

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Samuel: God's Shift Of Israel From Apostasy Under The Judges To David's Reign

I. 1 Samuel: From Samuel To The Death Of Saul

F. Israel's Tragic Insecurity Caused By Compromising With Unbiblical Beliefs

(1 Samuel 4:1b-21)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We at Nepaug Bible Church have long taught the need for us believers to adhere solely to Scripture for all matters of faith and practice and not to incorporate into our theology views that arise from outside the Bible.

However, many professing Christians think this stand is too narrow, that it stifles spiritual progress:

(1) In his book, The Whole Christian, Bruce Larson on the one hand claims that "'forgiveness and redemption are possible only through God's love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,'" but he also "praises Delores Krieger" for teaching "nurses 'to use their hands like divining rods' in an occult healing ritual," explaining "the results in terms of 'a force that is called prana' (a Hindu term) that 'can be transmitted from one person to another by touch.'" (Dave Hunt & T. A. McMahan, The Seduction of Christianity, 1985, p. 79 in citing Larson, *Ibid.*, p. 180, 132) Of note, "this book is highly acclaimed by a number of respected Christian leaders," *Ibid.*, Hunt & McMahan.

(2) Some Christian medical doctors use the term "'Holistic'" to refer to the utilization of a variety of scientific medical disciplines, but Michael Harner of New York's Academy of Science claims, "'The burgeoning field of holistic medicine shows a tremendous amount of experimentation [with] . . . techniques long practiced in shamanism,'" or witchcraft. (*Ibid.*, Hunt & McMahan, p. 120, citing Harner, The Way of the Shaman, 1980, p. 136)

(3) Hundreds of Christian psychologists have accepted the practice of hypnosis as being "'scientific,'" so they use it in their practices (*Ibid.*, Hunt & McMahan, p. 73), but William Kroger and William Fezler in Hypnosis and Behavior Modification: Imagery Conditioning, 1976, p. 412 comment that "'(t)he reader should not be confused by the supposed differences between hypnosis, Zen, Yoga and other Eastern healing methodologies. Although the ritual for each differs, they are fundamentally the same,'" *Ibid.*, Hunt & McMahan.

Need: *So, we ask, "Are we too narrow in not accepting views outside the Bible for our faith and practice? Why?!"*

- I. We before learned that the sons of Israel's high priest Eli were involved at the tabernacle in "ritual fornication . . . in accord with Canaanite cultic practice," (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 435), the result of Israel's mingling pagan beliefs with Scripture in disobedience to God's Word at Deuteronomy 12:1-3.
- II. However, this practice resulted in a tragic loss of God's blessing and devastating insecurity for Israel:
 - A. Mingling Biblical truth with pagan ideology led to Israel's tragic defeat in war, 1 Sam. 4:1-2; Deut. 28:15, 25:
 1. God had warned Israel that were she to disobey His Word by compromising her worship of Him with false pagan idolatry, she would suffer defeat in battle, Deuteronomy 12:1-3 with 28:15, 22.
 2. For mingling the worship of God with paganism, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, 1 Samuel 4:1-2.
 - B. Mingling Biblical truth with pagan ideology led Israel to view the ark of the covenant as a good-luck charm, producing a great, tragic loss of human life in battle with resulting grief and insecurity, 1 Samuel 4:3-11:
 1. To rectify their initial loss in battle, instead of repenting, the people of Israel heeded their elders in seeking to use the ark of the covenant as a good-luck charm in battle, 1 Samuel 4:3; *Ibid.*, p. 436.
 2. Thus, the high priest Eli's two sons were among the priests who took the ark into battle, and when the Philistines thought Israel's "gods" were in their midst, the "gods" who had saved her from Egypt by great miracles, they were afraid, and told one another to fight hard to avoid becoming subject to Israel, 4:4-9.
 3. Since Israel was disobedient to God, utilizing errant beliefs for security, she again suffered defeat in battle with a great loss of life, including the loss of Eli's two sons, 1 Samuel 4:10, 11b.
 4. In addition, the ark of the covenant was seized by enemy Philistine soldiers, 1 Samuel 4:11a.
 - C. Mingling Biblical truth with pagan ideology led to the untimely death of Eli the high priest, 1 Samuel 4:12-18:
 1. The elderly Eli had stayed away from the battle, but he worried what might happen to the ark, 1 Samuel 4:13a, 15. Eli himself thus similarly viewed the ark as a good-luck charm as influenced by paganism!
 2. When a fleeing Israeli soldier informed Eli not only of Israel's defeat and the loss of his sons, but especially of the taking the ark, he fell back and broke his neck, being old and heavy, and he died, 4:18.
 - D. Mingling Biblical truth with pagan ideology led Eli's pregnant daughter-in-law to lose all hope in dreadful insecurity, producing her untimely onset of labor and death in the delivery of her son, 1 Samuel 4:19-21:
 1. Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of his son Phinehas, was then great with child near the time of her delivery.

2. When she then heard that the ark of the covenant had been captured by the Philistines and that her father-in-law and husband had also died, she was shocked, and went into labor, 1 Samuel 4:19.
 3. She ended up dying in childbirth regardless of the encouraging news that the women standing by her that she had given birth to a son (1 Samuel 4:20). Just before she passed away, she named the child "Ichabod," meaning "no glory" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 1 Samuel 4:21), for the ark of God had been taken and her father-in-law and husband had both died that same day, 1 Samuel 4:21.
- E. Of special note, the reactions of individuals to the ark's loss displayed a devastating anxiety due to paganism:
1. Ancient Near Eastern pagan man believed that the capture of an object associated with a god or with the god's presence meant that the god himself had been captured by the enemy, Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T.
 2. This explains why the soldier telling Eli of the ark's loss expressed dismay by putting dirt on his head and tearing his clothes (1 Sam. 4:12), why Eli fell back and died at news of the ark's loss (4:18) and why his daughter-in-law went into labor at news of the ark's capture and named her newborn son "no glory" (4:19-21) -- they thought they had lost God by the seizure of His ark so that they had no more security!
 3. This compromised theology thus led Israel, Eli and his daughter-in-law to give up hope with tragic results:
 - a. Contrary to paganism, God had shown in Israel's history that He was not just a **local** deity, but that He was **omnipresent, existing in all places at once** in defeating *Egypt's* gods, in meeting the nation's daily livelihood needs for 40 years in the *Sinai wilderness* and giving her victory over *all of Canaan's nations*.
 - b. God had also given evidence that He was not **weak**, but **omnipotent, all powerful** in defeating *all of Egypt's gods* (Ex. 12:12), *all of the gods of the lands east of the Jordan* and *all of the Canaanite gods* in giving Israel victory of the land as God of heaven and earth, the God of the whole universe! (Joshua 2:11)
 - c. Thus, neglecting God's Scripture revelation of His omnipresence and omnipotence together with compromising His Scripture truth with paganism had led to great insecurity and tragic deaths in Israel!

Lesson: *Neglecting Scripture's revelation and compromising it with pagan thought led Israel to tragic defeat in war and the loss of the high priest, his sons and daughter-in-law with devastating anxiety and insecurity.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ to have eternal life like John 3:16 teaches. (2) May we not neglect Scripture revelation or compromise it with any ideology outside of Scripture that we might avoid great insecurity and traumatic tragedies, but may we adhere strictly to God's Word for blessing, Isaiah 8:19-20; Psalm 119:105.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon in their book, The Seduction of Christianity (Ibid., p. 24), citing Ernest Holmes, The Science of Mind (textbook), p. 30 which is in turn cited in Science of Mind, September 1983, p. 47, claim that the belief that "(m)an by thinking can 'bring into his experience whatsoever he desires'" is "the most basic idea of ancient sorcery," and that it "has taken firm hold in our modern world."

The canadafreepress.com web site (Kelly O'connell, "Modern Paganism Reveals Storm Clouds Over Democracy," May 19, 2014) adds to this claim that "the *spirit* of ancient paganism" has been "reborn in the modern world," that it shows up in "(a) disengagement with the traditional God, a dismissal of the notion of Natural Law, an onus against Christianity in any public activity or statements, a belief in the primacy of human activity in controlling the natural world, the presumption that morality is only a private issue--or a non-topic . . . that Political Correctness represents some important spiritual truths, that the universe is the result of naturalistic forces--coming into being without divine guidance, that humans and all life are the result of evolution."

Yet, the **price** of adopting modern paganism is the same that was paid by ancient pagans, "a permanent sense of insecurity and anxiety." Ibid. This explains the rising of turmoil in today's world: as man keeps shifting further away from the Bible's revelation of the transcendent, Almighty God of the universe, presuming he as man can control the universe about him, once he then learns that he is vulnerable to forces and events over which he has no control and for which he has no sovereign deity to control them for him in his behalf, modern man like ancient pagan man as with Eli, his daughter-in-law and Israel of old who compromised with paganism is driven into tragedy-inducing insecurity!

Accordingly, may we adhere to written Scripture ALONE for ALL matters of faith and practice, not compromising it with ideologies from the world with its unsettling, errant modern forms of paganism. Doing so will lead us to trust in Christ as Savior from sin as taught in John 3:16, and we will enjoy great security as we rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead us to THINK and to ACT ONLY BIBLICALLY!