

## 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

#### D. Heeding God's Messages Through His Biblical Messengers

#### (1 Kings 14:1-20)

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

We learned in our last message in this series that we must heed God's words above man's words, but one can go to the other extreme and disregard the message of God's biblical messenger as if they were just a man's words:

(1) This occurs in the secular realm: Robert M. Thorson, a professor at UCONN's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, in his recent column, "Winter Nor'easters Washing Cape Cod Away" (The Hartford Courant, March 15, 2018, p. A11) claimed that "planetary warming" is causing "(l)ocal sea levels" to rise "faster than expected" so that in "the next few thousand years . . . much of Cape Cod and the islands will disappear, one storm-bite at a time." Contemplating this thought left Professor Thorson lamenting, "I'm already grieving the human losses . . ."

However, were he and many who hold to "climate change" ideology to believe God's messengers, the writers of Scripture, they could rejoice that the earth's climate will remain moderate and stable enough for man to exist as long as the earth remains, that the rapture of the Church is near after which comes the 7-year Great Tribulation when the earth's crust will be upheaved followed by Christ's environmentally friendly, 1,000-year Messianic Kingdom followed in turn by the eternal environmental bliss of a new universe. Instead of grieving over the loss of Cape Cod in several thousand years, they could trust in Christ to be saved and enjoy great environmental blessings in the future!

(2) This occurs in evangelical realms, too: last Sunday, one of our members told me that many professing believers he knows left the church they once attended because its pastor preached on a subject that critiqued something in their lives, so they felt the pastor held something against them! According to this member, the pastor was just preaching from the Bible, so these people mistook God's message for the words of a man with a grudge!

Need: So, we ask, "*How can we recognize God's true messages from His biblical messengers?!*"

- I. We before learned that God sent a man from Judah to denounce Jeroboam's syncretism, 1 Kings 13:1-3.
- II. Then, to verify this message was from God by His messenger, God biblically fulfilled two prophecies:
  - A. God verified the prophet's denunciation of Jeroboam's syncretism by immediately causing the altar at Bethel to split and spill out its ashes, all in line with the prophet's prediction that this would then occur, 1 Kings 13:3-5.
  - B. The Lord again verified the prophet's denunciation of Jeroboam's syncretism by slaying that same prophet for disobeying His order not to fellowship with anyone in Israel: God used a lion to kill him and had the lion quietly stand by his body and donkey to reveal God had slain the prophet for sin, 1 Kings 13:11-24. In this way, his initial denunciation of Jeroboam's syncretism was also validated before others, 1 Kings 13:25-32.
  - C. Such prophecy fulfillments were the Deuteronomy 18:21-22 *biblical* way of showing one was God's prophet.
- III. However, Jeroboam did not heed God's denunciation of his syncretism, but sinned even more, v. 33-34.
- IV. The *CAUSE* of Jeroboam's refusal to heed God's censure was his *SYNCRETISTIC USE* of the *PAGAN BELIEF* that *HE COULD MANIPULATE* a *DEITY* and *HIS MESSENGERS*, 1 Kings 13:4-7; 14:1-4:
  - A. Ancient pagans believed in a pantheon of many gods that were fickle and who conflicted with one another and with a great chaos monster, that his monster had to be countered by magical incantations and cultic rituals to keep the current creative order from being destroyed, Bruce K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 1974, p. 40-71.
  - B. Thus, pagan man lived in insecurity, feeling the need to manipulate the gods and their messengers to insure the preservation of a stable world order, and this belief is evident in Jeroboam's interaction with God's prophets:
    1. While speaking with God's prophet from Judah, Jeroboam had tried to manipulate him as in paganism:
      - a. Jeroboam's pointing at the prophet to arrest him for denouncing his syncretism and God's then withering Jeroboam's hand led him to beg the prophet to ask *his* [the prophet's] God to heal him, 1 Kings 13:4, 6.
      - b. Once healed, Jeroboam tried to get the prophet from Judah to eat with him and to reward him for his healing, exposing a pagan bent to manipulate the prophet versus honoring God for His grace, 1 Kings 13:7.
    2. Again, as in paganism, when his son Abijah was ill, Jeroboam sent his wife disguised as another woman to God's prophet Ahijah with gifts to manipulate him to predict his son would be healed, 1 Kings 14:1-4.
- V. Hence, God had His prophet Ahijah condemn Jeroboam's dynasty to be destroyed, 1 Kings 14:5-20:
  - A. The Lord countered Jeroboam's pagan effort to manipulate His prophet Ahijah by giving Ahijah insight into the deception of Jeroboam's wife so that Ahijah, though blind, could expose her deception, 1 Kings 14:5-6b.

- B. God then had Ahijah give Jeroboam's wife a message of judgment for Jeroboam's apostasy, 1 Kings 14:6c-16:
1. Ahijah explained that it was the Lord Who had raised up Jeroboam to be king, but that Jeroboam had failed to obey God unlike David before him, that Jeroboam had made false gods in a religious syncretism, thus disrespectfully casting God, the Sovereign Creator of the universe, behind his back, 1 Kings 14:6c-9.
  2. Thus, the Lord would cause all the males in Jeroboam's house to be slain and disrespectfully left unburied except for the ailing Abijah who would be buried since God saw some good in him, 1 Kings 14:10-11, 13.
  3. The Lord would raise up another man to destroy Jeroboam's household, and eventually send the Northern Kingdom of Israel into national captivity for following Jeroboam's syncretistic idolatry, 1 Kings 14:14-16.
  4. Ahijah also added that as soon as Jeroboam's wife entered the city on her return home, her son Abijah would die, a sign that the rest of this prophecy by Abijah would later be fulfilled, 1 Kings 14:12.

**VI. Once again, God gave an IMMEDIATE fulfillment of Ahijah's prophecy to verify that his message was from God, for when the feet of Jeroboam's wife came to the threshold of the door of their home, her son Abijah died in fulfillment of the prediction from the Lord spoken by Ahijah, 1 Kings 14:17. The son was also buried in accord with another prediction by the prophet Ahijah (1 Kings 14:18).**

**VII. Jeroboam still did not repent! He fought wars, and after ruling for 22 years, he died, 1 Kings 14:19-20!**

***Lesson:** By mixing paganism with Biblical truth to form an idolatrous religious syncretism, Jeroboam adopted the pagan view that God and His prophets could be manipulated, causing Jeroboam to retain a rebellious attitude toward Israel's Sovereign, Righteous God and attempt to manipulate God and His true prophets. The Lord condemned Jeroboam and his house to be destroyed and Israel who followed his syncretism to go into captivity.*

***Application:** To recognize God's true messages from His biblical messengers, (1) may we trust in Christ to be saved from sin (John 3:16) that we might be indwelt by the discerning Holy Spirit (1 John 2:18-27). (2) Then, (a) may we not try to manipulate God and his biblical messengers, for God is all-powerful, all-knowing, righteous and sovereign over all, including His messengers (Ephesians 3:20; Hebrews 4:13; Deuteronomy 32:4b), that we then (b) utilize Scripture, the "mouth of the Lord" (our last lesson) in every circumstance involved to discern (i) both His biblical messengers (ii) as well as God's true messages by His biblical messengers!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . . )

I wish to illustrate here how applying this sermon can equip us to discern true from errant messages by way of carefully evaluating those messages in light of Scripture, and that goes for evaluating **anyone's** messages (as follows):

For example, I recommend the Ryrie Study Bible as the best study Bible on the market today! I knew Dr. Ryrie in seminary, I use my copy of his Bible extensively, and I really appreciate his notes. However, I *strongly* disagree with his footnote at James 2:21 where he wrote, "In Paul's writings, 'justification' means to declare a sinner righteous in the sight of God; here in James it means 'to vindicate' or 'show to be righteous' before God and men . . ."

Here are my reasons: (1) Dr. Ryrie's definition for "justification" in James 2 leaves James teaching that the **works of people vindicate THEMSELVES** to be **righteous**, a works salvation! (2) Besides, James 2:23 KJV uses the definition Paul uses of "justification" when James cites Genesis 15:6 where "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness," for that Genesis 15:6 "justification" was by faith, not by works! (3) Since James could not have used a different **definition** of justification than Paul, the claims in James 2:21, 24 and 25 that people are "justified by **works**" *must be* a **POTENT figure of speech** known as a *metonymy of the verb* where the **EVIDENCE** of being justified in the form of **works** is **EXCHANGED** for the **DECLARATION** of being justified. (E. W. Bullinger, Fig. Of Spch. Used In The Bib., 1968, p. 570-572) James taught the need for **works** to give **evidence** of one's being *graciously justified by God*, **not** to show **people** as *vindicating themselves* by **works**, a **works salvation!**

In support of this view, at James 2:14 where James asks, "can faith save him" and in v. 17 where he claims, "faith, if it hath not works, is dead," James uses the article, **he** before "faith" in both cases to mean "**the** faith," i. e., the **kind** of "faith" that gives no evidence of being **real** by its resulting lack of works. (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 783-784) James was contrasting an artificial faith that lacked resulting works with a true faith that produced them.

I with Dr. Ryrie and many Protestant commentators conclude that James was emphasizing the **evidences** of justification in righteous works, but I cannot agree with their claim that James used a different **definition** for "justify" than Paul, for doing so produces the errant position that people are justified by their works versus Paul's definition, and James himself **had** to have had the same definition as Paul did or he would not have written James 2:23!

**May we trust in Christ to be saved. Then, may we not try to manipulate God or His servants, but obey God's message as discerned by noting from Scripture His biblically certified messengers who give His message!**