

## 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**

##### **E. God's Work To Support His Servant's Credibility**

###### **(2 Kings 4:8-37)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

Last Sunday after our worship service, two believers told me of their concern regarding the Brett Kavanaugh hearings, a concern that is certainly valid: in a letter to the Republican-American, October 1, 2018, p. 6A, William R. Bellotti of Middlebury expressed it, writing: "In our justice system, people are innocent until proven guilty, yet Democrats have condemned Judge Kavanaugh on the word of a woman whose accusation cannot be substantiated."

However, the ideology behind this lack of due process is of greater concern: Rich Logis ("How Democrats Are Using Saul Alinsky's Smear Tactics Against Brett Kavanaugh," September 14, 2018; thefederalist.com) claimed "Alinsky's secular agitator bible, 'Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals,'" the "sequel to 'The Communist Manifesto,'" was used by Senate Democrats in the Brett Kavanaugh hearings to further their agenda.

On Thursday, I heard legendary local radio talk show host Brad Davis on "The Talk of Connecticut" say that everywhere he goes, he meets people who are upset with the government, especially with the Kavanaugh hearings.

Also, this last week, I again heard reports of more believers being oppressed in more churches in our area.

We explained why all this is occurring in our last Sunday morning sermon: we noted that Christ in Revelation 3:21 predicted that before the Revelation 4:1 pre-tribulation rapture of the Church, our Revelation 3:14-22 era of Church History would be marked by a mini-Great-Tribulation-era where the government-media-business-religious complex and evangelicalism will become increasingly despotic. Many oppressed people will withdraw from the despotism and head to churches where Christ spiritually nurtures them through Bible exposition.

(5) Yet, such a mini-Great-Tribulation-era will pressure even **good** leaders: *some* government, business, media and church leaders are **good**, but oppressed people tend to distrust **all** leaders, making life hard for the **good** leaders.

***Need:*** *So we ask, "If we are set to face a mini-Great-Tribulation-era of evil, tyrannical leaders where oppressed folk will tend to distrust all leaders, how are good leaders and past oppressed, distrusting subordinates to coexist?"*

- I. During the growing apostasy of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, so many bad leaders arose that even a devout believer in God came to slander His true prophet Elisha, claiming he lied to her, 2 Kings 4:8-16:**
  - A. Shortly after the Northern Kingdom of Israel had split from the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Israel's king Jeroboam formed a syncretism, a mixture of pagan belief and the worship of God, 1 Kings 12:26-33.
  - B. That syncretism enhanced deception in Israel, seen in how an old prophet of God in Israel misled a younger prophet God sent from Judah to pronounce judgment against Jeroboam's syncretism, and the younger prophet believed the old prophet's lie so as to sin to where God sent a lion to kill the younger prophet, 1 Kings 13:1-32.
  - C. Amid such great apostasy, even a devout believer in God came to slander His true prophet, 2 Kings 4:8-16:
    1. A woman of the town of Shunem and her husband built a guest room on their roof for God's prophet Elisha who often traveled past their home, 2 Kings 4:8-11; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 2 Kings 4:10.
    2. To reward her hospitality, Elisha predicted she would bear a son, 2 Kings 4:12-16a.
    3. The Shunammite woman's husband was old, and though there was a Biblical precedent in Sarah's bearing a Abraham a son in his old age, the Shunammite said Elisha lied in his prophecy, 2 Kings 4:14, 16b. She did not use the more gentle verb *shalah*, "mislead" (B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 1017), but *kazav*, "lie" (Ibid., p. 469)! In other words, she as a devout believer in God, slandered God's prophet!
- II. Such slander countered God's will that Elisha be viewed as His true prophet, so the Lord upheld Elisha's credibility before the Shunammite woman and gave her a fiery trial to enforce it, 2 Kings 4:17-37:**
  - A. First, the Lord upheld Elisha's credibility before the Shunammite woman by fulfilling his prophecy that she would bear a son, for she conceived by her husband and gave birth to a baby boy, 2 Kings 4:17.
  - B. However, her slanderous charge against Elisha, God's true prophet, had to be corrected, so the Lord used a severe trial in her life to impress her to change her errant view and accept Elisha's credibility, 2 Kings 4:18-37:
    1. Some years later, the woman's son suffered what may have been a sunstroke as he was in the harvest field with his father, so he was taken home to his mother where he died on her lap, 2 Kings 4:18-20.
    2. The Shunammite woman then took her son's body and laid it on Elisha's bed, hoping he would raise her boy like Elisha's mentor Elijah had raised the widow of Zarephath's son, 2 Kings 4:21; 1 Kings 17:19-24.

3. The Shunammite then made a hurried 25-mile trip by donkey to Mount Carmel to meet Elisha and ask him to raise her son from the dead, 2 Kings 4:22-25a; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Kings 4:25.
4. Elisha saw her approach from a distance, but he did not know why she wanted to meet him, for the Lord had not told him about her son's death. Since she had disbelieved the credibility of God's prophet, the Lord had bypassed using him to deal directly with the woman in a severe, personal trial, 2 Kings 4:25b-27.
5. When the Shunammite woman met Elisha, she grasped his feet in emotional anguish and asked, "Did I desire a son of my lord? Did I now say, Do not deceive me?" (2 Kings 4:28 KJV)
6. Her word "deceive" here is the **softer** verb, "*shalah*," meaning "mislead" (Ibid., B. D. B., p. 1017), so she had realized that Elisha was not a blatant liar since his prediction about her having a son had been fulfilled. However, she *still* doubted his **credibility**, for she though he was misleading her in that her son had died!
7. By her words, Elisha knew the **Lord** was working in the woman regarding her doubts about his credibility, so he responded to her words by seeking to elicit her confession as to his credibility as God's true prophet:
  - a. In her hearing, Elisha told his servant Gehazi to take his staff and go and lay it on the face of the boy **as if the staff had magic power as in Canaanite paganism**, 2 Kings 4:29; Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to 2 Kings 4:31.
  - b. Elisha was testing to see whether the Shunammite woman would **reject** the **magical** use of Elisha's staff in **faith** that he was a **true** prophet, not a false prophet of Jeroboam's syncretism who used pagan magic!
8. The woman passed the test: she stated what Elisha himself had told Elijah back in 2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6: "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." (2 Kings 4:30a) She implied that **ONLY if Elisha IN PERSON interacted with her son's body like Elisha's CREDIBLE MENTOR Elijah did with the body of the son of the widow of Zarephath would her own son be raised! Thus, she wanted to STAY WITH Elisha, God's TRUE prophet, until God had used him IN PERSON to raise her son!**
9. Elisha then followed the woman on foot as she rode her donkey home (2 Kings 4:30b), and on their way, the returning Gehazi met them to report that use of Elisha's staff had not raised the boy, 2 Kings 4:31.
10. Arriving at his bed where the boy's body lay, much like Elijah had done, Elisha prayed, prostrated himself on the body and rose to walk around until God raised the boy to life, 2 Kings 4:32-35; 1 Kings 17:21-22.
11. Elisha then called for the Shunammite woman, and when she arrived, he told her to take up her son, v. 36.
12. She entered the room and fell down at Elisha's feet, bowing herself low to express deep thanksgiving and respect to Elisha as God's true, credible prophet, 2 Kings 4:37a.
13. Then, the Shunammite woman arose, took up her son and went out to enjoy God's blessing, 2 Kings 4:37b.

***Lesson:*** *In an era where distrust of oppressive, godless leaders so was rampant that even the Shunammite woman, a devout believer in God, slandered the Lord's true prophet Elisha, he did not become defensive, but just followed God's leading in ministry until the Lord worked in the woman by a trial to correct her errant view of himself.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) If God calls us to a role of leadership in the predicted mini-Great-Tribulation-era, may we NOT become defensive if believers who have been oppressed distrust us, but just follow God's leading and let Him prove our credibility to others to protect HIS interests in us! (3) If God lets us face a trial that exposes our error of distrusting a godly leader, may we correct our view for blessing.*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . . )

(1) In contrast to the wrongs that we have recently witnessed in the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings, Scripture gives guidance on avoiding such wrongs in **any** human institution in Deuteronomy 19:15-19 KJV as follows: "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established . . . If a false witness rise up . . . the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness . . . Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you."

Though we cannot control what occurs in other institutions, we **can** affect what we do here in our Church. We thus need to heed Deuteronomy 19:15-19 in avoiding unjust slander and upholding righteousness in our body!

(2) On news we keep receiving about worldliness, carnality, spiritual blindness, lack of faith and ecumenism in evangelicalism under various despotic overseers and tyrannical leaders in the government-media-business-religious complex, we as a Church need to heed Christ's call to keep ministering God's Word and living by the Spirit's power as Christ in Revelation 3:21 directs. The Lord will thus fulfill His Word to bless us and make us a blessing to others.

**May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we then heed God's leading as leaders and subordinates!**