

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Kings: The Kings Of Israel And Judah From Solomon To The Babylonian Captivity

II. The Divided Kingdom, 1 Kings 12:1-22:53

N. God's Call To Avoid Compromising With Unbiblical Faiths

(1 Kings 18:17-40)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Last Sunday, one of our members reported that an area evangelical church has had a joint worship service with Catholic and Muslim groups. Yet, those faiths hold to views of God and salvation that differ from the biblical faith:

(1) Islam's deity (a) "Allah" was originally one of several gods: "'Within the Kaaba" at Mecca "'in pre-Moslem days, were several idols . . . One was called Allah" and "three others were Allah's daughters . . . The Quraish [Muhammad's tribe controlling Mecca] paved the way for monotheism by worshiping Allah as chief god . . .'" (Dave Hunt, The Berean Call, February 2000, "Q&A," citing Will Durant, The Story of Civilization, IV: 160-161)

(b) As for salvation, Islam's holy book, the Qur'an, teaches salvation by works at sura 7:6-9, but sura 57:22 claims Allah's predestination may supersede one's works in determining whether he can even go to heaven. (Rich Wendling and Daniel Shayesteh, "Islam's View of Sin and Salvation: Part 2," July 5, 2017; answersingenesis.org)

(2) The Roman Catholic Church (a) claims as deity (i) the bread and wine in the Mass: "The Council of Trent, Ses. XIII, Ch. 5" claims the faithful should display toward "this Most Holy Sacrament the full worship . . . which is due the true God." (H. Bettenson, ed., Docs. of the Christ. Chch., 1966, 371). (ii) As worshipers then ingest the host, they "become 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Peter 1:4)." (Sam Guzman, "5 Prayers of Thanksgiving for the Holy Eucharist," June 19, 2015; catholicexchange.com) (iii) Catholic Catechism #460 adds that the faithful then become gods themselves, that "'(t)he Word became flesh to make us 'partakers of the divine nature' . . . The only-begotten Son of God . . . assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods.'" (Brannon Howse, Rel. Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 392, citing www.catholicdoors.com/catechis/cat0422.htm#456) In addition, (iv) Catholic Catechism #795 makes the faithful become Christ, that "we have become not only Christians, but Christ Himself," the doctrine of "*Christus totus*," the "whole Christ." (vatican.va/archive/ccc_ccs/archive/catechism/p123a9p2.htm)

(b) On salvation, the Roman Catholic Church in "The Council of Trent, Session VI: Canons on justification" made "(t)he following propositions . . . anathematized: . . . '9. That the impious is justified by faith alone'" and "'23. That a man once justified can no more . . . lose the grace,'" lose his salvation, (Ibid., Bettenson) In other words, the Roman Catholic Church denounces justification by faith alone and unconditional salvation security.

(3) In contrast to all this, the biblical faith holds to (a) an eternally (Psalm 90:2) one, transcendent (Ephesians 4:6) God in essence, Who is Spirit (John 4:24), existing in three Persons (Matthew 28:19), and (b) salvation by faith alone in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 4:10-12) with unconditional salvation security (Eph. 1:13; John 5:24).

Need: *So, we ask, "If another area evangelical church meets with Catholic and Muslim groups, what about US?"*

- I. **When Elijah revealed himself to Israel's king Ahab, he called for a dramatic contest before the people of Israel to get them to STOP COMPROMISING between Baal and God in their worship, 1 Kings 18:17-21:**
 - A. Ahab remarked upon meeting Elijah that Elijah had troubled Israel for having called for the famine, but Elijah replied that Ahab and his father's house were the ones who had really troubled Israel with their Baal idolatry, what had led to God's judgment of the drought in line with the Law, 1 Kings 18:17-18; Deut. 28:15, 23-24.
 - B. To prove this point, Elijah called for a contest before the nation between him and the hundreds of prophets of Baal and Baal's consort, Asherah at Mount Carmel, a place believed by Phoenicians like Ahab's wife Jezebel to be "the sacred dwelling place of Baal." This left Ahab eager to accept Elijah's offer since he thought Mount Carmel would give Baal's prophets a great advantage, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 526; 1 Kings 18:19.
 - C. When everyone had gathered at Mount Carmel, Elijah asked, "How long are you hopping between two forks?" (Ryrie St. Bib., KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 Kings 18:21), explained in the context as alternating between Jahweh, Israel's "I AM," and Baal as Elohim, as "Creator-God." (1 Kings 18:20-21a,b) The problem was the people's effort to "'walk the fence' worshiping two gods" as the Creator in illogical compromise, Ibid., B. K. C., O. T.
 - D. "The people could not argue with this statement, so they said nothing," Ibid.; 1 Kings 18:21c.
- II. **Elijah then presented the terms of the contest: the prophets of Baal and the Asherah would offer up a sacrifice to Baal but call upon Baal to ignite the sacrifice followed later by Elijah's offering up a sacrifice to God and calling on God to ignite that sacrifice. The deity who answered by fire, igniting his sacrifice, would be judged the true Creator God, 1 Kings 18:22-24b. The people agreed to this test, v. 24c.**

III. The contest was decisively won by Scripture's God, earning the people's praise, 1 Kings 18:25-39:

- A. Though the prophets of Baal and the Asherah tried hard for 6 hours to get Baal, the alleged god of lightning, to ignite his sacrifice on his home turf at Mount Carmel, nothing happened, 1 Kings 18:25-29; *Ibid.*, p. 526-527.
- B. Finally, Elijah set up the sacrifice to Scripture's God, but he tried hard humanly to disadvantage the Lord in preparing it, 1 Kings 18:30-35: after building the altar of stones and putting the wood and sacrifice on it, Elijah had a trench dug around the altar base and the whole sacrificial presentation drenched with water until both the altar and everything on it was soaked and the trench at the base of the altar was filled with water.
- C. Then, Elijah simply prayed for God to ignite the sacrifice to prove He was the Creator God, 1 Kings 18:36-37.
- D. God's fire then fell, consuming everything having to do with the sacrifice, including the sacrifice, the wood, the stones of the altar, the dirt that was dug up to form the trench and the water in the trench, 1 Kings 18:38!
- E. The people fell on their faces, claiming "Jahweh" was "Elohim," that the I AM was the Creator-God, v. 39.

IV. Elijah then ordered that the prophets of Baal and Asherah who had been shown in the contest to be false prophets to be slain in accord with the Law, that no one fellowship with them, 1 Kings 18:40; Deut. 13:5.

Lesson: *Elijah called Israel's people to stop compromising their worship of God with Baal, and by a test between Baal and God that the Lord won, he backed this charge and led Israel to part fellowship with the false prophets.*

Application: (1) *May we believe in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) May we not compromise our biblical faith, (a) in practice and (b) in our circles of fellowship. Not compromising in fellowship involves (i) practicing "first degree separation" from apostates (2 John 7-11) and those with false gospels (Gal. 1:8-9) and (ii) "second degree separation" from believers who fellowship with apostates and those with false gospels (2 Thess. 3:6-15).*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We comment in this conclusion section on **some** issues we mentioned in our introduction since even **mentioning those** issues tends to raise **more, unsettling** questions about them, calling for **further** clarification:

(1) The effort by an area evangelical church to worship with Catholic and Muslim groups reflects a push in some circles now for the so-called "Abrahamic faiths" of Judaism, Christendom and Islam to unite over their alleged common heritage in Abraham of Genesis 11:27-25:11. Spiritually, this is a false commonality: Galatians 3:13-17 and Romans 4:1-25 teach Abraham was justified by faith without works (Genesis 15:6) as the precedent for becoming the true father of all who are justified by faith apart from works. However, we noted in our introduction that Islam and Roman Catholicism teach salvation by works or by faith plus works, and Judaism holds to salvation by works (Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*, 1990, p. 301), so the **only true** "Abrahamic faith" today is biblical Christianity!

(2) "Allah" is not the "Jahweh" or "Elohim" God of the Bible as some claim, but a false pagan god's name that was borrowed by Muhammad when he began the Islamic faith! "Allah" is no more God than was Baal in Elijah's era!

(3) In John 6:63, Jesus countered the Roman Catholic belief that the elements in the Mass are turned into His real blood and body: He claimed His flesh profited nothing, that people were to believe His words to be saved!

(4) The 2 Peter 1:4 phrase "partakers of the divine nature" does not refer to becoming a god through ingesting the host in the Mass as is taught by the Catholic Church and Catholic Catechism #460: "partaker" is from the Greek term *koinonos*, "participant," indicating "fellowship" (*T. D. N. T.*, v. III, p. 797-804), so the phrase is **not** about men gaining God's essence to become gods as in pagan apotheosis (bible.org/netbible, 2 Pet. 1:4, ftn. 19), but sharing "in the life of God by means of Christ and the Spirit living in him (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 2:20)," *Ibid.*, Ryrie, ftn. to 2 Peter 1:4.

(5) The Catholic Catechism #795 *Christus totus* belief of men becoming Christ began with Augustine (In Jo. ev., 21,8: PL 35,1568; *Ibid.*, vatican.va/archive/ccc_ccs/archive/catechism/p123a9p2.htm; Leroy Huizenger, "Christus Totus: Why Catholics Care About Christians," 5-31-12; firstthings.com). He wrote: "(W)e have become Christ . . . the fullness of Christ then is the head and the members . . ." Augustine thus read *pleroumenou*, "fills" in Ephesians 1:23 (*U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*, 1966, p. 666) to be in the **passive** voice, resulting in Christ being filled by the Church so that it completes Him. However, nowhere else does Scripture teach the Church completes Christ, and the Ephesians 1 context presents the Persons of the Godhead as completing their actions, not having other entities complete them. (*B. K. C., N. T.*, p. 621) If we take *pleroumenou* to be in the **middle** voice (*Ibid.*), what we can do since "(i)n the present tense" as here, "the middle and passive voices are exactly alike in form" (*Ibid.*; W. D. Mounce, *The An. Lex. to the Grk. N. T.*, 1993, p. 378; J. G. Machan, *N. T. Grk. for Beg.*, 1951, p. 58), then Christ sovereignly fills the Church for Himself (*Ibid.*, *B. K. C., N. T.*), what fits the theology of the rest of Scripture, the Ephesians 1 context and avoids the *Christus totus* error of making men become Christ! Augustine's mistranslation thus led to the *Christus totus* error!

May we trust in Christ for salvation. May we then hold uncompromisingly to the true Abrahamic faith.