

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

AA. Overcoming Long-Embedded Unbiblical Syncretism

(2 Kings 17:1-41)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We face not only newly developing unbiblical syncretism, but long-embedded unbiblical syncretism:

(1) In recent sermons, we have cited Brannon S. Howse's work, Marxianity, 2018 on his reports about the syncretism of unbiblical Marxism with "Neo-Calvinist" evangelicals, and of Howse's stand against it, Ibid., p. 7-306.

(2) Then, distancing himself from Neo-Calvinism, Mr. Howse testified: "I am not an Arminian, but I'm also not a Calvinist. I believe in . . . concurrence . . . Jesus says, 'Come all you who are weary and heavy laden.' But He also says, 'All that the Father gives to me . . .'" Thus, "two streams come together as one -- man's responsibility, or free will, and God's election . . . (C)oncurrence is what, I believe, the Word of God teaches." (Ibid., p. 123-124)

This belief, otherwise known as "Moderate Calvinism," claims God in eternity past sovereignly chose who would trust in Christ while man is also free and responsible to believe in a concert of wills that we cannot logically comprehend in this life. Not only Mr. Howse, but every evangelical school I have ever attended holds this view!

(3) However, **all** of this is the *product* of **long-embedded unbiblical syncretism**, and we explain: (a) Fifth century monk Pelagius used pagan Stoicism to teach one can help save himself by his (work of) faith. (W. Walker, A Hist. of the Chr. Chch., 1959, p. 168) (b) Bishop Augustine countered Pelagius' self-help salvation claim by asserting that faith is itself a gift from God, that God predestines who will believe. (B. B. Warfield, Calvin and Augustine, 1974, p. 378). Augustine wrote that he obtained his view of faith from reading 1 Corinthians 4:7, a verse in a context that does not address salvation faith, but only spiritual gifts (Ibid.). Thus, Augustine's view of faith's authorship came from his pagan-laced Neo-platonism where man is idolatrously a pantheistic extension of God. (G. Carruth, ed., The Vol. Library, 1994, v. 22, p. 2025-2026) (c) In the Reformation, Calvin adopted Augustine's view of election to counter the Roman Catholic Church's Pelagian view of salvation, and Arminius reflected Pelagius's errant views. As the result, the "Calvinist versus Arminian" debate has for generations raged in evangelical circles between Pelagius' Stoicism-laced belief of Arminianism and Augustine's Neo-platonism-laced belief of Calvinism! (c) Though Moderate Calvinism seeks to give man free will, it still reflects Augustine's idolatrously pantheistic view that God also somehow authors that faith by making God sovereignly choose who will even believe in Christ!

(4) It gets worse! Arminianism makes God's election unnecessary via man's will, Calvinism makes man's will unnecessary via God's election and Moderate Calvinism makes man's will **and** God's election cancel out each other's necessity as each achieves the same result. Yet, Webster's Third International Dictionary claims assertions must be *necessary* to be *logical*, and Clark H. Pinnock's landmark work, A Defense of Biblical Infallibility, 1967, p. 16-17, asserts Scripture must be *logical* to be *inerrant*! Thus, the *illogical* views of Arminianism, Calvinism and Moderate Calvinism all *counter Scripture's inerrancy*! In the end, ***Brannon Howse, each of the theologies above and every Christian school I've attended holds to a long-embedded unbiblical syncretism that counters Scripture's inerrancy!***

Need: So we ask, "*How do we overcome long-embedded unbiblical syncretism that we face?!*"

- I. **The end result of the Israel's ungodly syncretism with paganism was its fall to Assyria, 2 Kings 17:1-23:**
 - A. When the Northern Kingdom of Israel split from the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Israel's first king, Jeroboam I, formed a syncretism, mixing the worship of God with paganism in his golden calf worship, 1 Kings 12:1-33.
 - B. This syncretism was practiced until God sent Israel into captivity, 1 Kings 13:33-34; 2 Kings 17:1-23.
- II. **God then made a SPECIAL effort to MOTIVATE Israel's remaining Hebrews to END their generations of UNGODLY SYNCRETISM by sending them DESTRUCTIVE LIONS, 2 Kings 17:24-25:**
 - A. The Assyrians took mainly Israel's leaders captive to Assyria and sent people from other Gentile lands to rule Israel's land and intermarry with its remaining Hebrews; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 2 Kings 17:24.
 - B. When this arrangement of people groups first existed, no one in the land revered the Lord, including the remaining Hebrews, so God became angry and sent lions among them to kill some of them, 2 Kings 17:25.
 - C. In view of Israel's past, this crisis with the lions was God's signal for the Hebrews to end their long syncretism:
 1. When Jeroboam I had first formed his syncretism, God had sent a prophet from Judah up north to Israel to condemn the syncretism just as Jeroboam I was worshipping at his new syncretistic altar, 1 Kings 13:1-2.
 2. Yet, that prophet *later disobeyed God* on **another** matter, *discrediting* his **initial message**, 1 K. 13:8-10.

3. To show the old prophet and all Israel the **validity** of the **initial message** of the man from Judah, namely, his **condemnation of Jeroboam I's syncretism**, God **punished** the **prophet from Judah for his later disobedience** by sending a **lion** to **kill him**, but **hindering** the **lion** from doing **more** harm, 1 K. 13:11-25.
4. The old prophet thus understood God's reason in slaying the prophet from Judah this way, 1 Kings 13:26. He then buried the slain man in his own tomb and told his sons bury to him with the man from Judah that the old prophet's bones not be unearthed and desecrated in line with the slain man from Judah's **initial** prophecy that included word of the future desecration of the tombs of erring priests, 1 Kings 13:1-2, 27-32.
5. Thus, the **slaying of people by lions in Israel was a signal from Israel's TRUE God to ABANDON the nation's SYNCRETISM with paganism in line with the INITIAL MESSAGE of the prophet from Judah, a message CERTIFIED as being TRUE by the prophet of Judah's DEATH by a LION!**

III. However, God's warning went unheeded, and the people's syncretism only deepened, 2 Kings 17:26-33:

- A. The people in Samaria initially realized that the "god of the land" was angry and had sent lions to kill them, so they appealed to Assyria's king for aid, and he sent one of Israel's priests who had been taken captive to Assyria to Israel's land in order to teach its people how to appease the "god of the land," 2 Kings 17:26-27.
- B. This priest who had been captured from Samaria was thus returned, **BUT** he came to dwell in **Bethel**, one of the two places where the **golden calf worship** had occurred, meaning he was a **priest of Jeroboam I's errant SYNCRETISM!** (2 King 17:28 with 1 Kings 12:28-30)
- C. Thus, instead of leading them back to God, this **corrupted** priest taught **Jeroboam I's syncretism**, mixing the worship of God with paganism so that his hearers simply mixed the worship of Israel's God with various forms of paganism they had known from their own former lands back in Assyria, 2 Kings 17:29-31.
- D. Also, **like Jeroboam I's syncretism**, they made priests from the general population, violating the Mosaic Law that called for **only Aaron's sons** to be **priests**, 2 Kings 17:32-33 with 1 Kings 13:33 versus Ex. 28:1-29:46.

IV. The author of 2 Kings noted that this UNBROKEN and even ENHANCING SYNCRETISM ran OPPOSITE MULTIPLE WRITTEN DIRECTIVES in SCRIPTURE, 2 Kings 17:34-41:

- A. Up to the day the author of 2 Kings wrote 2 Kings 17, the people of Samaria mixed the worship of Israel's God with various forms of paganism, 2 Kings 17:34, 40-41. [These people became the Samaritans of Jesus' era!]
- B. The author noted this syncretism occurred **because** there was **no obedience** to **written Scripture** that in **various** places **explicitly** charged Israel to worship God **without any syncretism**, 2 Kings 17:35-39.

Lesson: *Though ungodly syncretism led to Israel's fall, and though God sent lions to kill some of the people who remained to signal His anger at their apostasy, they failed to heed Scripture, and continued in their syncretism!*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) May we learn from Israel's history to look to WRITTEN SCRIPTURE ABOVE all OTHER AUTHORITIES to overcome and avoid all ungodly syncretism.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

The link, "Making Sense of God's Election," on our Church web site's home page answers the long-embedded syncretisms on election and predestination that evangelicals have long held and that also counter Scripture's inerrancy.

However, with the limited space allowed here, we need to answer questions raised in our sermon (as follows):

(1) First, the Pelagian view deeply errs. Faith is not a work, and only God saves us. (Romans 3:20-28)

(2) On Augustinianism, (a) since we cited Brannon S. Howse's words of Jesus in John 6:37, "All that the Father gives me will come to me," we explain that Jesus in the same context at John 6:45 clarified these people had **already** "heard and learned of the Father," so they were **already believers** in the **Father!** The Father was simply discipling these **believers** to trust **also** in His **Son**. This is not a proof text that God makes lost people trust in Christ!

(b) Acts 13:48 KJV claims, "(A)s many as **were ordained** to eternal life believed," but in our "Making Sense of God's Election" link, we **extensively** show how theological bias led to the verb **tetagmenoi** being translated in the **passive** voice to read "were ordained." Yet, **tetagmenoi** is **also** the Greek **middle** voice, so the clause can read, "(A)s many as **had marshaled themselves on the side of** eternal life believed," and the **middle** voice **alone** fits the **context**.

(c) In summary, as we show in our web site link, God's election is **NOT** about selecting **who** will **believe**, but about God's choosing those He foreknew would **of their own will** believe to be given **positions** or **blessings** that **follow faith!** God's election and man's faith are for **different goals**, so there is **no logical contradiction** here! We thus avoid syncretism with both Stoicism and Neo-platonism and we also **support** the **inerrancy** of **Scripture!**

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we overcome long-embedded unbiblical syncretism by putting what written Scripture teaches above what any human or group of humans teach or practice.