

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: GAINING DIRECTION OUT OF THE AIMLESSNESS OF APOSTASY

Part I: Gaining Direction From God's Work In Our History From Furthest Antiquity, 1 Chronicles 1-9

B. Gaining Direction From Noting God's INTERACTION With Past Groups In The Faith, 1 Chronicles 4-8

5. Gaining Direction By Noting God's Work With The Eastern Half Of The Tribe Of Manasseh (1 Chronicles 5:23-26)

I. Introduction

- A. Christian leaders at times face the temptation to compromise their fully obeying God in order to meet personal needs in selfishness, a sin that has harmful long-term effects for all involved!
- B. The history of the eastern section of the tribe of Manasseh illustrates the reality of this truth (as follows):

II. Gaining Direction By Noting God's Work With The Eastern Half Of The Tribe Of Manasseh.

- A. 1 Chronicles 5:23-26 reveals the genealogical history of the eastern "half tribe of Manasseh" (5:23 KJV), where 1 Chronicles 7:14-19 summarizes the history of the tribe as a whole, cf. Joshua 22:7-9.
- B. Well, 1 Chronicles 5:23-26 reveals this eastern half of Manasseh had great leaders whom God initially used to give the tribe great victories where they later only fell into apostasy and the loss of divine blessing.
- C. If we view the history of Jephthah, a leader of this group in the time of the Judges, we note a temptation such leaders had to compromise fully obeying God so as to meet their personal needs in selfishness:
 - 1. Judges 11:1-2 reveals that Jephthah of the eastern half of the tribe of Manasseh was initially a social outcast from his tribe since he was the son of a harlot, Zon. Pict. Ency. of the Bible, vol. Three, p. 433.
 - 2. Thus, Jephthah's father, Gilead (Ju. 11:1) had selfishly committed immorality without properly meeting his need for sexual gratification within God's Biblical institution of marriage, Ex. 20:14; Matt. 5:27-28.
 - 3. Accordingly, Gilead's selfishness led to his illegitimate son's rejection and deep hurt as Jephthah thus fled to the distant city of Tob as a social and family outcast, Judges 11:3a!
 - 4. Then, when Gentiles invaded Israel, the opportunity arrived for the hurting Jephthah to gain his tribe's acceptance: his people sought for his help, for he had proved himself to be a good leader of outcasts while living in the city of Tob, Judges 11:3b-6.
 - 5. Jephthah naturally agreed to lead his tribe to victory providing he would be recognized as their peacetime leader after the victory, and his tribal kin agreed to this condition, Judges 11:7-11.
 - 6. Well, Jephthah so longed to erase the shame and hurt of his earlier rejection by his tribe by winning the battle that he vowed to God that, were he victorious, he would sacrifice as a burnt offering the first thing that came out of his house to meet him when he returned from the victory, Judges 11:30-31.
 - 7. Now, such a "rash" vow carried **pagan** overtones: the Canaanites made such vows to their gods to gain victory in battle (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 402), but this kind of vow was unnecessary in Jephthah's case -- God's Word already promised him victory were he to heed the Lord, cf. Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 7!
 - 8. When Jephthah returned from battle victorious, his only child, a daughter, was the first to come out of his house to meet him! Naturally, this horrified Jephthah! Yet, he had made his vow to God, so he kept it! (Some scholars think he commuted the vow to avoid killing his daughter in keeping her a virgin for life while others think he offered her as a sacrifice -- we do not know! (Ibid.; Ju. 11:34-35)
 - 9. Regardless what Jephthah did to his daughter, **her response** to his news about his **pagan influenced** vow was to ask his permission to weep **as would a pagan** for her **virginity** (Judges 11:36-37); **Pagan** women typically wept for the vegetation god Tammuz or his Canaanite counterpart Baal for fear of the perpetual virginity or barrenness of "Mother Earth," Zond. Pict. Ency. of the Bible, v. Three, p. 433.
 - 10. Upset at the tragic effects his **pagan influenced vow** had caused her, Jephthah naturally consented to his daughter's request, so her **paganistic deed SPREAD** as a **paganistic practice** in *Israel* (11:38, 40)!
 - 11. Thus, the **pagan** overtones of **Jephthah's vow** rising from his **personal desire** to be accepted by his tribe eventually led all Israel into **paganistic practices** that led to their apostasy and long-term demise!

Lesson: *The willingness of Manasseh's leaders SELFISHLY to COMPROMISE FULL OBEDIENCE to GOD for the sake of meeting PERSONAL DESIRES (in our lesson, first Gilead, and then Jephthah) actually LED to the ADVANCEMENT of apostasy and the demise of the tribe itself in divine judgment!*

Application: *May we who lead others in a family, church, or business not compromise full obedience to God to meet our personal needs, but SELFLESSLY fully obey God for the welfare of our subordinates!*