

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

V. Relying On God's Delivering Mercy Amid Oppressive Apostasy

(2 Kings 14:23-29)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Last Sunday after our morning service, three members of our Church independently of one another told me of oppression they face in their lives from the world around them, testimonies that are verified by media reports:

(1) The March 21, 2019 Republican-American lead editorial, "Merchants of death, p. 8A, stated, "Connecticut lawmakers have renamed" the term "'assisted suicide'" as "'aid in dying'" to keep people from recoiling at the idea of the "killing of sick individuals who no longer wish to live, followed by a slippery slope toward 'duty to die.'"

(2) A letter by Dave Velez of Waterbury in the paper claimed, "(T)he mainstream media are not giving full coverage to the mass slaughter of Christians . . . by radical Islamic jihadists" most likely lest it rouse the public, Ibid.

(3) The "New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft is apologizing after being charged in a . . . prostitution investigation" where "officers secretly recorded him" twice "engaging in sex acts." (Ibid., "Patriots owner apologizes in Fla. prostitution case," March 25, 2019, p. 7A) This case highlights how prostitution is become a national scourge.

(4) After almost two years of investigating using 19 lawyers assisted by 40 F. B. I. agents, analysts, forensic accountants and other specialists and issuing 2,800 subpoenas, 500 search warrants and interviewing 500 witnesses, special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation team did not find President Donald Trump or members of his campaign conspired with Russia's efforts to sway the 2016 election. (Ibid., "Barr: No Trump collusion," March 25, 2019, p. 1A; Kevin Johnson, Bart Jansen and Kristine Phillips, "No Conspiracy," USA TODAY, p. 1A)

Nevertheless, "Democrats" still feel "the need for . . . expanded investigations" in their search for something, for anything, to use to undermine the president. (Ibid., "Democrats ready to start building on Mueller report," p. 3A)

(5) Upon learning that two former employees "conspired to steal from her beauty products company," Suelyn Farel admitted, "I have to be careful, that possibly my judgment of the character of people around me is wrong." (Ibid., Republican-American, Joyce M. Rosenberg, "Devastating Breach of Trust," March 25, 2019, p. 1C)

(6) Paul Hughes' story, "Committee sends 3 toll bills to General Assembly" (Ibid., March 21, 2019, p. 5A) told how the Connecticut legislature's effort to install tolls faces so much taxpayer resistance, "uncertainty abounds" over whether the Democrats who dominate the legislature have the votes in both the House and Senate to approve of tolls.

(7) The legislature is also considering legalizing marijuana, but Steven Malanga ("The Marijuana Delusion," City Journal, Spring 2019 cited in "Quotable," Ibid., March 22, 2019, p. 6A) warns that in states that have done this already, violent crime is up -- 3 % in Washington, 20 % in Colorado, 21 % in Oregon and 30 % in Alaska.

Need: "If we face oppressive apostasy and seemed trapped by it in our lives, how can we hope for God's blessing?"

I. Under king Jeroboam II's reign in Israel, apostasy abounded in the nation in ways that remarkably parallel the apostasy that we face today, 2 Kings 14:23-24:

- A. Jeroboam II came to Israel's throne, and like all of Israel's kings before him, he held to Jeroboam I's religious syncretism, worshiping God mixed with pagan elements in Jeroboam I's golden calves, 2 Kings 14:23-24.
- B. Apostate sin was then rampant in Israel, and the prophecies of the Biblical books of Hosea and Amos, being written during Jeroboam II's reign (Zon. Pict. Ency. Bible, v. Three, p. 458-459), describe moral problems in Israel then that were uncannily similar to the problems we mentioned in our sermon introduction (as follows):
 1. Hosea 6:4 told how efforts of self-reformation proved to be deceptive (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Hos. 6:4) like the Connecticut lawmakers' effort to replace the term "assisted suicide" with the words "aid in dying" somehow to sanctify the idea of "the killing of sick individuals who no longer wish to live, followed by a slippery slope toward 'duty to die.'" (Ibid., Republican-American, March 21, 2019, p. 8a)
 2. Hosea 6:9 complained of priests en route through Shechem to worship the golden calves at Bethel were actually murdering people (Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Hos. 6:9) akin to the refusal of the mainstream media to give adequate coverage to the mass slaughter of Christians worldwide by Islamist terrorists lest it arouse the American public into action to intervene as complained by Dave Velez of Waterbury in his letter.
 3. Hosea 6:10 told of cult prostitution in Israel, and prostitution is so widespread in America that even the owner of the New England Patriots has himself twice been caught on tape involved in sexual acts with prostitutes in a Florida massage parlor, and he has even publicly apologized for his misbehavior.

4. Hosea 10:4 reported on false oaths that were being taken followed by many resulting lawsuits, what we see in the many charges surrounding the case involved in special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation and the seemingly endless series of investigations and legal proceedings still to follow regarding the matter.
5. Hosea 10:13 critiqued the tendency of Israel's people to rely on their own understanding instead of living by faith in God, what is reflected in the testimony of Suelyn Farel who admitted that she was wrong to rely on her own judgment of the character of her company's employees. (Ibid., Rosenberg)
6. Amos 2:7a complained of injustices to the poor, where the rich longed to see (pant after) the poor reduced to the place where dust is thrown on their heads as a sign of grief (Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Amos 2:7), and our legislature seeks to install tolls to milk the public out of as much money as it can to meet its huge budget.
7. Amos 4:1-2 told of women who oppressed the poor and indulged in wine, and our lawmakers are thinking of legalizing marijuana, what has been shown to increase violent crime against the public in other states.

II. Yet, in mercy, God had compassion on Israel's oppressed, apostate people, so regardless of the nation's involvement in religious syncretism, the Lord gave Israel relief from oppression, 2 Kings 14:25-29:

- A. The Hebrew text at 2 Kings 14:26 describes the dire oppression of Israel's apostate people: the particle of negation, '*epes*, meaning "cessation," occurs twice -- once before "imprisoned" ('*asur*) and also before "freed" ('*azub*), to clarify how **every** slave and **every** free man had ceased to avoid being oppressed (Kittel, *Bib. Heb.*, p. 583; H. A. W., *Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T.*, 1980, v. I, p. 65; B. D. B., *A Heb. & Eng. Lex. of the O. T.*, p. 67, 783, 737), and there was no '*ozer*, no helper. (Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 740) Israel faced a crisis of hopelessness, what talk show hosts and newspaper editorials often claim about our country in our day!
- B. God had compassion on His people, and He did not say He would blot out Israel's name in judgment (2 Kings 14:27a), so He used even godless king Jeroboam II to help them: God had Jonah who He had sent to Nineveh to predict that Jeroboam II would restore Israel's border, 2 Kings 14:25, 27b; *Bible Know. Com., O. T.*, p. 566.
- C. The way God fulfilled this prophecy displayed His great mercy for the people of Israel (as follows):
 1. First, the Lord arranged for Israel's Gentile oppressors, the Arameans and Assyrians, to become weakened:
 - a. Israel's Aramean enemies immediately to the north of Israel's border were "weakened by attacks from the Assyrians to their northeast under Adad-nirari III," Ibid.
 - b. Yet, the Assyrians themselves were also weakened, "suffering from the threat of attack from the Urutu people on their northern frontier," from "internal dissension and" from "a series of weak rulers," Ibid.
 2. With this power vacuum in her oppressive Gentile neighbors, Israel saw God mercifully use Jeroboam II's administrative skills that he had learned from his father Jehoash (2 Kings 14:11-14; Ibid.; 2 Kings 14:27b) to lead his modest army to recover Israel's territory that had been lost to the Arameans, land stretching from Lebo Hamath "over 150 miles northeast of the Sea of Kinnereth (Sea of Galilee)" south to the "sea of the plain," that is, the Dead Sea, 2 Kings 14:25; Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to 2 Kings 14:25. (2 Kings 14:28-29)

Lesson: *When everyone in apostate Israel, whether bond or free, suffered great oppression, and there was no spiritually qualified human deliverer to help, the Lord MERCIFULLY weakened Israel's oppressors and enabled even ungodly Jeroboam II to use his administrative skills to recover Israel's lost land and give the people relief.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) In facing oppressive apostasy today, may we rely on the Lord Who mercifully gave the helplessly oppressed people of Israel in Jeroboam II's reign relief from some oppression to come to our aid that we might live productive lives for Him even in our evil era.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

The Lord's merciful relief from oppression occurred in a case involving one of the men of our Church. He went to a pharmacy a few years ago to pick up a prescription that a specialist had called in for him. When he got to the pharmacy, the pharmacist, a woman with an accent indicating she was of European heritage, asked him if she could speak to him alone, so he heeded her hand signal that he follow her over to a side counter where she asked him, "Do you know what this drug will do to you?" She then warned him about the drug she was about to sell him!

The man waited to ingest the drug until he got a second physician's opinion, and the second doctor echoed the pharmacist's warning and then some! The man is now very relieved that he did not ingest the drug! In retrospect, he believes the Lord worked in the heart of that woman pharmacist of Eastern European heritage to warn him as a protective guard in his behalf when he was completely vulnerable to undesirable harm and was totally unaware of it.

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we then rely on the Lord MERCIFULLY to come to our aid when we helplessly face oppression today that we might live for Him in blessing even in our apostate era.