

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

DD. Handling Strong Opposition To Biblical Truth

(2 Kings 19:1-37)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

In his recent commencement address at Taylor University, Vice President Mike Pence told of rising opposition to Christian beliefs, saying, "(T)hroughout most of American history, it's been pretty easy to call yourself a Christian. Lately, it's become acceptable, even fashionable, to malign traditional Christian beliefs." ("Class of 2019, make the most of tough moments," USA TODAY, May 24, 2019, p. 7A) His point can be readily illustrated (as follows):

(1) Genesis 9:6 teaches that God made man in His image, so governments are to exercise capital punishment on those who murder other people who are made in the image of God. However, Megan McCardle's piece, "In the absence of Roe v. Wade" (Republican-American, May 18, 2019, p. 6A) noted the Supreme Court in 1972 "abolished the death penalty . . . though the Constitution clearly contemplates government-administered capital punishment."

(2) Exodus 21:22-23 calls for the execution of one who injures a pregnant woman in a conflict at any trimester of the pregnancy so that the woman delivers the fetus and the fetus dies. However, Megan McCardle's column added that in 1973, the Supreme court "gave the country a new right to abortion," but that "(t)his right is nowhere mentioned in the Constitution." (Ibid.) However, Americans have since departed more from Scripture on the issue: (a) Even the reputedly conservative Republican-American in its recent editorial, "Pro-abortion poachers" (Ibid., May 25, 2019, p. 6A) claimed the restrictions on abortion set in Alabama, Georgia and Missouri "are extreme" as they "ban abortion even in cases of rape and incest," a stance conservative Christians have always held. (b) The departure from Scripture is also seen in a Gallup poll where "60 percent of Americans" now "support abortion rights in the first trimester" and "13 percent do in the third." (Noah Goldberg, "Abortion's elusive middle ground," Ibid., May 22, 2019, p. 6A)

(3) Genesis 8:21-22 records God as promising to preserve a "seedtime and harvest" climate suitable for raising man's crops for his food along with "cold and heat" variations in the climate, and that as long as the earth exists in contrast to catastrophic "climate change" or "global warming" ideology. Nevertheless, Connecticut's House of Representatives recently considered an education bill that added "climate change to a list of subjects that must be taught in public schools." (Kathleen Megan, "Legislators to try again to pass climate change class," Ibid., May 25, 2019, p. 5A) "(T)he provision drew such vehement opposition" that "legislators decided to put a hold on the bill," but progressive legislators want to keep bringing the bill back for further consideration and passage, Ibid.

(4) A letter in the Republican-American, May 22, 2019, p. 7A, signed by an Imam, a Pastor, a Priest, a Rabbi and others in response to worldwide violence against worshipers, asserted: "We are . . . determined to nurture an inclusive community . . . where, to paraphrase sacred Scripture, 'neighbor invites neighbor under shaded vine or fig tree, with none to make them afraid.'" The "sacred Scripture" roughly refers to Micah 4:1-5 where men in Christ's Kingdom will heed God's Word, producing unity and peace. Yet, Galatians 1:8-9 forbids fellowship with those who teach a false gospel, and all who signed the letter violate that Scripture passage, so they counter true unity and peace!

Need: *So we ask, "How does God want us to handle the strong opposition to Biblical truth that we face today?!"*

- I. When Assyria besieged Jerusalem, Assyria's military leaders so greatly verbally maligned Biblical truth, they upset Judah's King Hezekiah and his administration's officials with him, 2 Kings 19:1-5:**
 - A. News from Hezekiah's officials of the Assyrian military leader's maligning of Judah's God as being unable to deliver Jerusalem from his military force so upset Hezekiah that he tore his clothes as had his officials when they had heard the Assyrian leader malign the Lord, 2 Kings 19:1 with 2 Kings 18:27a, 33-35.
 - B. Accordingly, Hezekiah sent his servants to God's prophet Isaiah for a solution to this crisis, 2 Kings 19:2-5.
- II. God through Isaiah promised Hezekiah that He would punish the Assyrian king for maligning Him, making that pagan king return home and be slain, so Hezekiah was not to fear him, 2 Kings 19:6-7.**
- III. However, when the Assyrians temporarily withdrew their forces to fight Egypt, the Assyrian king sent word by letter to warn Hezekiah not to listen to Isaiah's encouragement, that Judah's God was helpless to deliver Jerusalem like the gods of the other nations Assyria had conquered, 2 Kings 19:8-13.**
- IV. This REPEAT MALIGNING of Judah's GOD so UPSET Hezekiah that he entered the house of the Lord, he spread out the Assyrian's letter before the Lord and prayed for God's help, 2 Kings 19:14-15a.**
- V. In that prayer, Hezekiah voiced an exemplary *LOYALTY* to *SCRIPTURE TRUTH*, 2 Kings 19:15b-19:**

- A. As Hezekiah addressed the Lord, he acknowledged his trust in the **Genesis 1-2 Biblical truth** that **God alone was the Creator God of the universe** and **Lord over all of the world's kingdoms**, 2 Kings 19:15b.
 - B. Hezekiah then asked God to condescend to behold the words Assyria's king had written in the open letter before the Lord in which he had reproached the living God of Israel, 2 Kings 19:16.
 - C. Judah's king claimed the **Exodus 20:1-6 Biblical truth** that the **gods of the Gentiles** whom Assyria had defeated could not deliver their people as they were **false gods, the works of men's hands**, 2 Kings 19:17-18.
 - D. **Based** on these **Biblical truths** that Judah's God was Creator God of the universe and of all the world's nations as the one and only true God, Hezekiah asked the Lord to deliver Jerusalem from Assyria's army that the kingdoms of the world might know that Judah's God alone was the God of the universe, 2 Kings 19:19.
- VI. The Lord replied favorably to Hezekiah's prayer, sending him Isaiah with good news, 2 Kings 19:20-34:**
- A. God through His prophet Isaiah encouraged Hezekiah that He had favorably heard his prayer, 2 Kings 19:20.
 - B. Furthermore, God revealed that Assyria's king had foolishly boasted against Jerusalem and Judah's true God, for the Lord had been the One Who had raised him up to punish other nations, 2 Kings 19:21-24, 25-26.
 - C. Accordingly, God would also punish Assyria's king himself, forcing him to return home, 2 Kings 19:27-28.
 - D. As for the people of Judah, for two years, they would eat the produce of the land without having it confiscated by Assyrians. Judah's people had not been able to plant crops due to the presence of the invading Assyrian army, but God would cause the seed that was sown naturally to be sufficient for two years, and in the third year the people could resume their usual farming activities, 2 Kings 19:29-31; B. K. C., O. T., p. 577-578.
 - E. Assyria's king would neither enter Jerusalem nor harm it, but return home as God would defend the city for the sake of His own reputation and for God's servant, David, 2 Kings 19:32-34.
- VII. God then miraculously slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers and punished Assyria's king, 2 Kings 19:35-37:**
- A. That night, the angel of the Lord, the Preincarnate Christ, killed 185,000 men of the Assyrian army, 2 Kings 19:35. [Secular archaeological evidence supports this event: (a) Assyria's king reported he shut up Hezekiah 'like a bird in a cage,' not defeating him, and (b) Greek historian Herodotus wrote of field mice destroying the army, what likely refers to a plague. (Merrill F. Unger, Arch. and the O. T., 1973, p. 269; *Ibid.*, fn. 12)]
 - B. Assyria's king Sennacherib returned home, and while he worshipped in the temple of his false god, two of his own sons slew him, 2 Kings 19:36-37. In accord with Hezekiah's prayer that the gods of other nations were mere creations of men's hands, Sennacherib's false god could not protect him from his own sons in his false god's temple, a testimony to God's supremacy as He judged Sennacherib for maligning Him as the true God.

Lesson: *When Hezekiah faced the maligning of the Biblical beliefs of the true God, he held to belief in the Biblical truth and prayed for God's help. The Lord answered Hezekiah by delivering Judah and punishing the maligner(s).*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) May we handle opposition to Biblical truth by (a) holding firmly by faith to that Biblical truth while also (b) asking God in prayer for His help.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

While speaking at our Good Friday Service with Faith Bible Church in Winsted on April 19th, I cited Genesis 8:21-22 on God's pledge to preserve the earth's climate and commented in passing, "So much for global warming!" That remark was met by vocal outbursts from the congregation! Not knowing if it meant that people were agreeing or disagreeing with me, in faith in God and to fulfill my calling, I repeated Genesis 8:22 and explained how God pledged to preserve earth's climate while the earth remains in contrast to His destruction of the earth during the Genesis Flood.

Following the service, several people from Faith Bible Church who apparently had not heard such teaching from that passage expressed their appreciation to me for it. The experience reminded me of Christ's words in the Matthew 13:51-52 Parable of the Householder that those who expound Old Testament ("things old") and New Testament ("things new") truths to His people provide priceless information their hearers need for their discipleship. It is thus worth an expositor's investing all he has to gain a knowledge of Old Testament (Parable of the Hid Treasure) and New Testament (Parable of the Pearl of Great Price) truths and to expound them to God's people for their discipleship. God promises such teachers great eternal rewards if they do this, Matthew 13:43 with Daniel 12:3.

Thus, like Hezekiah of old, I pledge to keep on relying on the Holy Spirit and to invest whatever material resources I have that are necessary to do so to keep on expounding Scripture to you and to keep a firm grip on its truths in my own life. In an era of great confusion and error, the people of God deserve no less.

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we follow king Hezekiah's example in facing opposition to the Bible's truth by holding firmly to the Biblical truth we know and praying for God's timely, needed help.