

From Faith to Faith

Granbury Street Church of Christ

Seeing Through the Fog

Kevin W. Rhodes

Elisha traveled throughout greater Palestine and beyond during his prophetic ministry. When Ben-Hadad reigned in Damascus as king of Syria, Elisha came to the city, which provoked interest in the Gentile potentate because he was sick and because acknowledged Elisha's role due to his past dealings with the prophet. Therefore, wishing to know if he would recover of his illness, the king sent his servant, Hazael, to inquire of Elisha about his health, producing a memorable exchange in anticipation of a momentous occasion in the history of Syria. When Elisha heard the question, he responded, "Go, say to him, 'You shall certainly recover.' However the LORD has shown me that he will really die" (2 Kings 8:10). At first glance it might seem that Elisha advised him to lie, but what follows proves this to be far from the case. Having said this, the prophet stared directly at Hazael until the Syrian servant became embarrassed. Elisha then began weeping. When Hazael asked why, Elisha replied, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel: Their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword; and you will dash their children, and rip open their women with child" (2 Kings 8:12). Hazael took offense to such a harsh statement, saying, "But what is your servant—a dog, that he should do this gross thing?" (2 Kings 8:13). However, Elisha then explained that he would do so as king of Syria. Hazael then left, gave Ben-Hadad the answer as instructed, and proceeded to murder him the following day (2 Kings 8:14-15).

Surely Hazael knew his own character! Why would he take offense to what Elisha said, especially considering what he did shortly afterward? First, he might have drawn a line between what he would do personally and what he would have others do on his behalf, but he did not seem to have any problem committing murder. Second, the prophecy of his becoming king might have made the earlier prophecy more palatable to him, though that seems unlikely. Third, it is one thing to have evil plans in your heart; it is quite another to realize someone else knows exactly what you are thinking. This seems the most likely explanation, especially considering Elisha's staring Hazael down to the point of embarrassment at the beginning of the narrative. People today regularly behave in a similar manner. They contemplate evil in private but attempt to maintain an aura of respectability and morality in public. Even Christians will show up on Sunday morning for worship after a Saturday evening of debauchery and, when questioned, provide enough "Who me?" looks of innocence to rival a toddler. We need more willingness and skill to see through the fog people try to create for themselves to expose a heart far from God. It does no good for that person or the church to keep pretending.

Shepherds

Sid Carruth
Kenneth Helm
Clark Lehtinen
George Sowell

Deacons

Gary Barger
Jeff Day
Vince Grinnell
Justin Hewlett
Bill Hughes
Tim Norman

Preacher

Kevin Rhodes

Sunday

Bible Study
9:00 am

AM Worship
10:00 am

PM Worship
5:00 pm

Wednesday

Ladies Class
10:00 am

Bible Study
7:00 pm

Cleburne, Texas

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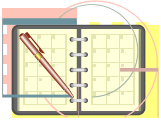
Obedience Doesn't Argue with God - 3

Kevin W. Rhodes

The heart of discipleship does not argue about the means God uses to accomplish His purpose as if He should accommodate our personal expectations. To the contrary, a disciple's heart should be trained to accept whatever God says with a commitment to do exactly what God wants, with a faith strong enough to accept God's wisdom in the process. A disciple's heart does not require a detailed explanation from God on every subject. A disciple trusts that God has a reason for it, obeys, and then considers the possible reasons for God's design. Yet far too many people answer various biblical exhortations with "Why do I have to?" instead of with "Your will be done." The Syrian general Naaman certainly fell into this latter category. He traveled from Syria to Israel and stood at Elisha's door with high hopes of being healed of his leprosy; however, rather than accept the simple command delivered by Elisha's servant, he balked, complained, argued, and ranted: "But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, 'Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.' Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?' So he turned and went away in a rage" (2 Kings 5:11-12). Naaman failed originally because he let his own preconceptions dictate his reaction to an inspired command. He previously decided—in his own estimation—what the prophet ought to do and, not surprisingly, experienced deep disappointment at what the prophet actually commanded him to do. Thus, having elevated his own opinion to the level of the divine, he preferred arguing to obedience—a pattern oft repeated in the annals of spiritual history. Thankfully, when questioned gently by his own servant, he repented of his recalcitrant behavior and did exactly what Elisha had commanded, immersing himself in the Jordan seven times. A disciple retires all his former expecta-

tions to accept without argument the will of God as expressed in holy writ.

Finally, discipleship does not argue about God's wisdom. People can waste a tremendous amount of energy and time pondering all the possibilities the world offers, instead of realizing from the first that God's way will always be the best way. Even while in Egypt, ancient Israel questioned God's wisdom. Focused solely on the moment and their own comfort, they found it difficult to endure any hardship, despite the promise of deliverance it accompanied. When Pharaoh reacted harshly to Moses and made life more difficult on the people, they blamed Moses and the LORD instead of Pharaoh. When they found themselves thirsty and hungry in the wilderness—despite after witnessing the power of the LORD exhibited in the ten plagues—they whined and wanted to return to Egypt, to go back to what they knew: slavery and oppression. Such describes their history throughout the centuries. Influenced greatly by the nations they failed to drive out of Canaan, they ultimately approached the prophet Samuel requesting that he give them a king. He offered them rebuke and reproof, objections and warnings. "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, 'No, but we will have a king over us'" (1 Sam. 8:19). Having adopted the "grass is always greener" philosophy to life, they opted for the world's wisdom over God's, and so it often happens today. Rather than turning to the Bible with a heart dedicated to learning what God wants, people look toward the world and ask "Why can't we do that?" Worldly wisdom has the allure of flash and ease, but only God's wisdom has substance. Worldly wisdom is a get rich quick scheme built on deception; God's wisdom offers the promise of an inheritance of untold value built on a deep relationship with the heavenly Father. Disciples do not try to get around what God says; disciples work at doing it. They do not argue with God's wisdom; they learn to listen so that they will grow wiser as a result.



News and Notes

Among our sick

- Bob Baze continues to need our prayers.
- Nancy Griffith, Jean Gorman's sister, is in critical condition. She is a member at the Southside church of Christ. The family has asked for prayers.
- Jack Hewlett remains in room 302 at Walls Hospital.
- Doug Kilcrease had outpatient surgery on his nose and face last Friday.
- Kidron Lehtinen's MRI has been postponed to February 12th.
- Paul Wilkinson saw the doctor this week to get the results of his tests.
- Jo Ann Williams had cataract surgery last Monday, February 3rd.

Directory Update

Caleb and Maddie Norman

425 I00F Street Apt. 2111

Denton, TX 76201

Please Note

- Senior Game Night will be Tuesday, February 11th, starting at 6:00 PM in the annex.
- Family Day will be on Saturday, February 22nd, in the annex. Ezra 8 will be the topic of study. Please see Darla Grinnell and Ginger Owens about lunch plans.
- There is still time to get your recipes to Jeri Allen.
- The Gospel Journal sign up sheet is in the foyer for anyone that would like to subscribe to it. If there are 10 that sign up the cost is \$18.00. The regular cost is \$20.00.

Those who Serve Lords' Supper: 2/09

Front South

Will Cammack
Ken Boroughs
Dale Ash

Back South

J. D. Allen
Gary Barger
Weldon York

Front North

Colton Allen
D. J. Stucky
Gene Threadgill

Back North

Sid Carruth
Jordan Collins
Don Crecelius

Leading prayers:

Sunday AM

Paul Doyel
Don Crecelius

Sunday PM

Tim Norman
Dale Mullen

Wednesday PM

Kyle Day

Announcements:

Sunday AM-PM:

Paul Murphy

Wednesday

Paul Murphy

Song leaders:

Sunday AM

Russ Jones

Sunday PM

Russ Jones

Wednesday PM

Jeff McPherson

Foyer Personnel:

Sunday & Wednesday

J. D. Allen

Collection Counting

Paul Murphy / Jeff Day / Kyle Day

Wed. PM Devotional (2/12)

Russ Jones



Sermons for Sunday

AM

A Relationship with Jesus

PM

The Preacher's Bill of Rights
1 Corinthians 9:1-12



Listen to the Gospel!

Luis and Mike in the Mornings

(Monday - Friday) from 7:00 am - 9:00 am cst on
KnowTheTruthRadio.org

Biblical Foundations with Pat McIntosh

(Tuesday - Thursday) 7:00 am or 11:00 am
btradio.net



Our Records

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| Bible Class | 110 |
| AM Worship..... | 187 |
| PM Worship | 107 |
| Wednesday Bible Class 2/5..... | 114 |
| Contribution | \$7,939 |

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