2 Kings - Commentaries by Norman W. Berry

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, 2 Kings 9, Verses 25-37, Day 178 -

Article from https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb

V.25 If you would like to trace something interesting, look back into the history of king Ahab and see what the Lord said would happen (1 Kings 21). Read it to see why and how God had made the promise that punishment would come. Just stop for a moment and try to think how awful it is going to be for our unsaved friends and relatives when they die, to suddenly realize that they are lost and will be in hell forever, because they didn't believe the Word of God which had so plainly told them that they would be damned if they did not believe (Read 2 Thess. 2:12). But, may we who are believers, remember the precious blood of Christ which was shed so that we would never, never be punished for our sins — He took the punishment. May we realize the awfulness of one sin.

Many, many years went by, but here we read of the field of Naboth again! Neither Ahab nor Jezebel escaped.

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, 2 Kings 9, Verses 1-24, Day 177 -

V.1-4 It may be difficult for you to sort out the kings of the two kingdoms in the land of Israel. Not one of the kings of the 10 tribes — called the "kingdom of Israel" — obeyed the Lord. Their wickedness brought on themselves the severest punishment of God, as we are now going to read. So prepare yourself, remembering that the Lord had warned them.

V.1-4 Elisha, the Lord's prophet, doesn't get involved with this new king over the kingdom of Israel. He sends one of the sons of the prophets to proclaim him king.

V.4-26 But there were two messages delivered to this other man. (1) To tell him that he was to be king; (2) to tell him to punish the house of Ahab for all its wickedness. Both messages appeal to Jehu's nature. He carries out the second with great energy. God was punishing for the evil, but Jehu was doing it to strengthen his own position as king.

The Lost Axe Head and Restoration: The Older to the Younger With Love, Lost Axe Head ... and Restoration, The

The Older to the Younger...with love

Many share a deep concern about the days in which we live, the wickedness abounding and the subtle attacks of Satan, even from within. With this in mind, I would like to bring before you several different occasions where older ones spoke to those younger, both from the Old Testament, from the New and also by a few comments from an older brother to those of you who are growing into responsibilities among believers.

An Older One Speaks to a Younger—Old Testament

Please turn to 2 Kings 6:1-7. "And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it."

In earlier chapters these younger ones, the sons of the prophets, were not in a good state of soul; they missed the mind of the Lord. But it would seem, possibly because of the previous chapter where Elisha had performed that wonderful work for Naaman, that these younger ones were now growing in their souls. They said, "Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us." There appears to be a desire to develop. They consult with an older one. I observe with joy you who have a desire to draw from the older ones, that you are going on with the Lord, and are thus growing in your souls. You will be blessed, and a blessing.

Desiring Fellowship of the Older Man

Then these younger ones said, "Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan." Jordan is the place of death; this was surely progress in their souls. But notice, they consulted with him. They didn't branch out into independency. It is so much the spirit of this day for younger ones to say, "We don't need to be consulting the older ones...they are living in a past day." These younger ones said to Elisha, "Let us go...unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam." Each one was going to take a beam personally; not forming into groups or cliques. "...and let us make us a place there where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye." What happy approval! It has long been noticed that younger ones who act in independency without seeking the fellowship of the brethren, often end in disaster. "And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants." They lovingly said, "We are not going to go without you, Elisha." This is the road to wisdom and blessing. He replied, I will go." (Read Psa. 133:1, 3.)

“So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood." Wood often in Scripture speaks of humanity. It can apply primarily to Christ. He, the eternal Son of God, became a human being. In Hag. 1:8 it says, "Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house." May we all desire to be building the testimony of His grace, to the blessed Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here Comes a Test

“…they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water." Let us consider the ax head as a picture of the truth. He loses the ax head in the water. He thinks immediately of the older man, the "man of God," and confesses it was borrowed. The truth is not ours; it is committed to us as a trust; we can lose it. May we value it and the One of whom it speaks! This "man of God" could have reached into his pocket, taken out an ax head, and said, "here is another." But instead he asks, "Where fell it?" Where did you lose it? This is very important. If we lose the truth it is not only the immediate loss of it that we need to fear, but it is where the drift started. We don't leave the Lord's Table at right angles; nor is it without going through many "red lights." He had to go back to the place—the place of departure. When we neglect this, we are on the way to the loss of discernment, and of the truth itself.

“And he showed him the place." He took him right to the spot. He didn't blame the quality of the ax, he valued it.

The Shadow of the Cross of Christ

“And he cut down a stick." How touching! Written long, long before the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not that we need to be saved over again, but we need to get back to the cross—the beginning of our blessing—-the foundation. This also is where we find our restoration. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "And the iron did swim." Miracle! Oh, prove the Lord, and find out that He is faithful to His Word. But the ax head did not attach itself to the handle. "Therefore said he (Elisha), Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand and took it." Precious! He had to get down on his hands and knees, reach out and personally take that ax head, and put it back on to the ax handle. The truth was restored to him; but he had to take a humble place. God is faithful to His Word if we obey.

New Testament "Axe Heads”

The apostle Paul, the older, to Timothy, the younger: 2 Tim. 2:15:

Study to show (or, strive diligently to present) thyself approved to God, a workman that needeth (has) not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (cutting in a straight line) the word of truth.”

Timothy was to be a workman, as it were, cutting with his ax in a straight line. "The Word of Truth" was to be carefully handled. Timothy was not to lose his "ax head.”

Another "Ax Head”

1 Tim. 4:12-16. "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity (love), in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both sane thyself, and them that hear thee.”

"Let no man despise thy youth." It was not that the apostle Paul was saying to Timothy, "don't let them push you around because you are a younger brother," but rather Paul was saying to him, "Consistency, Timothy, consistency. If you are living out in your life the truth that you are teaching, they will not despise you." Paul was teaching that younger brother heavenly truth that he, himself, had received from an ascended and glorified Lord in heaven. We have been loaned this truth; here is our "ax head." May we be wielding that ax head in truth.

Consistency in our life is so important! We all have a tendency to drift from "cutting in a straight line." Fathers and mothers also need this. There is no moral power, fathers, if there is inconsistency in your life.

Paul Continues

“Be thou an example (or, a model) d the believers." Today, are the younger ones saying, "Well those are the old brethren; and when they have passed on, then we will be able to get on to newer ways of dealing with problems and such things?" It is Christ whom we need; consistency to the blessed Word of God! It is the applying of that "ax head" consistently that is going to bring honor to the Lord Jesus Christ in our life. Then there will be blessing. "Inward purity" —we are living in a day when morals are rapidly declining. The world's winds are blowing into our Assemblies; we need to have inward purity in our lives. Then Paul says, "give attendance (or, give thyself) to reading"—the precious Word of God. Reading around the home table is important for us all; but personal reading is essential to our growth, "to exhortation"—to be giving a word to another when we see the need. Do we have a love for each other, and a concern?

Careful Use of "Ax Head" Brings Reward

Then he says (verse 14): "Neglect not the gift that is in thee (be not negligent). Every one of us has received a gift. If we are using that gift, we are going to do it easily. Take on those responsibilities; if the Lord leaves us here much longer, we older ones shall be gone.

“Meditate upon (or, occupy thyself with) these things..." "These things" are heavenly truth; not the problems of this life. We are surely surrounded by problems. But the answer is Christ. He is the answer for every problem! "Give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting (or, progress) may appear to all." How encouraging it is to see the younger ones growing in their souls and assuming responsibility; not leaving all to the older ones. The Lord will bless you.

Mothers: Keep Your Eye on the Ax Head

You mothers—don't give up! We are living in dark days. May you be an example and an encouragement to your daughters, young and old. Keep on! We think of Timothy's mother, and his grandmother.

Paul says, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine (or, teaching); continue in them..." He warned in the 20th chapter of Acts of the dangers from without, but he also warned of the dangers from within.

Another "Ax Head"... 2 Tim. 3:14

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured (or, fully persuaded) of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." We cannot learn truth from those who do not walk in it. If we are drawing from those who have bought the truth—paid for it in faithfulness to the Word of God—-and have left us their scripturally-proven writings, then we are going to be established in the truth. We tend to be thinking that there are new ways that we need to be adapting ourselves to. It is the truth we need, and to be living it daily! It is not profitable to be finding fault with those who may be allowing things in their homes that are doing so much harm, but rather to be encouraging others to resist the pressures to give in to those things. Resist the tendency of your peers to be compromising. Stand for the truth and you will experience the Lord's preserving care; you shall know the joy of living in a dark day for the Lord's glory.

Ax Head Care

2 Tim. 3:13, 14. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou..." When the older brother, Paul, was writing to Timothy, in almost the first or second sentence he penned he said (1 Tim. 1:3): "...charge them that they teach no other doctrine." That may sound very narrow. There are no new doctrines—no new approaches. We have the Word of God; we have the Holy Spirit living in our hearts, and He is the teacher; He would occupy us with Christ. "Continue thou." Keep on, beloved ones. May it be Christ alone!

Hold the Ax Handle Tightly

Notice the end of Chapter 4. These are Paul's closing words to the beloved Timothy, and the last the Apostle penned in Scripture, Verse 22: "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen." He is laying down his pen forever. But he has given us such a heritage! You sisters, who may be married, walk on yourself, consistently; encourage your husband to stand for the Lord against the darkness that is creeping in amongst us, sad to say. Continue thou! The power of Christ shall rest upon you (2 Cor. 12:9). The day of faith will soon be over—all the trials and sorrows—and the fever of life shall be gone forever! The blessed Lord Jesus is coming soon!

To learn, and yet to learn, whilst life goes by, So pass the student days...

Thus to be great, and do great things, and die, And lie embalmed in praise.

My work is but to lose, and to forget; Thus small, despised to be, All to unlearn, this task before me set, Unlearn all else, but Thee.

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, 2 Kings 6, Verses 15-33, Day 174 -

V.15-17 To natural sight, Elisha’s position was hopeless. But to faith there is a bright side. May verse 16 be our constant thought. It will be, if we live with a tender conscience toward the Lord.

V.19 Elisha was the “man of God” in verses 6, 9-10, but notice it is missing here.

V.20 Elisha was experienced with the power of God, and wouldn’t neglect showing the grace of God. If we are conscious of the grace, we will know the power.

V.24-33 Now we come to Elisha’s last great appearance. Remember that Israel’s own disobedience to God had brought this famine on them. Read the warnings in Leviticus 26:21-29 and Deuteronomy 28:49-57.

V.30 Notice that the king wore two things. He was trying to be two things at once. Had he worn just the last item mentioned, there would not have been this famine. He was half-hearted in his humility. Sackcloth is a picture of repentance and humility.

V.25-32 Notice the contrast between what all the people and the king were doing with what Elisha is doing (Isa. 26:3).

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, 2 Kings 6, Verses 1-14, Day 173 -

Elisha is able to adjust to all kinds of people kings, widows, lepers and now to men building a house. The Apostle Paul could preach to kings (Acts 26:1-2), and pick up sticks for a fire (Acts 28:3). They were both like our blessed Lord, Who designed and created the world, yet could take up a little child in His arms.

V.1-7 This story can be like a believer; he has the truth “loaned” to him, but loses it. Usually, we start down that road when we stop reading the Scriptures each day. He has to go back to the very spot where he lost it.

V.6 The “stick” (wood) can be a picture of the cross of the Lord Jesus. We need to realize that the death of Christ has paid for our sins.

V.7 Then we reach out our hand and we are restored and thankful.

V.8-23 Once more we see God’s grace working through Elisha. This time it is to warn the king of Israel of the secret plans of the enemy!

V.11-14 The king of Syria sends a whole army to catch one man. The ungodly person realizes his weakness against God and against God’s people. So we need to realize that if God is with us, it does not matter how strong the enemy may appear.

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, 2 Kings 23, Verses 15-37, Day 196 -

V.15-20 While king Josiah was ordering all these idolatrous things to be destroyed, he noticed some places where people had been buried (sepulchers). There were the places where the bones of the false prophets who had lived many, many years before. His eye caught a name which was engraved on a sepulcher. The men told him that it was the grave of that man of God who had lived about 350 years before (1 Kings 13:1, 30). So we see the two results — preservation for the two prophets, and destruction for all which was not of God.

V.21-23 One of the reasons this Passover was never equaled before or after it, was because everything was done according to God's Word! What a message for every one of us today.

V.24 Remember that idolatry is always connected with worship. The human heart is never satisfied unless it has an object to worship. Today Satan is succeeding in deceiving millions through his cults with religious appearance. Even true believers are being led away from the truth of Scripture.

V.25 Those awful conditions were no hindrance to this king. Read carefully what it says about his faithfulness. Notice it was with his spirit (heart), soul and body (might).

V.26-27 In spite of the faithfulness of the king, God would not change from the severe punishment He had already announced (Read Jer. 15:4).

V.29-37 The punishment commences. Judah loses its faithful king Josiah, and gets two evil kings, both being the sons of Josiah. The kingdom of Judah is under the control of the king — "Pharaoh" means king. Like Caesar, Kaiser, Czar.

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, 2 Kings 23, Verses 1-14, Day 195 -

V.1-2 Having read the Word of God himself, the next important step was to have it read to all the people. It would not have been right just to tell the people about the Word. He wanted them to hear the words for themselves. That is why we say repeatedly that the purpose of these outlines is to encourage you to read the Word of God for yourself and have it affect you.

V.3 He doesn't ask them to do what he was not doing himself. The italic letters, not in the original writings, give the impression that the people first made the promise. But it was really the king. Then the people agreed.

V.4 The first job was to get rid of the corruption. And this is always God's order. Believers don't learn God's truth until they are willing to separate from what they know is wrong in their life (Isa. 1:16-17).

V.5 Then the religious evil had to be put away. Do you understand what this means in your life?

V.6-14 Does he say "oh, what is the harm in that?" or "everyone is doing it, so it might be all right?" No. He decided everything by what God's Word said. Are we?

V.12 Notice the last word in verse 4 — Bethel (also in verses 15, 17). Now turn back to 1 Kings 12:26-29! This was hundreds of years before. (See Eccl. 3:15, last part). God doesn't change. He had foretold 350 years before that "a child ... Josiah" would destroy the altar of Bethel (1 Kings 13:2). Not only is Josiah's name in the Bible 350 years before he is born, but also that he would do this to the very same altar!

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, 2 Kings 18, Verses 17-37, Day 190 -

The three representatives of the Assyrian king meet the representatives of king Hezekiah. They do their best to discourage any trust in the Lord or in anyone else. They apparently knew that Hezekiah was trusting in the Lord, so they mock the Lord really.

V.32 The enemy offers them an imitation of their own wonderful land (Deut. 8:7-8). The enemy's land was certainly not anything as good as their own land of Israel. Satan's prizes are false.

V.37 Not having faith in the Lord as Hezekiah had, these three men are very upset, and bring the message to Hezekiah.

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, 2 Kings 18, Verses 1-16, Day 189 -

V.1-8 Now back again to the kingdom of Judah. In the whole story of king Hezekiah, we see what can be done when the heart is turned toward God. If only the other kingdom had done this! Notice how the Lord was pleased, and helped him.

V.9-12 The Assyrians had taken the other kingdom captive. Its capital was Samaria. The reason why the enemy could win was not because they were stronger, but because of what we read in the 12th verse.

V.13-16 Eight years later, the Assyrian army returns to do the same thing to the kingdom of Judah. But will it succeed? Will king Hezekiah also be disobedient, or will he turn to the Lord? He had a very disobedient and foolish father (2 Kings 16:10-20), and it would have been easy for him to follow his father's ideas. At first, when Assyria took the other towns of Judah, Hezekiah pays a tribute. But this was not trusting the Lord. It only put off the evil day.

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, 2 Kings 16, Verses 11-20, Day 187 -

V.11 The priest back at home, who should have been a guardian of God's truth, weakly goes along with the king's plans and makes an altar, copying the plan which the king had sent him. Many believers today are doing the same thing. They are worshipping at altars that are copies of the Old Testament Jewish laws. For instance, having a building which is called the house of God this is copying the temple idea. God says He doesn't live now in temples (buildings) made with hands (Acts 17:24), but He lives in every believer (1 Cor. 6:19). Or having one man, appointed by the congregation, who does all the preaching, and who alone is allowed to give the bread and wine at communion — this is copying the priest idea from Leviticus, and quenches the Spirit of God (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19). And God says that now all believers are priests (I Peter 2:5) and that all believers are equally important (1 Cor. 12:140. If our own will, what we think, takes over, we will not be able to see anything wrong with these things (Job 34:32).

V.12-13 He probably thought that it was very attractive looking. The human mind must have some form of religion, and if left to itself, always goes to something attractive to the eye, but which is really idolatry. See verse 2 for God's opinion. We all need to be reminded that the Word of God, as guided by the Holy Spirit, is the only authority.

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, 2 Kings 16, Verses 1-10, Day 186 -

The story of Ahaz king of Judah. He had a good father (2 Kings 15:32-38) to show him the right way of the Lord. He is a picture of believers who stubbornly refuse to change their ways to conform to the Word of God (See Hos. 4:17). A person who persists in following his own way, is often led away into worse error. This king is an example.

V.10-18 Ahaz, king of Judah, goes to visit the king of Assyria. But God wants His people to keep separate from those people who worship idols. Notice what appeals to his eyes! He prefers this altar to the one which God had designed (Ex. 27:1-2). Did this please God? Of course not. Many believers today think that it is perfectly correct to learn a bit from different religions. Denominations which borrow from Judaism and the other religions are doing this. Pray that our eyes might be opened to see the errors into which Satan is leading many believers. All done to rob the Lord Jesus of the glory He deserves.

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, 2 Kings 10, Verses 18-36, Day 180 -

God was acting for a different purpose than Jehu was. Jehu was doing all this to strengthen himself as king. Both purposes were being accomplished!

V.29-30 But God saw exactly what the heart of Jehu was like.

V.31-36 You would think that Jehu would have learned something about God from all these things, but no. He was just like millions today, thinking that God doesn't notice everything, even the heart of the man who was carrying out His purposes.

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, 2 Kings 10, Verses 1-17, Day 179 -

We could never understand the awful events in these verses unless we remember two things, (1) that a perfect and holy God has put them in the Bible, and (2) that He sooner or later punishes every sin that is ever committed. Either you will be cast into hell for your sins, or Jesus has been punished for every one of your sins.

V.1 Samaria was the capital, Jezreel was a place in Israel; Jerusalem was the capital of the kingdom of Judah.

V.2-3 King Jehu uses these strange methods to do what God had told him to do.

V.4-5 The leaders of Israel are afraid, for they suspect something is going wrong.

V.6-7 The severe punishment from God falls on these seventy princes, the sons of wicked king Ahab.

V.9-11 Not only the princes, but all these four groups. It was total removal from the earth of all those who had served Ahab. Remember this is a picture of God's righteous punishment of every unrepentant sinner today.

V.12-17 These men, who had come from the King of Judah, were killed on orders from Jehu, he even boasts of his zeal for the Lord in all that he was doing!