

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Deuteronomy: Moses' Great Appeal For Israel To Obey God For Blessing Part V: Specific Treaty Stipulations Of The Great King, Deuteronomy 12-26 D. Heeding God's Commands Simply Because He Gives Them (Deuteronomy 14:3-21)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We at Nepaug Bible Church have long believed and taught that when God gives us a Scripture command, He expects us to obey it unconditionally. Consequently, what some of us a few weeks ago learned that a number of reputable, conservative, nationally known Evangelical leaders did four years ago has amazed and concerned us:

(1) In 2009, leaders of Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Evangelical groups met to draft "The Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience" to oppose abortion, gay marriage and a violation of religious rights by the government. (Chet Plimpton, New Tribes Mission, "Manhattan Declaration: A Synopsis," 1/2010)

(2) However, John MacArthur, Pastor of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, reports that this declaration also gives the "implicit assumption (from the start of the document until its final paragraph) . . . that Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant Evangelicals and others all share a common faith in and a common commitment to the gospel's essential claims. The document repeatedly employs expressions like 'we [and] our fellow believers'; 'As Christians, we . . .'; and 'we claim the heritage of . . . Christians.' That seriously muddles the lines of demarcation between authentic biblical Christianity and various apostate traditions. The Declaration therefore constitutes a formal avowal of brotherhood between Evangelical signatories and purveyors of different gospels." (John MacArthur, "The Manhattan Declaration," gty.org/resources/print/articles/A390) For an Evangelical then to sign the document would put him in violation of God's Galatians 1:8-9 call to excommunicate those of false gospels!

(3) Nevertheless, the list of Evangelicals who signed the Manhattan Declaration shockingly reads like a Who's Who among reputable, conservative, nationally known Evangelical leaders: they include Dr. Mark L. Bailey, President of the Dallas Theological Seminary; Dr. James Dobson, Founder of Focus on the Family; Dr. Michael Easley, President Emeritus of the Moody Bible Institute; Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer, Pastor of The Moody Church; Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Dr. Joseph Stowell, President of Cornerstone University; Chuck Swindoll, Chancellor of the Dallas Theological Seminary and Ravi Zacharias, Founder and Chairman of the Ravi Zacharias International Ministries. (Ibid., Plimpton)

Need: So, we ask, "If reputable, conservative, nationally known Evangelical leaders violated a Scripture command on the salvation gospel ministry to counter government evil, what are we at the local church level to do? **WHY?!**"

- I. Seen in the arbitrary way He gave her diet, God wanted Israel to obey His Word just because He gave it:**
- A. Though God's Deuteronomy 14:3-21 directives on Israel's diet is part of His Deuteronomy 12-26 specific treaty stipulations instructing Israel on specific challenges she would face upon entering Canaan (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 260, 283), that diet did not itself counter ancient near Eastern pagan practices or beliefs:
1. The diet did not ban Israel's eating all animals used by pagans in worship such as the pig, but it allowed God's people to eat bulls though many pagan groups worshipped them, Deut. 14:4, 7-8; Ibid., p. 288.
 2. Also, the diet God gave Israel did not ban all animals that preyed on other animals to counter the pagan belief that partaking of the blood of still living but dying animals prolonged one's life (as I myself have [errantly] previously taught!), for some of the banned animals are purely vegetarian (as follows):
 - a. The "hare" (*'arnebet*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 286) and "coney" (*shapan*, Ibid.), i. e. the Syrian rock hyrax, were both forbidden from Israel's diet at Deuteronomy 14:7; Zon. Pict. Ency. of the Bible, v. One, p. 937.
 - b. However, the "hare" is a vegetarian: upon chewing and swallowing its food, its intestinal bacteria only break it down on the first pass through the hare's digestive tract, so the hare re-ingests it again in a process called refection to obtain the full nutrient value from what it originally ate, Ibid., v. Three, p. 33.
 - c. The "coney" (hyrax) eats mostly leaves and some other vegetation, and it is so timid, it never ventures far from protective rock crevices, so it would be unable to survive were it a predator, Ibid., v. One, p. 937.
- B. In fact, there is no other explainable practical purpose for the Deuteronomy 14:3-21 diet that God gave Israel:
1. The diet is not explainable for the reason of health:
 - a. Jesus later declared all foods to be clean (Mark 7:14-23; Ibid., Bib. Kno. Com., N. T., p. 287-288), and all of the Deuteronomy 14 restrictions were removed for the Church in Acts 10:9-16 and 1 Timothy 4:4.
 - b. These moves would not come from a Good God if the Deuteronomy 14 banned were animals unhealthy!

2. The diet is not explainable in terms of theory of the "Symbolic View" of Scripture:
 - a. Some theorize that God distinguished between "clean" and "unclean" animals to signify in a symbolic manner the distinctions between "good" and "evil," Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 288.
 - b. However, this theory is "divorced from the controls of grammatical historical exegesis, and is therefore impossible to validate" Biblically, Ibid.
 3. The diet is not a testimony of God's favoring certain animal parts and functions as the Sovereign Creator:
 - a. One might think God gave this diet to testify of Himself as the Creator in distinguishing edible from banned animals based on the classification of preferred body parts and functions, that only land animals that chewed the cud and divided the hoof or fish that had fins and scales could be eaten, Deut. 14:6, 9.
 - b. However, there are grand exceptions in the diet to this theory: (1) no body parts distinguish edible from banned birds (Deut. 14:11-18), and (2) all insects that had wings that functioned to equip them to fly were banned (Deut. 14:19) in contrast to some birds that flew but were nevertheless deemed edible, Deut. 14:20.
- C. Accordingly, we conclude that **God ARBITRARILY set Israel's Deuteronomy 14:3-21 diet, making her utterly unique among the nations, calling her to obey His diet SIMPLY BECAUSE HE GAVE IT!**
- II. God's Word was binding for all Israel, both small and great, even for her kings, cf. 1 Samuel 15:1-23:**
- A. Israel's king Saul had been directed from God through the prophet Samuel to perform holy war against the wicked Amalekites, destroying all of the people and animals of this Gentile people group, 1 Samuel 15:1-3.
 - B. However, Saul and the people with him spared the king and the best of the animals of the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:7-9), and Saul later told Samuel that he intended to sacrifice the spared animals to God, 1 Samuel 15:15.
 - C. However, Samuel replied that obedience was better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22), that disobedience to God's Word even for sacrifice was rebellion like unto the sin of witchcraft, 1 Samuel 15:23a.

Lesson: *From God's arbitrary dietary laws of Deuteronomy 14:3-21 and from His directives in 1 Samuel 15:1-23, we know that God expected all Israel, both small and great, to heed His Word simply because He gave it!*

Application: *May we (1) trust in Christ to be saved, John 1:11-12. (2) Then, may we (a) all (b) rely on the Holy Spirit for the power (Gal. 5:16; Rom. 8:3-4) (b) to obey God's Word unconditionally (c) simply because He gave it!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) The fact that so **many** reputable, conservative, nationally known Evangelicals compromised the gospel in act by signing the Manhattan Declaration shows our own need at the local church level to discern **how** such an event **could** ever **occur** so **we** might **avoid** it ourselves. A case study would help, and we have one in a man Time magazine called the "reigning intellectual of the evangelical movement in the U. S.," Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr. (Ibid., Plimpton)

Back in 1996, Dr. Mohler had written the following accurate critique about Evangelical compromise: "The twentieth-century evangelical movement in America grew out of a sincere and urgent desire to identify with . . . the faith 'once for all handed down to the saints' (Jude 3) . . . in contrast to modernist and liberal compromise among Protestants and to Roman Catholicism . . . Nevertheless, the theological unity that once marked the movement has given way to a theological pluralism that was precisely what many of the founders of modern evangelicalism had rejected in mainline Protestantism." (R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "Evangelical: What's In a Name?" in John H. Armstrong, gen. ed., The Coming Evangelical Crisis, 1996, p. 33) Thus, when he later signed the Manhattan Declaration, Dr. Mohler countered in practice the same kind of theological compromise he had earlier critiqued in writing!

His **reason** for signing it was given in a blog, "Why I Signed The Manhattan Declaration." He explained that "the freedom to follow and obey" our "convictions" was "now at stake," and being "engaged in Christian leadership," he did "not" want to "bend the knee to Caesar," Ibid., Plimpton.

However, **Scripture never** makes **religious liberty** a **necessity** for us where it **always** makes **obeying God** a **necessity!** Dr. Mohler thus erred by focusing on human insight rather than God's Word! ***The lesson: we must stay focused on so as to heed Scripture versus focusing on so as to heed any other insight to the contrary!*** (Isaiah 8:20)

(2) This lesson looms huge if we note the "Church of Rome," "Marxists," and others have used the Hegelian Dialectic Process to push for change, creating conflicts between opposites. (Brannon Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 479) In the case of the Manhattan Declaration, this may well have been used -- a government threat to morals and religious rights used by religious liberals to press conservative Evangelicals to react by joining perceived "lesser evil" apostates to sign the Declaration. ***Staying focused on Scripture offers us immunity to such subversion!***

For blessing, may we stay focused upon and so obey Scripture above every other focus to the contrary!