

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

A. Following God's Examples To Qualify For Ministry

(2 Kings 2:1-18)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many in Christendom are not closely following the overseers and examples that Scripture's God has provided:

(1) The Roman Catholic Church claims Peter as its first pope, but it does not heed his words in 1 Peter 1:15 ESV that reads: "(B)ut as he [God] who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct," for "Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano . . . has . . . accused . . . Popes Benedict XVI and Francis of covering up for ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick . . . whose penchant for sleeping with seminarians was apparently an open secret in some church circles for over a decade . . . Vigano insisted Francis must resign, given the . . . McCarrick scandal . . . and a string of other gay sex abuse and cover-up cases . . . that have implicated several of Francis' top advisers." (Nicole Winfield, "Both accuser, pope 'serene' amid controversy," Republican-American, August 31, 2018, p. 6D)

(2) Protestants have problems, too: though Puritans started Harvard University in 1638 to train men as pastors (The Rebirth of America, The Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, 1986, p. 41), a Christian group on campus earlier this year was "branded discriminatory" and "defunded" by school officials for dismissing its student leader "when she revealed that she was in a same sex relationship." (Mike LaChance, "Christianity Under Fire at Harvard," April 10, 2018; legalinsurrection.com) The morals of the Biblical Christian faith have now been opposed by Harvard officials!

(3) Locally, though Paul in 2 Timothy 4:1-2 charged pastors to "Preach the Word," several newcomers to our Church report that it's hard to find even an evangelical church in our area whose pastor preaches from the Bible's text!

Need: *So we ask, "In view of what occurs today, is it even important to follow the lead of God's past overseers?!"*

- I. Elisha closely followed God's appointed spiritual overseer for him in Elijah, and hence he closely followed God Himself opposite what other prophets of the Lord did, 2 Kings 2:1-7; 1 Kings 19:16b-21:**
 - A. After God had told Elijah to anoint Elisha to be his successor as prophet (1 Kings 19:16b, 19), Elijah had found Elisha and thrown his mantel over him, indicating God's call that Elisha fill his role, 1 Kings 19:20-21.
 - B. Elisha then closely followed Elijah, seen in his actions just before God took Elijah to heaven, 2 Kings 2:1-7: though Elijah three times asked Elisha to stay behind while God had Elijah to go elsewhere, Elisha refused to leave Elijah (2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6) and though other prophets twice told Elisha that God would take his master from him that day, Elisha told them to remain quiet, for he focused on closely following Elijah, 2 Kings 2:3, 5.
 - C. In sharp contrast, the prophets in training by their questions to Elisha revealed their focus in one's being promoted to head prophet instead of focusing on closely following their master Elijah, 2 Kings 2:3, 5.
- II. God thus gave Elisha instead of the other prophets Elijah's office and spiritual power, 2 Kings 2:8-15:**
 - A. In his final miracle, Elijah struck the Jordan River with his mantel, parting it so that he and Elisha could cross over on dry ground, 2 Kings 2:8. This miracle was meant to kindle Elisha's appetite for Elijah's power.
 - B. When Elijah then asked Elisha what blessing he wanted from Elijah before he went to heaven, Elisha asked for a "double portion" of Elijah's spirit, what culturally meant the eldest son's share as heir to his father's estate, 2 Kings 2:9 with Deuteronomy 21:17; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Kings 2:9.
 - C. Elijah replied that God would grant Elisha's request **IF** he **SAW** Elijah being *taken up to heaven* (2 Kings 2:10), ***what would require Elisha to CONTINUE FOLLOWING Elijah CLOSELY!***
 - D. Elisha kept following Elijah closely and saw God take him to heaven in a whirlwind accompanied by a chariot and horses of fire, 2 Kings 2:11. Elisha tore his clothes in grief upon losing Elijah, crying out that Elijah had been a one-man army, defending Israel from God's destructive judgment in his ministry, 2 Kings 2:12.
 - E. Elisha then took Elijah's mantel that had fallen to the earth and struck the Jordan with it, asking God to part it, and the Lord parted the Jordan for Elisha as he had done for Elijah, that Elisha might cross it, 2 Kings 2:13-14.
 - F. The onlooking prophets in training who witnessed this miracle then acknowledged Elisha's promotion to Elijah's head prophet office, so they bowed before Elisha, signifying their submission to him, 2 Kings 2:15.
- III. In addition, the other prophets' persistent lack of closely following even new master Elisha further vindicated God's choice of Elisha versus any of them to take Elijah's place, 2 Kings 2:16-18:**
 - A. The prophets in training asked Elisha if they might search for Elijah, saying that God might have brought him down on some hill or in some valley, disbelieving God's revelation of taking Elijah to heaven, 2 Kings 2:16a.

- B. Elisha initially forbade them, but they nagged him until he let them perform the search (2 Kings 2:16b-17a).
- C. When they returned in 3 days without finding Elijah, Elisha rebuked their not heeding him, 2 Kings 2:17b-18.
- D. These prophets *STILL* did not heed God's revelation nor even His new head prophet Elisha, revealing God's justice in not promoting any of them to be His new head prophet, but choosing Elisha instead!

IV. Significantly, the pattern of God's choosing one who closely followed a credible spiritual predecessor to be used of God in his generation is repeated in Israel's history going back to Abraham:

- A. Elisha's use of Elijah's mantel to part the Jordan by faith occurred after he closely followed Elijah so that he could use Elijah's mantel to repeat Elijah's last miracle of parting the Jordan with that mantel, 2 Kings 2:8-14.
- B. Then, Elijah's parting of the Jordan in faith to cross it on dry ground recalls his predecessor Joshua's ministry of seeing God part the Jordan for Israel to cross it on dry ground to enter the Promised Land, Joshua 3:1-4:24.
- C. Joshua's crossing of the Jordan in turn recalls his predecessor Moses who by faith led Israel to cross the Red Sea on dry ground in God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt during the Exodus, cf. Exodus 14:1-31.
- D. Then, Moses' ministry of influencing Pharaoh by faith recalls his predecessor Joseph's influence on Pharaoh by faith, and Moses' parents, seeing he was a beautiful child like Joseph, by faith hid Moses in an ark on the Nile River to be taken to Pharaoh's palace where Joseph went, Ex. 2:1-10; Gen. 39:6; 41:1-47:31; Heb. 11:23.
- E. Joseph then interpreted Pharaoh's dream by faith for direction (Gen. 41:1-57), recalling his father Jacob's dream and vision from God that directed him in inheriting in the Abrahamic Covenant, Gen. 28:10-22; 46:2-4.
- F. Then, Jacob's believing God's vision recalls his father Isaac's vision of promise from the Lord, Genesis 26:1-5.
- G. Isaac's faith in God's vision recalls God's great vision of promise to Abraham for his faith in Genesis 15:1-21.

Lesson: *God's promoting and empowering Elisha for Elijah's office was His reward for Elisha's closely following his godly example Elijah, what indicated that Elisha also closely followed the Lord. This pattern of God's rewarding men for following godly examples occurred down through Israel's history dating back to Abraham.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ to have eternal life, John 3:16. (2) May we (a) realize that God wants us closely to follow the lead of the godly examples and overseers He assigns us, what also reflects how well we follow the Lord HIMSELF, (b) that we then closely follow those over us in the Lord. (c) Only then will God view us as candidates for promotions to greater spiritual influence and power in His ministry.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We apply the lesson of this message to the issues introduced in our sermon introduction above (as follows):

(1) On the scandals in the Roman Catholic Church's hierarchy, (a) the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:1-2 of the Bible urged exercising church discipline on immoral men in the church, and the Vatican needs to practice this!

Also, (b) the Catholic Church's alleged first "pope" Peter in Acts 15:7-11 taught that God justifies men by faith, "purifying their hearts by faith" (v. 9), that one should **not** put a "yoke upon the neck of the disciples" such as the works of the Law "which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear," v. 10. The Roman Catholic Church should thus do away with its sacraments of works for salvation and hold to faith alone for justification like Peter taught.

(2) On the problem noted at Harvard University, the school must return to its Puritan roots and heed its 1646 "Rules and Precepts" that was binding for its students, for part of it states: "Every one shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that they be ready to give an account of their proficiency therein, both in theoretical observations of languages and logic, and in practical and spiritual truth . . ." (Ibid., The Rebirth of America)

In those Scriptures, Harvard's officials and students will read from Leviticus 18:22; Jude 7; Genesis 19:1-5; Romans 1:24-32 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 that homosexuality is an abominable sin, but that one can be cleansed and released from it by faith in Jesus Christ for salvation! Harvard needs to heed its Puritan forefathers and their Bible!

(3) On the problem of churches in our area not preaching from the Bible's text, one of my spiritual forefathers, Dr. John G. Mitchell of the Multnomah School of the Bible, in his article, "The vanishing art of expository preaching" (Moody Monthly, 1977, p. 41-43) lamented: "The neglected gift in the gospel ministry today is the gift of expository preaching and teaching." He explained what this entailed, claiming, "Expository teaching is expounding the Word of God -- exposing it to the minds and hearts and lives of God's people. It is preaching the truth in the light of the context. It's giving the content of what's in the passage." (Ibid.) The Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:1-2 NIV urged Timothy to do the same thing: "Preach the word," proclaim the content of the Scriptures, and "correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction." Regardless what other churches in our area do, we will closely heed Dr. Mitchell and the Apostle Paul and preach applicational messages from the contents of the Bible's text.

May we trust in Christ to be saved. May we closely heed the spiritual leaders God gives us for blessing.