

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

HH. Blessing Through Heeding God's Inherently Authoritative Scripture

(2 Kings 22:1-20)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

It is becoming increasingly difficult for many people in today's world to discern the authoritative truth:

(1) Attorney Eric Brown's piece, "Sorting truths in today's world," Republican-American, June 24, 2019, p. 2C, told of a lawsuit being brought in Connecticut "by three athletes born female who want to compete as female, but believe that they are losing out on fair competition because they are being required to compete against biologically male athletes who identify as female." Mr. Brown summed, "One of the truths we used to be certain of was that a girl was a girl and a boy was a boy. Now we are not so sure. And now the courts are being required to decide . . ." (Ibid.)

(2) A letter by Steve Morton of Oxford, Connecticut in the Republican-American, June 25, 2019, p. 6A, claimed, "I have degrees in electrical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and therefore am not a climate scientist," but that he had noticed "(c)olumnist James Barrante has . . . views" that counter catastrophic climate-change and "rebut a narrative that has become popular. Others have called for the Republican-American to stop publishing his columns." Mr. Morton indicated he didn't know which view was the correct one, but he believed James Barrante's view that was "being suppressed must have merit" since a "totalitarian mindset" is so opposed to it!

(3) It happens in evangelical circles, too: R. Albert Mohler, Jr.'s chapter, "Evangelical': What's in a Name?" in John H. Armstrong, gen. ed., The Coming Evangelical Crisis, 1996, p. 41, 37 claimed "some evangelicals are growing increasingly open to homosexuality and abortion," so they have "embraced revisionist biblical exegesis . . . to legitimize" their views, treating the Bible's "truth" as "not" being "an absolute, objective" kind of reality!

Need: *So we ask, "If it is getting hard to discern what is authoritative truth in today's world, what are we to do?!"*

- I. **When Josiah came to Judah's throne as an eight-year-old boy (2 Kings 22:1), not only was he an impressionable child, but both his father Amon and his grandfather Manasseh in the earlier part of Manasseh's reign had been heavily involved in idolatry (2 Kings 21:20-22 with 2 Chronicles 33:1-20).**
- II. **However, Josiah had a heart for God, choosing to walk in the ways of his ancestor David, 2 Kings 22:2.**
- III. **Remarkably, this decision was NOT based on a knowledge of Scripture, for Manasseh had likely tried to destroy copies of written Scripture, leaving Josiah to follow only the examples of good kings before him and to rely on what he had heard about God by means of oral tradition, Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 581.**
- IV. **Yet, when a copy of Scripture was found and read to Josiah, though it was his first exposure to Scripture and he was not told it was God's Word, he viewed it as authoritative and heeded it, 2 Kings 22:3-20:**
 - A. Eighteen years into his reign when Josiah was 26 years of age, he directed some of his officials to use moneys collected from contributions by the people to the temple to hire workmen to repair the temple, 2 Kings 22:3-7.
 - B. "In the process of renovating the temple a copy of the Book of the Law (. . . likely the entire Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible) was found," Ibid.; 2 Kings 22:8.
 - C. When Shaphan the king's scribe read it, he brought the book to Josiah, reporting that in fulfilling the king's order to give the moneys to the workmen to repair the temple, they had also found a book, 2 Kings 22:9-10a.
 - D. Shaphan did not tell Josiah that the book was Scripture, only that it had been found in the temple, v. 10a,b.
 - E. When Josiah heard Shaphan read the Scripture for the first time without knowing it was Scripture, he tore his clothes and asked his officials to inquire of God what to do since Judah was ripe for judgment, v. 11-13.
- V. **Josiah's reaction to the reading of Scripture reveals important realities about Josiah and Scripture itself:**
 - A. Josiah's response to the reading of Scripture in tearing his royal robes and weeping before the Lord (2 Kings 22:19b) showed the **innate power** and **authority** of **written Scripture** as noted in Hebrews 4:12-13 ESV: it is "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."
 - B. Also, Josiah **interpreted** written Scripture **literally**, viewing its message in the **normal** way of interpreting any writing. He did not "embrace revisionist biblical exegesis" to excuse Judah's sin as some evangelicals do today, but he **interpreted** Scripture **literally**, *heeding its message as God's forthright, authoritative Word!*
 - C. Josiah had a **heart** for **heeding** the **Lord** as **reflected** in his *submission to God's WORD!*

VI. **Josiah's officials found a prophetess of the Lord named Huldah who announced that though God had planned to punish Jerusalem and Judah for their great past deeds of idolatry, since Josiah had responded so positively to the reading of the Law of God, the Lord would spare him and Judah judgment in Josiah's lifetime to the blessing of Josiah and Judah's people of his era, 2 Kings 22:14-20.**

***Lesson:** Josiah's submission to God as reflected in his completely submissive response to the first reading he had ever heard of God's powerful written Word led to God's sparing him and Judah divine punishment in his lifetime.*

***Application:** (1) May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) As believers living in an era of great darkness like Josiah, may we like him relate to God with a pure heart and wholeheartedly yield to the literal interpretation of His divinely inspired, powerful, written Word's instruction with God's rich blessing.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

As we face hotly debated issues today with many people not being sure where the authoritative truth lies, here are Bible quotes that address many such issues that we like Josiah might expose our minds to God's Word on them:

(1) On "climate-change," God in Genesis 8:22 ESV states: "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease." God will not let catastrophic climate change occur.

(2) On burning carbon fuels that "climate-change" advocates oppose, Leviticus 6:12-13 ESV states: "The priest shall burn wood on it every morning . . . Fire shall be kept burning on the altar . . . (I)t shall not go out."

Also, Exodus 27:20-21 ESV states: "You shall command the people . . . that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp may regularly be set up to burn . . . from evening to morning before the Lord."

In addition, when the risen Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples by the Sea of Galilee, He prepared a setting for a meal for them, described in John 21:9, 12 ESV as follows: "When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread . . ." God sanctions man's burning of carbon dioxide producing fuels.

(3) On raising cattle that produce methane that allegedly harms the world's climate according to some "climate-change" advocates, Genesis 18:1-2, 7-8 ESV reports: "And the Lord appeared to [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre . . . He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men . . . And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man who prepared it quickly. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate." God's ingesting of Abraham's beef and milk shows He condones man's raising of beef and dairy cattle.

(4) On cutting down trees for man's interests, Joshua 17:18 ESV cites Joshua telling Joseph's descendants: "(T)hough it is a forest, you shall clear it and possess it to its farthest borders . . ." Man may clear even forests!

(5) On abortion on demand, Exodus 21:22-23 ESV asserts: "When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life . . ." Since the focus in the extended context is on the harm done to the fetus, no trimester being mentioned, the "life for life" phrase implies the fetus at any trimester is a human being so that abortion on demand is murder.

(6) On homosexuality, Romans 1:26-27 ESV asserts: "For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error." All homosexuality is sin.

(7) On efforts to redefine or to change genders, Deuteronomy 22:5 ESV declares: "A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God." If cross-dressing is an abomination to God, redefining and changing one's gender are also abominations.

(8) On "free healthcare," "free college for all," "free housing," "free money for those unwilling to work," etc. being promoted by some politicians, 2 Thessalonians 3:10 ESV orders: "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat," and 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 ESV directs: "(W)ork with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may live properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one." God directs us to work to earn our own livelihoods.

(9) On financial reparations for the descendants of slaves from other Americans, Ezekiel 18:20 ESV asserts: "The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son." In God's view, the **descendants** of slave owners were *not* involved in slavery, so none of them owe reparations for it!

(10) On the call from some for the cancelling of all student loan debt, Exodus 20:15 ESV asserts: "You shall not steal," and cancelling a debt is failing to let the loaning party be reimbursed, essentially stealing from him.

May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin. May we then heed God's inherently powerful Scriptures.