

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

C. Persistently Trusting God And His Word For Persistent Blessing

(2 Kings 3:1-27)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

There is a trend today to *cease* viewing God and Scripture as **sufficient** for meeting man's spiritual needs:

(1) This trend exists in the secular realm: "(A) team of 33 respected scientists has concluded that . . . octopus genes 'are likely new extraterrestrial imports to Earth,' arriving on a comet or meteorite, 'most plausibly as an already coherent group of functioning genes within (say) [frozen] . . . fertilized octopus eggs'" (Answers, September-October, 2018, p. 29-30, citing Progress in Biophysics and Molecular Biology, August 2018), for "(o)ctopuses are genetically so diverse from their supposed nautiloid ancestors, that it is highly unlikely they could have evolved their high intelligence and astounding camouflage abilities in the few million years supposedly available" on Earth, *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Thirty-three respected scientists will not allow for a divine origin of the octopus as claimed in the Bible, so with their inability to explain its evolutionary development on planet Earth, they claim it evolved somewhere else in deep space and was brought here on a comet or a meteorite in the form of frozen, fertilized octopus eggs!

(2) The trend to cease viewing God and Scripture as sufficient for man's spiritual needs exists in evangelical circles, too: in his latest book, Gospel Reset: Salvation Made Relevant, 2018, that is being sent to America's churches, Ken Ham who heads the Answers in Genesis ministry on page 124 wrote: "(I)ncreasing numbers of people no longer see the Bible as relevant, and so they reject its morality and salvation. The church is telling people, 'Trust in Jesus' . . . but . . . (f)or the Church to be successful, it needs to . . . start teaching some aspects of geology, biology, anthropology, etc., in its sermons, Bible classes, youth groups, Sunday schools, and other church programs."

Yet, for years we have taught that the Gospel is the "power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16), that it is **sufficient** for evangelism as we rely on God the Holy Spirit for power (2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14; 2:1-2), that Scripture and relying on God the Holy Spirit are **sufficient** to disciple and that we do not need anything more (2 Timothy 3:14-17). For years we have heeded the Apostle Paul's 2 Timothy 4:1-2 directive to "Preach the Word," not the Word plus something else. Nevertheless, Ken Ham now claims we must teach science along with the Gospel and Scripture to make the Gospel and Scripture believable, that the Gospel and Scripture are not themselves sufficient to disciple!

Need: *So we ask, "Should we use other resources along with relying on the Holy Spirit, Scripture and the Gospel to succeed in discipling people in today's world or should we persist in doing what we have been doing all along?!"*

- I. Jehoram began life by not trusting in God, leading to a livelihood crisis for his coalition, 2 Kings 3:1-10:**
 - A. Jehoram tried to fight Moab without trusting in God for help, what led to a livelihood crisis, 2 Kings 3:1-9:
 1. Instead of following the Lord, Jehoram held to Jeroboam's religious syncretism, 2 Kings 3:1-3.
 2. When Moab then rebelled against him, Jehoram sought the help of Judah's king Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom who was subject to Jehoshaphat (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 542), and this coalition approached Moab from its less fortified southern side by way of the southern, desert end of the salty Dead Sea, v. 4-9a.
 3. That left the coalition running out of drinking water, creating a livelihood crisis, 2 Kings 3:9b.
 - B. Jehoram wrongly blamed God for the crisis though he had never sought God's assistance, 2 Kings 3:10, 1-3!
- II. However, when Jehoram then sought God's help, the Lord graciously, abundantly provided, v. 11-25:**
 - A. Jehoshaphat urged Jehoram to consult a godly prophet for God's help, and since Elisha was nearby, Jehoram, Jehoshaphat and Edom's king together went to speak with Elisha about obtaining God's help, 2 Kings 3:11-12.
 - B. Elisha did not even want to speak with wicked Jehoram, but since good king Jehoshaphat was present, Elisha decided to consult the Lord for a solution to the livelihood crisis the coalition faced, 2 Kings 3:13-15.
 - C. God in abundant grace offered to be all Jehoram's coalition needed for its entire mission, 2 Kings 3:16-19:
 1. The Lord first offered supernaturally to supply water in the desert without use of a storm, 2 Kings 3:16-17.
 2. He went beyond Jehoram's initial request for water to offer him great victory over Moab, 2 Kings 3:18-19.
 - D. God then miraculously sent water and used it to lure the Moabites into being defeated by Jehoram, v. 20-23:
 1. God sent water flowing from the Edomite desert early in the morning, solving the livelihood crisis, and the reflection of the early sunlight off of the water's surface looked red like flowing blood to Moab, v. 20-23a.
 2. Believing that Israel's coalition had then massacred each other, the Moabites rushed toward the coalition camp to take spoil, not prepared for battle so that the coalition was able to start defeating them, v. 23b-25.

- III. Nevertheless, though God through Elisha had offered to give Jehoram victory, his fear of rousing the Moabite army or its god instead of *PERSISTENTLY* trusting God led to failure in his mission, v. 26-27:**
- A. In response to the progress Israel's coalition had begun to make against him in battle, Moab's king first tried to break through what he believed was the coalition's weakest part, the Edomite line of soldiers, 2 Kings 3:26.
 - B. When this effort failed, the desperate Moabite king offered up his eldest son and heir to the throne as a burnt offering to his pagan god on his besieged city's wall in view of all of the soldiers in the battle, 2 Kings 3:27a.
 - C. Jehoram feared this extreme act might rouse the fury of Moab's soldiers or their god and cause his coalition to be defeated, so *instead of persisting in his newly-exercised trust in God*, Jehoram *faithlessly* withdrew his coalition's siege and returned home, 2 Kings 3:27b; Ryrie Study Bib., KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Kings 3:26-27.
 - D. The Moabite king recorded this event as a victory for him, which record exists in the archaeological find known as the Moabite Stone, *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 543; Zon. Pict. Enc. Bib., v. Four, p. 266-267.

Lesson: *For not persisting to trust in God, Jehoram failed to be persistently blessed: he trusted the Lord to see Him meet his livelihood needs en route to the battle, but he failed to persist in faith so as to succeed in his mission!*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) May we persist in the Holy Spirit's power (Romans 8:3-4) to keep believing God's promises in Scripture on meeting our needs. (3) Applied to the issues in our introduction, may we persist in believing (a) Scripture (2 Timothy 3:14-17) and (b) the Gospel (Romans 1:16) to be sufficient for discipling (c) as we rely on the Holy Spirit's power by faith to disciple others.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

On the subject of Ken Ham's new book that we mentioned in our introduction, reputable men of God urge us to *persist* in holding to the sufficiency of the Gospel and Scripture for discipling, and we cite them (as follows):

(1) In an article about an interview he had with Dr. John C. Whitcomb, "one of the towering theologians of our times" and coauthor of The Genesis Flood (1961) that "sparked the modern creation movement," the Editor in Chief of Answers in Genesis' magazine, Answers, Mike Matthews, reported how Dr. Whitcomb "believed that the church's greatest need was for believers to start all their thinking and witnessing with the Bible. We make a grave mistake, Dr. Whitcomb believes, if we think we need to prove the Bible's validity from outside sources so people will consider what it says. 'Self-authenticating' is a technical term for the Bible's power to speak for itself. It's its own final authority. It doesn't require an outside reference to prove its certainty." (Mike Matthews, "Why Genesis Still Matters: Our Conversation With John C. Whitcomb," Answers, November-December, 2017, p. 74-75)

Mr. Matthews noted that Dr. Whitcomb practiced this belief, for "(t)hroughout the interview," he "kept going back to the Bible for answers, instinctively. When I would press him to elaborate on the most effective arguments to convince people, he kept opening his Bible and emphasizing God's grace and the power of his Word," *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Dr. Whitcomb also said that believers in Christ "need help . . . We need the Holy Spirit who wrote the Bible," who "intercedes for us . . . to purge us from false thinking, to illumine us with God's truth." (*Ibid.*, p. 76)

(2) Also, the late Dr. Bolton Davidheiser, Ph. D. in Zoology with a specialty in Genetics from Johns Hopkins University gave "A Personal Testimony" in his book, Evolution and Christian Faith, 1976, that had a supportive Foreword by Dr. Charles C. Ryrie of the Dallas Theological Seminary. Dr. Davidheiser there told how he came to trust in Christ as his Savior in a Church service though still believing evolution to be true. He reported that the pastor "preached a simple gospel message of salvation by grace, and that evening I found myself saying, 'I believe that,' to everything he said. This surprised me for I had said many times that I could not believe unless someone would first disprove evolution to me. But there I was, agreeing with everything he said and telling myself I believed it."

Dr. Davidheiser added that later while doing cancer research in Baltimore, he had access to a good library and did some reading in Biological Abstracts and then he read them in the scientific journals, but he was "surprised to find" that things he had taken "as assured were not so sure after all," *Ibid.* He wrote, "The more I read the more amazed I became. As evolution had been the great stumblingblock in my life, I felt a desire to aid others who might have the same problem. Evolution is commonly presented to the public as proved beyond any real doubt. It is good to know something of the "other side" of the evolution problem, and I have tried to do that in my writing and speaking. ***But this is not enough. It is the preaching of the gospel that leads to salvation.***" (*Ibid.*; emphases ours)

May we trust in Christ Who died for our sin, was buried and bodily rose from the dead that we might have eternal life, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. Then, may we PERSIST in believing God's promises that this Gospel is sufficient for evangelizing (Romans 1:16) and that Scripture is sufficient for discipling (2 Timothy 3:14-17) as we rely on the Holy Spirit for insight and power in ministering God's Word. (2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14; 2:1-2)