

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

X. Identifying God's True Messages And True Messengers

(1 Kings 22:51-2 Kings 1:18)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Identifying God's true messages and true messengers is a significant challenge today:

(1) On the Internet, "(o)ne popular website hosts 1.5 million sermons with teaching from many different theological perspectives." (Roger Patterson, "Testing The Teachers," Answers, September-October 2018, p. 50)

(2) However, the issue affects us locally: the Republican-American recently ran local writer Bill Dunn's op-ed, "Reasons to remain in the church," August 24, 2018, p. 8A by which he not only denounced newly exposed "horrible crimes committed by many clergy of the Catholic Church," Mr. Dunn also told why he was remaining in the Church. He explained, "(T)he Catholic Church is the original church founded by Jesus. It is the church that teaches the full Gospel message -- the 'words of eternal life' -- and it is the church where Jesus Christ is present, body and blood, soul and divinity, in the Eucharist," Ibid. So, if local writer Bill Dunn's recent op-ed in a local newspaper claims he is staying in the Roman Catholic Church for these three beliefs, are we to view those beliefs as true? How do we know?

(3) The issue affects our Church: the man who brought the Gospel to our Church and whom we support as a missionary, in his August 25, 2018 prayer letter, wrote that he recently hosted a debate in his home on whether converts to Christ from Islam should stay "inside of their Muslim community" ("the Insider Movement (IM)") or live outside it. He added in his letter, "Many IMers believe they can still repeat the second half of the creed, 'Muhammad is the apostle of God' and many do not practice baptism," but he gave no comment on whether these beliefs are true, Ibid. So, if this missionary wrote that he hosted this debate but made no comment in his letter on the credibility of the IMer beliefs mentioned in his letter, are we to think those IMer beliefs are at least debatably true? How do we know?

Need: *So we ask, "How can we identify God's true messages and true messengers today?!"*

- I. Ahaziah did not view as credible either Israel's God or His prophet, Elijah, 1 Kings 22:51-2 Kings 1:9:**
 - A. When Ahaziah became king, he heeded the idolatry of his father Ahab and mother Jezebel, 1 Kings 22:51-53.
 - B. Accordingly, God started to punish Ahaziah, fulfilling His promised judgments of the Mosaic Covenant:
 1. In accord with Deuteronomy 28:15, 25, God let the Moabites rebel against Ahaziah's rule, 2 Kings 1:1.
 2. In accord with Deuteronomy 28:15, 20, God let Ahaziah get badly injured in an accident, 2 Kings 1:2a.
 - C. However, instead of repenting and seeking God, Ahaziah turned to a pagan Baal god for help, 2 Kings 1:2b.
 - D. The Angel of the Lord then sent Elijah to intercept Ahaziah's messengers who were going to inquire of Baal to announce that because Ahaziah sought the help of Baal and not God, he would die of his injury, 2 Kings 1:3-4.
 - E. When the messengers returned to Ahaziah to report Elijah's message, and Ahaziah learned by their description of him that the man was Elijah, Ahaziah sent a captain with 50 soldiers to arrest Elijah, 2 Kings 1:5-9.
- II. God thus had Elijah minister so as to give Him and Elijah as His prophet credibility, 2 Kings 1:10-18:**
 - A. First, Elijah relied on the Angel of the Lord to protect him from his foes, 2 Kings 1:3a, 15a; Exodus 23:20-22:
 1. Ahaziah and his mother Jezebel were great enemies of Elijah: Jezebel had threatened his life and Ahaziah had sent a group of soldiers to capture Elijah so as to harm him, 1 Kings 19:1-3; 2 Kings 1:9.
 2. Nevertheless, the Angel of the Lord Who was God (Exodus 23:20-21) and Who had promised to be an Enemy to Israel's enemies (Exodus 23:22) directed Elijah to meet Ahaziah's messengers and later go to the palace at Samaria where his enemies in Jezebel and Ahaziah lived! (2 Kings 1:3-4, 15)
 3. Elijah thus trusted the Angel of the Lord to minister in his defense from his enemies, 2 Kings 1:3-8, 15.
 - B. Second, Elijah taught the Biblical truth that Israel should worship God alone, 2 Kings 1:3-8, 16; Ex. 20:1-6.
 - C. Third, Elijah exhibited long-term credibility as God's servant regardless of his short-term ministry burnout:
 1. Though he temporarily suffered burnout over Jezebel's threat on his life (1 Kings 19:1-3), Elijah long-term taught God's truth on Israel's need to worship Scripture's God alone, 2 Kings 1:3b; 1 Kings 18:21, 37-39.
 2. Though he temporarily suffered burnout, Elijah long-term exemplified the truth, sitting on a hill aligned with his past Mount Carmel ministry of exalting God over Baal, 2 Kings 1:9b,c; 1:11, 13; 1 Kings 18:19-39.
 3. Though he temporarily suffered burnout, Elijah long-term exhibited God's power in ministry, repeatedly calling fire from heaven in line with his Mount Carmel ministry, 2 Kings 1:10, 12 with 1 Kings 18:37-39.
 4. Though he temporarily suffered burnout, Elijah long-term voiced God's truth to evil men, 2 Kings 1:3-15.

5. Though he temporarily suffered burnout, Elijah long-term did not let his emotions rule him in his ministry:
 - a. The first commander sent by Ahaziah told Elijah to come down from the hilltop (2 Kings 1:9) where the second commander brashly heightened the order, telling Elijah to come down *quickly*, 2 Kings 1:11.
 - b. Having effectively called fire down upon the first group of soldiers, Elijah might easily have been *goaded* by the second commander's **brash** command that he come down "*quickly*" to *shout back* at him for fire to come down "**QUICKLY**" on this second commander and his men!
 - c. However, Elijah did not do so: he *simply repeated* his *initial* word from the Angel of the Lord that fire come down on the second commander and his men, 2 Kings 1:10, 12. Elijah was not letting his feelings run his ministry, but doing the will of the Angel of the Lord who had sent him and told him what to say!
- D. Fourth, the fruits of his ministry show Elijah was God's messenger: all his prophecies on Ahaziah and the men he sent for him came true (2 Kings 1:3-17), proving by Deuteronomy 18:20-22 that he was God's true prophet.

Lesson: *Though distrusted by Ahaziah, God used Elijah to reveal His OWN credibility as Israel's true God as WELL as ELIJAH'S credibility as His TRUE PROPHET by Elijah's trust in Scripture's God, his Scriptural teaching, his long-term ministry credibility and the Biblical fruits of his ministry.*

Application: *To discern God's true messages and true messengers, (1) may we trust in Christ to be saved and indwelt by the discerning Holy Spirit, John 3:16; Romans 8:9b; 1 John 2:20, 27. (2) May we then (a) rely on that Spirit (Galatians 5:16) (b) to test all messengers to see IF they (i) trust Scripture's God, (ii) they teach Scripture truth, (iii) they exhibit long-term credibility in consistently teaching Bible truth, exemplifying that truth, evidencing God's power in ministry, obeying Scripture's God and objectively serving God, and (iv) that they bear Biblical fruit in their ministry. (3) Only if they PASS this test do we KNOW that they give God's messages as God's messengers.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) In our introduction, we noted beliefs stated by local writer Bill Dunn in a local newspaper's op-ed for why he was staying in the Catholic Church regardless of its many clergy scandals. Yet, applying the "Elijah Test" above, we find each belief Mr. Dunn gave counters Scripture: (a) On the issue of the "original church founded by Jesus," the Catholic Church claims Jesus in Matthew 16:18 promised to build His church on Peter, for "Peter" means "rock" in the Greek text, and Jesus said He would build His church on "this rock," allegedly Peter, the alleged first Catholic pope. (Loraine Boettner, Roman Catholicism, 1978, p. 104) Yet, Peter's name in Matthew 16:18 translates *petros*, a loose stone, where "rock" in the "this rock" phrase of that verse translates *petra*, a massive rock. (Abbott-Smith, A Man. Grk. Lex. of the N. T., 1968, p. 359) Jesus had just said in Matthew 16:17 that neither Peter nor any other mortal, but only God had revealed the truth to him of Peter's Matthew 16:16 confession about Jesus as Messiah and Son of the living God. The massive *petra* rock must be far greater than Peter or mortals -- it must be Jesus! He did not build the Catholic Church on Peter; rather, Jesus built His Church of those who believe in Him on Himself! (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 57). (b) On the alleged "full Gospel message" issue, the Catholic Church claims that salvation is by faith plus the works of the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church, what Ephesians 2:8-9 with Galatians 1:8-9 and 3:1-4 condemn and anathematize! (c) On Jesus' alleged presence in the Eucharist of the Mass, Jesus in John 6:63 said that ingesting His "flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life."

Mr. Dunn's op-ed thus upheld *errant* teachings that he has learned from *errant* teachers on **key** beliefs, what is grounds for *leaving* the Roman Catholic Church, **not remaining** in it, cf. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18!

(2) We noted that the man who brought the Gospel of Christ to our Church has claimed in his recent prayer letter that he hosted a debate in his home on IMer beliefs that "Muhammad is the apostle of God" and not practicing believer's baptism, but that the missionary made no comment in his letter on whether those beliefs are credible!

Yet, applying the "Elijah Test" above, we find those beliefs contradict Scripture on key issues: (a) On whether a believer in Christ can confess "Muhammad is the apostle of God," the Muslim Qur'an, being the canonized sayings Muhammad allegedly received from his deity, Allah ("Who Was Muhammad?"; gotquestions.org), at Qur'an 9:30, claims that "those who consider Jesus to be the Son of God are under the 'curse of Allah.'" (Robert Spencer, The Truth About Muhammad, 2006, p. 37-38) 1 Corinthians 12:3 and 1 John 4:1-3 teach such a claim comes from one who is not from God and has the spirit of antichrist! (b) On baptism, Jesus told us to baptize believers in Matthew 28:18-20.

Though the missionary did not say whether these IMer beliefs are credible, Scripture shows they *err*, that they come from *errant* teachers, and the errors involve **key** issues, grounds for withdrawing from IM, 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

May we trust in Christ to be saved. May we then test for God's true messages and true messengers akin to the 2 Kings 1:10-18 test of God's prophet Elijah to discern what to heed and from whom we are to heed it.