

## 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

##### I. Discipling Spiritually Dysfunctional People Impacted By An Apostate Era (2 Kings 6:1-7)

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

Last Sunday after our evening service, a Church member approached me to express concern over the hatred that had led to the shooting at a Pittsburgh synagogue and the national division and lawlessness that existed over the illegal immigrant caravan from Central America that was making its way north to our nation's border with Mexico.

This member's concern was not alone: in recent years, whenever another mass shooting or another issue of national political divisiveness like an election or an immigration crisis arises, even long-time members have expressed concern over current events. Each time we clarify that Christ in Revelation 3:21 predicted a mini-Great-Tribulation for our era of Church History where oppressed people will be driven to Bible teaching ministries for spiritual balm! Nevertheless, even long-time members struggle with ongoing unsettledness in the wake such events.

Thus, it would be edifying for us to know **how** God expects us as a Church to *disciple* people in view of such circumstances, and we have a pattern for that in 2 Kings 6:1-7 in its context -- a pattern set by the prophet Elisha.

Need: *So we ask, "If we face an era of unsettling apostasy, HOW are we effectively to minister in it, and WHY?!"*

- I. **Elisha had to disciple student prophets who were unsettled by the apostasy of their era, what had led to their low level of faith in God, anxiety and even spiritually dysfunctional insubordination to Elisha:**
  - A. Due to the impact of apostasy, the student prophets feared that when God had taken Elijah up by means of a whirlwind, He might have dropped him out of the sky, killing Elijah so that his body lay unburied on the earth:
    1. The phrase in 2 Kings 2:16 that starts with the word "lest" joins the conjunction *pen* with the perfect form of the verb "*nasa*" ("lift, carry, take") to express **fear** that God may have dropped Elijah's body so that the prophets needed to retrieve it to bury it, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 814-815, 669-672.
    2. Such **fear** indicated a *distrust* in God as being a **Good** God Who would never mistreat His godly prophet by dropping him from the sky to kill him, and this **unbiblical** fear had risen from the influence of pagan apostasy that held all deities to be fickle tyrants, Bruce K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 1974, p. 57-65:
      - a. When Jeroboam instituted his syncretism in Israel, mixing belief in God with paganism (1 Kings 12:25-33), it led the nation to hold that God Himself was to a degree erratic and oppressive like any pagan deity.
      - b. The student prophets had thus been affected by Jeroboam's syncretism, leading to their low level of trust in God as being a Good God and thus also of their limited trust in his messenger Elisha, what in turned fueled their anxiety over what God may have done with their late master Elijah's body.
  - B. When the student prophets then nagged Elisha to let them search for Elijah's body (2 Kings 2:11, 17), Elisha realized that they were spiritually insubordinately dysfunctional, not inclined to obey him, 2 Kings 2:17-18.
- II. **Accordingly, Elisha had to use cautious care in discipling the student prophets, and the events in 2 Kings 6:1-7 shows how he wisely disciplined these men in view of their spiritually insubordinate dysfunction:**
  - A. Elisha initially excelled in what the student prophets would accept from him -- his miracles and teaching, v. 1:
    1. The KJV phrase "the place where we dwell with thee" translated **literally** is "the place where we sit before your face" (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 566), alluding to Elisha's teaching the sons of the prophets in a **classroom**.
    2. Elisha's miracles especially in helping the student prophets by increasing the student prophet widow's oil, purifying their stew and increasing their loaves (2 Kings 4:1-7, 38-41, 42-44) and teaching had attracted so many men, they ran out of class space, Ryrie S. B., KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Kings 6:1; B. K. C., O. T., p. 549.
    3. Thus, Elisha strongly emphasized his miracles and teaching, what the student prophets gladly accepted.
  - B. However, Elisha then coupled his miracles and teaching effort with **waiting** for the student prophets to **learn** by **trial-and-error** of **their need** to **OBEY his OVERSIGHT for their own welfare**, 2 Kings 6:2-7:
    1. Elisha let the student prophets take the initiative in addressing the need of the classroom's lack of space:
      - a. As the teacher, Elisha would have long before realized the classroom was filling up, but he did not take the initiative to direct that they build a larger building since the sons of the prophets were really not subject to his leadership as seen in the 2 Kings 2 incident regarding their insistence on searching for Elijah's body.
      - b. Thus, Elisha waited for the students see their need for more room and approach him on it, 2 Kings 6:1.
    2. Elisha let the student prophets initiate building plans to address the lack of classroom space, 2 Kings 6:2:

- a. The Jordan River lowland had a "jungle" of trees free for the taking, Ibid., Z. P. E. B., v. Three, p. 691.
- b. Since mobilizing all the young male student prophets to chop down trees toward constructing a newer, bigger classroom down near the Jordan River seemed to be a sensible plan, the student prophets formed such a plan and approached their overseer Elisha about it, seeking his approval, 2 Kings 6:2.
3. Nevertheless, the student prophets had **learned** by Elisha's solving their **trials** of the widow's indebtedness, the poisonous stew and insufficient barley loaves by performing helpful miracles to have Elisha come along with them for *their own welfare*. They thus **repeatedly sought** and **gained** Elisha's involvement in their classroom building effort, 2 Kings 6:2-7:
  - a. They asked for Elisha's **permission** to build a larger structure, and he **granted** it, 2 Kings 6:2.
  - b. They asked for Elisha's **presence** in constructing the building, and he **joined** them, 2 Kings 6:3-4.
  - c. They asked for Elisha's **help** in a crisis in their effort, and he **gave** it: when a student prophet lost a borrowed axe head and asked for Elisha's help, Elisha made it float so he could retrieve it, v. 5-7.

***Lesson:*** *In an era of great apostasy where errant beliefs had led to great insecurities, distrust and dysfunctional insubordination in the student prophets, their master Elisha (1) used his spiritual gift and taught Scripture, attracting the student prophets to his ministry. (2) However, to counter the effects of apostasy that caused the student prophets to be faithless, anxious and insubordinate to Elisha and to God's oversight, Elisha waited for the student prophets to learn of their need for his involvement in overseeing them before exercising his oversight there.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we trust in Christ for eternal life, John 3:16. (2) To disciple in an apostate era where people are unsettled, expressing a low level of faith, anxiety are and dysfunctional insubordination, may (a) we overseers focus on using our supernatural gifts (1 Peter 4:10-11) to impact our subordinates (1 Timothy 4:14-15) while also (b) waiting for subordinates to see their need for our authoritative oversight before we actually assert it!*

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

(1) On using our spiritual gifts and teaching to impact others, last Sunday, a Church member told me of his appreciation for the morning sermon we gave two Sundays ago on the Biblical roles of men and women opposite Marxist ideology. I then recalled that the Sunday I gave that message, two ladies had similarly expressed appreciation for that sermon, expressing that they wanted to obey Scripture in their roles as women.

Each of these people had a strong desire for Bible truth that counters today's "politically correct" ideas of the roles of men and women, and in view of what they face in the world, we know why, too: Dick Hanley's letter to the Republican-American, October 29, 2018, p. 6A, claimed that one of our major political parties has been "hijacked by radical socialists," and the goals of the Communist Manifesto that spawns such radicalism calls for abolishing eternal truths, all religion, all morality (p. 92), the family (p. 87) and all countries and nationalities (p. 90), what is behind a lot of the political unrest in our country. ("Goals, 'Communist Manifesto,'" learn-usa.com) Marxism that tries to upset law and order, morality, the institution of the family and national identities has so impacted our society that even the Biblical roles of men and women have been undermined in "political correctness," unsettling to many believers!

So, to heed Elisha's example of going strong on Bible teaching to God's people who gladly accept it in an apostate era, (a) opposite Marxism's call for a lack of civility and the violation of law and order, we assert that we should obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, 1 Pet. 2:13. (b) Opposite Marxism's call for immorality, we assert that we should not let immorality once be named among us, Eph. 5:3. (c) Opposite Marxism's call to abolish the family, we assert that husbands should love their wives as Christ loves the Church, that wives should submit to their husbands as to the Lord, that children should obey their parents and that parents should rear their children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 5:22-6:4 NIV). (d) Opposite Marxism's call to abolish all countries and nationalities, we assert that we should be subject to the government powers that exist, that each government power is ordained of God to exist, Rom. 13:1. (e) Opposite Marxism's main goal to abolish private property (p. 82; Ibid.) in coveting what the rich have so as to take it forcibly from them to give it to the poor, we assert that we should not covet or steal (Ex. 20:17, 15), but work to provide for our own livelihood needs. (1 Thess. 4:11-12; 2 Thess. 3:10)

(2) On exercising authority, may we overseers in the Church heed Elisha's example to *wait* to assert our authority **with individuals** afflicted with apostasy-caused spiritually insubordination until *they see their need* for it and seek it from us. [The **exception** would be for the Church's overseers to assert their full authority whenever it is needed to protect the Church's doctrine, testimony, unity and order! (1 Peter 5:2-4; Titus 2:11-15)]

**May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we who are called of God to lead use our spiritual gifts and teach Scripture to the full, waiting on God as to when and how we lead those who can accept our oversight.**