

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

B. God's Validation Of His True Servants

(2 Kings 2:19-25)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The conduct of many ministers today not only leaves many in the pew wondering who is a real messenger of God, but some of God's **true** church leaders are left feeling nervous over how those in the pew view **them**:

(1) For example, Nicole Winfield's story, "US cardinal still wants pope to address accusations" (Republican-American, September 7, 2018, p. 6D) explained how Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano's accusation that Pope Francis helped cover-up "sexual misconduct allegations" and the pope's 2016 document, "The Joy of Love" that has caused conservative Catholics confusion "about the church's teaching on the indissolubility of marriage" in addition to the pope's continued refusal to answer questions on these issues is troubling even to some cardinals. Then, "the number of . . . inquiries around the country" on the "Catholic Church's handling of clergy sex abuse allegations" continues "to grow" (Ibid., David Klepper, "NY, NJ attorneys general investigating dioceses," p. 8A)! If charges rise about the pope's lack of credibility and multiple states investigate alleged sexual abuses by priests, those in the pew may ask if any minister is credible, and ministers can get anxious over how others view them and react in unwise defensiveness!

(2) Locally, newcomers to our church tell us about worship services area evangelical leaders sponsor with known cultic groups, so God's servants at our Church know the temptation to get anxious over how people view **us!**

Need: *So we ask, "Since the credibility of many ministers is being greatly hurt by their actions to where even God's true servants are under unnerving scrutiny by people in the pew, what is God's solution?!"*

- I. Upon taking Elijah to heaven, God supplied four evidences that Elisha was His prophet, 2 Kings 2:7-18:**
 - A. First, 50 student prophets from a distance saw God publicly take Elijah up in a whirlwind, 2 Kings 2:7-11.
 - B. Second, those 50 prophets then saw Elisha use Elijah's mantle to part the Jordan and cross it, 2 Kings 2:12-14.
 - C. Third, those 50 prophets then publicly acknowledged that Elisha was Elijah's successor, 2 Kings 2:15.
 - D. Fourth, those 50 prophets learned by experience that Elisha's claim that God had taken Elijah to heaven was true even though they doubted that God had actually achieved this feat, 2 Kings 2:16-18.
- II. Some men believed God's evidences of Elisha's credibility and asked for his help, so God helped them:**
 - A. The men of Jericho believed the 50 student prophets' report of Elisha's credibility as prophet so as to ask Elisha to heal the water of the spring that their city used, 2 Kings 2:19.
 - B. However, for Elisha to help them would involve God's exhibition of great grace (as follows):
 1. When Joshua had defeated and destroyed Jericho, he had put a curse on anyone who rebuilt it, that he would lose his eldest son in laying its foundation and his youngest son in setting up its gates, Joshua 6:26.
 2. Hiel from Bethel later defied that curse, so he lost his eldest son in laying the foundation of Jericho and he lost his youngest son when he set up its gates in fulfillment of Joshua's curse, 1 Kings 16:34.
 3. For the men of a destroyed Jericho that God had not wanted rebuilt to ask His prophet to purify their water so they could live there would take great grace on God's part in view of His past will regarding their city!
 - C. Nevertheless, since the men of Jericho had accepted the credibility of God's prophet and by faith in God asked for Elisha's help, God in great grace led Elisha to heal their problem water, 2 Kings 2:20-22:
 1. Elisha asked for a new bowl with salt (2 Kings 2:20), a **ceremonially clean** bowl and **salt**, used in **all** Israel's **sacrifices** (Lev. 2:13) to typify preservation and faithfulness (J. V. McGee, Thru The Bible, 1981, v I., p. 332): Elisha taught that God in everlasting righteousness would graciously would heal the water!
 2. Elisha poured the salt into the spring and God in grace permanently healed the water, 2 Kings 2:21-22.
- III. Yet, other men rejected God's evidences of Elisha's credibility and mocked him, so God punished them:**
 - A. As Elisha headed west up to Bethel, some young men (*ne'arim* "young men" + *qetannim* "young;" Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 559; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 881-882, 654-655) mocked Elisha, claiming that if he were a real prophet, he should ascend to heaven like he said Elijah had done. (2 Kings 2:23; Bible Know. Com. O. T., p. 541-542) They may have been "young false prophets of Baal" or young prophets of Jeroboam's syncretistic worship center at Bethel, Ibid.; cf. 1 Kings 13:25-33.
 - B. Their mocking was against **God**, for **He** had **appointed Elisha**, so Elisha cursed them in **God's** name, v. 24a.
 - C. Two female bears then came out of the woods and mauled 42 of the young men, 2 Kings 2:24b; Ibid., p. 542.

IV. Elisha then renewed his dedication to uphold Elisha's ministry in God's calling as prophet, 2 Kings 2:25:

- A. Elisha's acts of God's grace at Jericho and judgment near Bethel recall God's grace and judgment in Elijah's former ministry at Mount Carmel: on that mount, Elijah in grace had called fire down from heaven, causing Israel's people to trust in God, and in judgment he had near there slain the false prophets, 1 Kings 18:19-40.
- B. So, after his works at Jericho and Bethel, Elisha went to Mount Carmel to dedicate himself to uphold God's work of grace and judgment by predecessor Elijah before going to Samaria to minister before the king, v. 25.

Lesson: *By multiple, public evidences, God indicated that Elisha was His true prophet. When the men of Jericho then heeded those evidences and sought Elisha's help, God led him graciously to help them, but when others rejected those evidences and mocked Elisha, God led him to minister judgment upon them.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) May we heed the public evidences of credibility God provides us regarding His true leaders. (3) May those called of God to lead not concern themselves with how others view them, but like Elisha simply follow God's leading in ministering in His Biblical will.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In application of this sermon's lesson, a number of events have occurred in the last month that are in this congregation's best interests for it to know, for as in Elisha's case, they give evidences on your leaderships' credibility:

(1) Around August 14th, my wife found a Jehovah's Witnesses tract that had been left at our front door when we were out that upheld Scripture's inerrancy and divine authority. I was bothered by this, for the tract was a lure for weak evangelicals who saw nothing wrong with the tract's contents to be sucked into a cult that denied Christ's deity.

(2) On August 17th, I heard a secular radio report that the Mormon Church's president wants to stop calling his Church "Mormons" and instead use its "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" title! This increased my concern about cultic deception, for this title sounds more "Christian" especially to unsuspecting, weak evangelical Christians.

(3) On August 25th, I received a letter from a missionary our Church supports that told of his hosting a debate on whether one saved out of Islam can claim Muhammad is an apostle of God! The letter did not clarify whether this claim was true or false, what really bothered me, for I knew the letter would soon be read before unsuspecting people in our morning worship service. So, in the September 2nd sermon, I told how Qur'an 9:30 cites Muhammad as saying that all who claim Jesus is the Son of God are under Allah's curse, showing that Muhammad is *not* an apostle of God!

(4) On September 7th at the Friday night meeting of our Men's Retreat, a visitor gave a moving testimony, but he did not speak of trusting in Christ until one of our men publicly asked him about the issue and he somewhat agreed to having made a commitment to God. However, after the meeting, the visitor said that a key part of his heritage was that of Jehovah's Witnesses! A Church member then asked him if he held to Christ's deity, but the visitor seemed unsure! The member later told me that this made him glad for our doctrinal introduction that we give each Sunday.

(5) On September 8th, Saturday morning at our Men's Retreat, a Church deacon informed me that my claim in my Sunday introduction that tells people they will reach their homes after the service technically errs, for no one knows for whether he will get back to his house! I agreed, and said I would modify my words in my introduction!

(6) On September 9th, one of our Church members asked if I might review a monthly edition of an Our Daily Bread devotional booklet to see if I might approve of its use in the Church. After I took the booklet home but before I could review it, my wife picked it up and saw that many of its devotionals were written by women, typical of what occurs in compromising evangelicalism, and what would cause us to violate 1 Timothy 2:12 in letting women teach men! Alarmed at this, I checked the quarterly edition we set out in our sanctuary and saw that 40% of it was authored by women! When I reported this to the Board of Deacons, we decided to stop putting out Our Daily Bread booklets!

(7) All of these events displayed a vulnerability for weak or unsuspecting believers to be misled, so I decided to address each one, making the following adjustments to my Sunday morning doctrinal introduction: (a) I will add that Colossians 2:9 KJV claims that "in [Christ, v. 8] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." This will better clarify Christ's deity opposite the errors of Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism and Islam. (b) On my past, errant claim that people will reach their homes after the service, I will instead say: ". . . even if you do not reach your house today, you will one day for sure end up in your heavenly Father's home in heaven!" (c) I will add a comment on 1 Timothy 2:12-15 on the Biblical roles of men and women, and for the power to perform and achieve all these objectives, (d) I will refer to the Romans 8:3-4 truth of our need to rely by faith on God Holy Spirit for power in living.

May God's people evaluate all these events to discern the truth regarding their leaderships' credibility.

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we in the pew heed God's evidences of His true servants and function accordingly, and may His true servants obey the Lord and let Him handle their credibility issues.