European cities were under water. Certainly Venice should have been destroyed . . . (B)y the 1300s, the returning cold caused Greenland's climate to become very inhospitable, forcing the Vikings to leave. There is no indication a rapid decrease in sea level occurred as the massive glaciers reformed in Greenland during the Little Ice Age. So, apparently something is amiss with ocean-level predictions."

"Climate science" views have thus radically erred over time! So, like our spiritual forefathers who believed God's Genesis 8:21-22 promise to preserve the earth's climate as long as the world exists so as to stand against catastrophic global cooling warnings in 1975, we today must stand against catastrophic global warming warnings by holding to Genesis 8:21-22! Our forefathers are now gone, but God wants US to trust His Word!

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we like our forefathers trust God and heed His Word today!