

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

D. God's Use Of Unsettling Crises To Grow Our Faith

(2 Kings 4:1-7)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Last Sunday, two believers told me of their longing for the rapture. The growth of intrigue, Marxism and ecumenism in the government-media-business-religious complex as epitomized in the Brett Kavanaugh hearings and the spiritual decline in evangelicalism concerned them as it does many. Indeed, Paul Hutchinson wrote, "We are witnessing a model execution by Senate Democrats of Saul Alinsky's 'Rules For Radicals'" in the Bret Kavanaugh "confirmation hearing" (Paul Hutchinson, "Opinion: The Kavanaugh Hearings - Ruled By Radicals," 9/24/2018; dailycaller.com) and Saul "Alinsky was a radical Marxist strategist." (Wayne Allyn Root, "'Russian Collusion' by Saul Alinsky," 7/20/2018; townhall.com) When I told these believers that Christ in Revelation predicted this mini-Great-Tribulation-type-period for our era of Church History and how we are to live in it, they expressed great interest!

Some newcomers were not with us when we last taught on Christ's prophecy for our era, so a brief overview of that passage could really help them. Also, studying 2 Kings 4:1-7 on Elisha's ministry to a widow who faced unsettling crises led me to realize its application aligns with Christ's word for our era. I will thus preach from 2 Kings 4:1-7 in the sermon body and in the conclusion, combine its application with Christ's Revelation prophecy for our era.

Need: *So we ask, "Why does God let us believers face unsettling crises today, and how should we respond?!"*

- I. **A deceased prophet's widow who faced unsettling trials cried out unto Elisha for help, 2 Kings 4:1:**
 - A. The grieving widow of a prophet in the school of the prophets faced the additional trial of a creditor who was about to take her two sons from her as his slaves to resolve the family's debt, 2 Kings 4:1a,b,d!
 - B. The widow told God's prophet that he knew her late husband had revered the Lord, so she cried unto Elisha for help in view of her belief that her husband deserved to see Elisha help her and her sons, 2 Kings 4:1c.
- II. **In reality, Scripture reveals that the widow's own words indicate that she was spiritually blind and that she and her husband had lacked a good spiritual standing before the Lord, 2 Kings 4:1b, d et al.:**
 - A. The early death of the widow's husband under the Law seen in his leaving two minor sons at home meant that he had seriously sinned, for the Law taught that obeying the Law led to a long life, 2 Kings 4:1b,d; Deut 6:2.
 - B. Since a creditor was about to take the widow's sons as slaves to resolve a debt, God was punishing her for sin, for Deuteronomy 28:12b, 44a taught that under the Law, God would reward one's obedience to Him by not having him borrow but lend but that he would suffer indebtedness in discipline if he disobeyed Scripture!
 - C. The widow's husband was part of the school of the prophets, known for its spiritual laxness, 2 Kings 4:1a:
 1. 2 Kings 2:1-18 reports these prophets failed to believe God's message to them that He would take Elijah to heaven so that they nagged Elisha into unsuccessfully letting them look for Elijah's body!
 2. The widow's husband as a part of this group thus likely lacked in reverence for and faith in God!
 - D. Besides, the fact that the widow would expect Elisha to help her because she claimed her husband revered the Lord exposed her spiritual blindness to the defective nature of her deceased husband's spiritual walk!
- III. **Elisha then asked how he could help the widow. He wanted to help, but not in a way that would enable her to stay in spiritual blindness and a lack of reverence for and a lack of faith in God. However, neither could he tell her of her spiritual problems, for that along with her crisis might destroy her, 2 Kings 4:2a!**
- IV. **The Lord then led Elisha to answer his own question: God had His prophet help the widow in a WAY that would TEACH her to GROW in her REVERENCE FOR and TRUST IN God, 2 Kings 4:2b-7:**
 - A. Upon asking the widow what she still had left in her house, Elisha was told that she had nothing left in her home but a little olive oil (*shemen*) in a small, cosmetic flask (*'asuk*), 2 Kings 4:2b; Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, p. 561; B. D. B., *A Heb. and Eng. Lex. to the O. T.*, p. 1032, 692.
 - B. Olive oil in the Ancient Near East was valuable for various reasons: it was used as a cosmetic, for cooking, for food, for lamp oil, etc. (*Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib.*, v. Four, p. 513-515), so Elisha told her to borrow from her neighbors **LOTS** of various **kinds** of vessels of **all sizes** (*keli*, *Ibid.*, Kittel; *Ibid.*, B. D. B., p. 479-480; *Ibid.*, *Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib.*, v. Five, p. 878), what would include bottles, buckets, basins, pitchers, cups, and flasks. She was to close the door of her house behind her, her sons and all of the borrowed vessels and pour the oil out of her small, cosmetic flask into each vessel in order to fill it, 2 Kings 4:3-4.

- C. Elisha's directive thus implied that the **oil** would **MULTIPLY**, that it would be in the widow's best interests to borrow as **many** and as **large** a group of vessels as she could for the miracle that was about to occur!
- D. When she heeded Elisha's word, she began to fill up the vessels with the oil, what proved to be increasingly exciting, for when she had filled up the last vessel, she told her son to bring her another empty vessel to keep the flow going, but he had to say there were no more! (2 Kings 4:6a). At that moment, the oil stopped multiplying, and the miracle ceased to occur, 2 Kings 4:6b.
- E. When the widow told Elisha what had happened, he had her sell what she needed to pay the debt and use the rest for her family's livelihood needs, 2 Kings 4:7. The widow then wished that she had **trusted God MORE** to have acquired **MORE, LARGE** vessels to **enhance the future livelihood welfare** of her and her sons!

Lesson: *God used the needy widow's unsettling crises to teach her to trust Him and heed His Word FAR MORE than she had, that she might GROW in her walk with the Lord for GREATER blessing!*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) If God lets us face unsettling trials, may we realize that He wants us (a) to pay closer attention to Scripture that we (b) rely on the power of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16) to (c) revere, trust and obey the Lord more for greater blessing.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We noted in our introduction that 2 Kings 4:1-7 we viewed in this sermon has affinity with the message God has for our era in Christ's Revelation 3:14-22 prophecy. [The URL for our sermon about that prophecy on our Church web site is www.nepaugchurch.org/Sermons/SundaySermon20171126.pdf] We explain (as follows):

(1) As we learned in studying Revelation 3:14-22, today's evangelicals *as a whole, akin to the 2 Kings 4:1 widow*, function in their sin natures ("wretched"), are worldly ("miserable"), lack faith in God ("poor"), are blind to their needy state ("blind") and fail to stay faithful to godly works, becoming ecumenical ("naked"), Rev. 3:17b KJV.

(2) These five descriptive words in their wide Scripture contexts critique **BOTH Calvinism AND Arminianism!** [*Calvinism is corrupted with Augustine's pagan Neo-platonism and Arminianism is corrupted with Pelagius' pagan Stoicism.*] Christ's Revelation 3:17b five words in their contexts **ALSO** expose the false spiritualities of today's evangelicals that have been produced because of the influence of these two errant theologies!

(3) Christ thus calls individual evangelicals to ask Him to arrange that they face trials [**akin to the 2 Kings 4:1 widow**] of being slandered by fellow evangelicals into (a) trusting God [**akin to the widow**] versus relying on other evangelicals ("gold tried in the fire"), into (b) staying true to God's calling versus turning ecumenical with other evangelicals ("clothed") and into (c) discerning evangelical errors and discerning Bible truth ("see"), Revelation 3:18.

(4) Charismatics are experienced-based and less-disposed to Bible study, so Christ used **clearly Charismatic** terms in Revelation 3:19 to get Charismatics to see their need to repent of errant Arminian theology and spirituality!

(5) Revelation 3:20 addresses needs for believers to overcome the sin nature by trusting Christ to meet their financial needs instead of trying to meet them in their own efforts (versus "miserable") [**akin to the widow**], and Revelation 3:21 addresses needs for believers [especially pastors] to overcome the world (versus "miserable") by not loving it, but by loving the Lord [and feeding His flock (John 21:15-19)] that Christ might enhance their influence.

(6) Revelation 3:21 also implies that those who expound Scripture, Christ's words (Rev. 19:11-16), will see Christ through their ministries administer edifying balm to those who come out an oppressive evangelicalism and world system. This is noted in observing that Christ promises to seat such an expositor "in" His earthly Davidic throne, wording that points to Revelation 7:17 where Christ "in" the Father's throne "feeds" saints who come out of the future Great Tribulation. Applied to **our** era, believers will be oppressed by fellow carnal evangelicals and a godless world in a pre-rapture, mini-Great-Tribulation-type-era of deception, intrigue and oppression so as to withdraw from such mistreatment and head for churches that expound Scripture by which Christ nurtures them.

(7) **As a Church, we have already seen this start to occur: we have seen believers withdraw from the oppressive government-media-business-religious complex and/or oppressively godless evangelicalism and head to churches where Scripture is expounded, that is, where Christ Himself by His Word "feeds" them, where He nurtures them from past mini-Great Tribulation-type-era afflictions, Revelation 7:17 with Revelation 3:21.**

(8) **Newcomers can thus understand why we do what we do at Nepaug Church: if holy men of God wrote Scripture as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21), then we believe we should preach and teach the Bible the way the Holy Spirit initially meant it to be understood -- verse-by-verse in its literal, grammatical and historical contexts -- that Christ's nurturing "feeding" from His Word might occur!**

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we sit at Jesus' feet and see Him nurture us by His Word!