

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Kings: The Kings Of Israel And Judah From Solomon To The Babylonian Captivity

II. The Divided Kingdom, 1 Kings 12:1-22:53

S. The Cause And Cure For Marital And Family Failure

(1 Kings 20:1-21)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

If ever we needed to understand the cause and cure for marital and family failure, it would be today:

(1) The Allentown, Pennsylvania branch of Planned Parenthood recently tweeted, "We need a Disney princess who's had an abortion." The post was soon deleted due to a large public backlash, but it reflects a freefall in marital, family and moral values by various people in our society. (Answers, July-August, 2018, p. 46)

(2) Many evangelicals are affected: former President Jimmy Carter, a self-professed "born again" Christian last week on HuffPost Live said: "I think Jesus would encourage any love affair if it was honest and sincere and was not damaging to anyone else and I don't see that gay marriage damages anyone else." (M. Sampathkumar, "Jimmy Carter says, 'Jesus would approve of gay marriage' but not abortions," July 10, 2018; independent.co.uk) That view contrasts with Jesus' Mark 10:11-12 prohibition on divorce and remarriage and with Matthew 5:28 where just looking at a woman with lust is adultery and with Romans 1:24-27 that treats homosexuality as an expression of depravity.

(3) Family failure is all too familiar to us at the local level: in the last two weeks, members of our Church have told our deacons or me about aberrant immorality, marital or family problems in the lives of people they know.

Need: *So, we ask, "What is the cause and cure for marital and family failure that we witness today?!"*

- I. **When Israel's king Ahab was told by invading king Ben-hadad to hand over his silver, his gold, his wives and his children to him, Ahab SHOCKINGLY CONSENTED to Ben-hadad's demands, 1 Kings 20:1-4:**
 - A. Ben-hadad, king of Aramea ("Syria" KJV) with 32 kings and their huge force of horses, chariots and infantrymen surrounded Ahab's capital of Samaria and besieged it, 1 Kings 20:1.
 - B. Sensing that he had Ahab cornered, Ben-hadad demanded that Ahab give him all his silver and gold along with the best of his wives and children as a demand to end the siege, 1 Kings 20:2-3.
 - C. **Shockingly**, Ahab *readily agreed* to Ben-hadad's demands, 1 Kings 20:4 ESV.
- II. **Indeed, only when Ben-hadad demanded Ahab's possessions did Ahab resist, 1 Kings 20:5-12:**
 - A. Sensing from Ahab's readiness to give him his silver, gold, wives and children, Ben-hadad increased his demands on Ahab, requiring that he give up whatever his soldiers wanted to seize in Samaria, 1 Kings 20:5-6.
 - B. Ahab and his advisers refused this demand, asserting that Ben-hadad really sought trouble, so they refused his added demands **although** Ahab **again amazingly** agreed to hand over his silver, gold, **wives and children** that Ben-hadad had originally demanded from him! (1 Kings 20:7-9)
 - C. Ben-hadad reacted to Ahab's resistance by threatening to seize everything in Samaria, and Ahab challenged Ben-hadad not to boast like one who had already won the battle, 1 Kings 20:10-11. Ahab's stout resistance to Ben-hadad's demands to seize all his possessions in contrast to Ahab's **persistent willingness** to hand over his silver, gold, **wives and children** reveal a **dreadfully low** value Ahab placed on his **marital** and **family** ties.
- III. **Ahab's dreadfully low value of his wives and children rose DIRECTLY from his PAGAN IDOLATRY:**
 - A. 1 Kings 16:29-33 claims Ahab had adopted his wife's religion of Baal and Baal's female consort, the Asherah.
 - B. That idolatry's beliefs and practices directly produced a very low valuation of marital and family relationships:
 1. Baal and Asherah worship involved "sacred prostitution, child sacrifice and snake worship," and it "had a most serious retarding and debilitating effect on every phase of Canaanite cultural and community life." (Merrill F. Unger, Archaeology and the Old Testament, 1973, p. 171-175)
 2. With Ahab and his wives becoming physically intimate with pagan cult prostitutes in depraved pagan worship and sacrificing of their children to their gods, he became far less attached to his wife and children.
- IV. **So, to correct the source of Ahab's marital and family problems, God said He would give him victory over Ben-hadad's superior forces to teach Ahab to switch from Baal to the Lord as God, 1 Kings 20:13:**
 - A. A prophet of the Lord came to Ahab to announce that God would give him victory over Ben-hadad's great multitude, delivering Ben-hadad to him that day, 1 Kings 20:13a.
 - B. In doing so, God would reveal that He was the **true** Lord **as opposed to BAAL and the ASHERAH**, v. 13b:
 1. The pronoun "I" in the last phrase, "I am the Lord" in 1 Kings 20:13 is written as a separate word before the verb, making it emphatic, we translate the phrase: "I Myself am the Lord," Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 549.

2. God was indicating by His coming help of delivering the humanly vastly superior forces of Ben-hadad into Ahab's hands that **HE** as *opposed* to the pagan gods **Baal and Asherah** that Ahab worshiped was **Lord!**
- C. God thus *graciously* sought to get Ahab to **switch GODS**, what would bring him real blessing and greatly alter his value of marital and family life and thereby greatly improve his marital and family relationships:
1. The God of **Scripture** revealed that He made Eve from Adam's rib and closed up the flesh in its place, leaving a scar in Adam's side so that he would identify his wife as part of himself, Genesis 2:20-23.
 2. This creation of the woman was meant to teach all subsequent descendants of Adam and Eve to treat their marital partners as a part of themselves so that they become "one flesh," inseparable, Gen. 2:24, what Jesus Himself noted in His teaching against divorce in Matthew 19:3-6.
 3. With husband and wife viewing each other as a part of themselves, the children produced by the couple were to be viewed as God's blessing to them, what Eve noted when giving birth to her firstborn, Gen. 4:1.
 4. Thus, were Ahab to switch from Baal to Scripture's Lord as his God, adopting God's instruction on marital and family ties, Ahab would have begun highly to value his marital and family ties, no longer sacrificing his children to pagan gods and refusing to hand over his family to Ben-hadad.
- V. **Ahab chose to obey the prophet's directives on defeating Ben-hadad, so God gave Ahab a great victory:**
- A. God's prophet told Ahab to send out his meager forces to attack Ben-hadad's vast army, 1 Kings 20:14-15.
 - B. Israel thus made a surprise attack at noon when Ben-hadad and his 32 confederated kings with him were getting drunk and carelessly assuming they could defeat Ahab's forces, 1 Kings 20:16-18.
 - C. Ahab's meager forces then engaged the enemy, each striking down his foe so that the Aramean force fled with Israel in pursuit, and Ben-hadad escaped with some horsemen on horseback, 1 Kings 20:19-20.
 - D. Israel overpowered the horses and chariots and destroyed many of the Aramean infantrymen, 1 Kings 20:21.
- VI. **Similar to Ahab's case, in TODAY'S world, the worship of MAN as a god "with some form of evolutionary philosophy undergirding" it such as humanism and Marxism versus SCRIPTURE'S GOD has led to marital and family problems (John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris, The Genesis Flood, 1978, p. 444), so the CURE of such problems is to REPLACE MAN with SCRIPTURE'S GOD!**

Lesson: *Though his worship of Baal led to Ahab's low value of his marital and family ties, God gave him a great victory over Ben-hadad that Ahab might turn from Baal to the Lord, restoring healthy marital and family ties.*

Application: *Since the cause of marital and family failure is following false gods over Scripture's God, especially today's false god of self, (1) may we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) Then, may we (a) rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit we receive at salvation (Romans 8:9b; Galatians 5:16) to (b) worship and obey Scripture's God versus man, especially ourselves, (c) and see God restore us to healthy marital and family relationships.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We have found over the years that Christians often have questions about **specific guidelines** on marital and family functions. Scripture offers these, so we mention them here briefly for purposes of edification (as follows):

(1) On marriage, (a) Ephesians 5:18 directs believers to rely on the Holy Spirit for (b) wives to be able to submit to their husbands as to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-24) and for (c) husbands to love and nurture their wives in a self-sacrificing way as Christ did in sacrificing Himself on the cross to save the Church (Ephesians 5:25-32).

(2) On parenting, (a) Ephesians 5:18's directive on relying on the Holy Spirit equips (b) children to obey their parents as unto the Lord for a long, rewarding life (Ephesians 6:1-3) and He similarly equips (c) parents not to "provoke" their children to anger," but rear them in the "discipline" and "instruction" of the Lord, Ephesians 6:4 ESV.

(d) It is particularly helpful for parents to utilize Jesus' John 14:16-18 insight, what applies to parenting offspring of any age: speaking about the Holy Spirit's coming on believers at Pentecost in Acts 2, Jesus said He would not leave his disciples "as orphans" (Greek = *orphanos*, v. 18a ESV), so the **Holy Spirit** actually **parents believers!** Thus, the Holy Spirit parents believers throughout their lives, be they spiritual "little children" or spiritually growing "young men" or spiritually mature "fathers" so named in 1 John 2:12-17. Thus, **any parent of any son or daughter of any age [still living at home] can parent that offspring PERFECTLY** by relying on the Holy Spirit, and the **Holy Spirit** will lead **that parent AUTOMATICALLY** to administer the **right** discipline and/or instruction in any situation!

By thus AVOIDING reliance on the false god of MAN, ESPECIALLY the false god of OURSELVES, we come to rely on GOD the HOLY SPIRIT for God's rich blessings in marital and family life!

May we believe in Christ for salvation. Then, may we rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit to heed Scripture to relate properly to the LORD, and find HIM richly blessing our marital and family relationships!