

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 G. Heeding God's Ways Regarding Effective Human Leadership, Deuteronomy 16:1-18:22 4. Heeding God On The Role Of Spiritual Teachers (Deuteronomy 18:1-8)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We as a people are currently experiencing a dearth of trust in various formerly trusted institutions and entities:

(1) Rick Newman's article, "American's Are Losing Faith in . . . Themselves" (finance.yahoo.com/blogs, September 30, 2013) reported that "(a) recent Gallup poll found that Americans' trust in 'the American people' has fallen to a record low . . . Conservatives believe President Obama's health-reform law will allow an out-of-control nanny state to mushroom beyond control, ruining western civilization. Liberals feel Congressional Republicans should be passing new taxes to fund said nanny state instead of obsessing over Obamacare and trying to repeal it. In short, a growing number of Americans feel people who disagree with them are completely nuts."

(2) This loss of trust extends well beyond the political realm, too: Rick Newman added, "In fact, confidence in most institutions has been falling, as the economy stagnates and living standards fall for many Americans. People clearly feel something is wrong in America . . . (T)hey blame government, business, the media, the education system, the wealthy and even organized religion."

(3) This loss of trust in formerly trusted entities affects us locally: (a) Last Sunday, I heard that several area evangelical churches are participating in a "forty days of prayer and fasting" observance for people to trust in Christ. Though we at Nepaug pray for the lost to be saved, nowhere in Scripture's autograph manuscripts does God tell us Christians to fast! (b) That same Sunday, I was shown a New York Times article that supported the Marxist collectivism trend in some evangelicals. I recoiled at realizing that a mainstream Liberal media newspaper had identified and condoned such an ideology in evangelicals! (c) Accordingly, I find I am less and less confident in the doctrinal integrity of fellow evangelical churches and even their leaders.

Need: *So we ask, "With the drop in trust we are having in once reliable institutions, how should we respond?!"*

- I. Deuteronomy 18:1-8 directed that Israel's SPIRITUAL TEACHERS, the LEVITES and PRIESTS, were to LIVE by COMPLETE TRUST in GOD ALONE toward GUARDING the NATION from IDOLATRY:**
- A. Deuteronomy 18:1-8 is part of the Deuteronomy chapters 12-26 specific treaty stipulations (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 260) that were not an exhaustive list of God's laws, but instructed Israel on specific spiritual challenges she would face upon entering the land of Canaan (Ibid., p. 283; Deuteronomy 4:10).
 - B. As such, Deuteronomy 18:1-8 addressed the lure for **Israel's spiritual leaders**, the **Levites** and **priests**, to heed false Baals over God for rain and to idolize possessions (our Deuteronomy 14:22-29 lesson) for security, tempting them to **lose** their *perspective* as **teachers** and **examples of godliness, leading to national apostasy.**
 - C. Thus, Deuteronomy 18:1-5 directed an *antidote* to *apostasy* in **HOW** these leaders were to obtain a *livelihood*:
 - 1. In **contrast** to the *other tribes*, the tribe of Levi was **NOT** to *possess any income producing properties*:
 - a. The Levites and priests were **not** to **own any** "share in an inheritance" (*heleq*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 291; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., v. I, p. 293) **or** "inheritance [proper]" (*nahala*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., T. W. O. T.), Deut. 18:1. Besides their cities and pasture lands for immediate housing and transportation needs, the tribe of Levi was **NOT** to own *any income producing properties*, cf. Numbers 35:1-8.
 - b. Rather, this tribe would get its *income* needs met from the **Lord's "income" of offerings** as the **Lord ALONE** would be their "inheritance" (*nahala*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., T. W. O. T.), Deut. 18:2. [The emphatic pronoun, *hu'* rendered "Himself," written separately from the verb, indicated God **Himself** would be the **Dominant** Provider for the income of the Levites, for **He** was their "inheritance," Deut. 18:2; Ibid., Kittel.
 - c. Thus, God detailed how these spiritual leaders were to receive parts of His sacrifices and tithes the other tribes gave Him as His "income" so they could "stand and minister in the name of the Lord," Deut. 18:3-5.
 - 2. This arrangement left the **Levites** in a **humanly at-risk state**: **all** of their **INCOME** needs were thus **FORCED** to be met **SOLELY** by **GOD'S WORK THROUGH** the **OTHER TRIBES** as an **act of FAITH!**
 - 3. The tribe of Levi was thus to **exemplify** and **teach** Scripture to the other tribes (Malachi 2:7; 2 Chronicles 16:7-9) as **pleasing** unto the **LORD**, so their **INCOMES** were dependent on **God's provision** as His **reward** for their **ministry** of the **Word** to the *rest* of Israel! (cf. 2 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 Corinthians 9:9-14)

D. God also decreed that any Levite who wholeheartedly chose to dedicate himself to serve the Lord at the tabernacle (like Hannah dedicated her son, Samuel, a Levite [1 Chronicles 6:16-28], to stay at the tabernacle for life, 1 Samuel 1). Such a devout Levite would partake full-time of the Lord's "income" offerings as did the priests and Levites who served there part-time in their respective twenty-four courses of service, Deut. 18:6-8a with 1 Chron. 24; Ryrie St. Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 1 Chron. 24:4. Also, such a Levite could keep "anything received from the sale of property at home (see also Lev. 25:33)," Ibid., ftn. to Deut. 18:6-8; Deut. 18:8b.

II. This role directly applies to PASTORS TODAY, SUPPORTED SPIRITUAL CHURCH TEACHERS:

- A. The Apostle Paul directed that those elders who ruled well and especially those who "labor in preaching and teaching" be financially remunerated for their labor (1 Timothy 5:17-18 ESV; 1 Corinthians 9:9-14).
- B. Well, for such a pastor supported by the Church to succeed *long-term*, like the Levites and priests of Old Testament Israel, he **must trust GOD ALONE** to move the people to donate toward his *income needs*!
- C. In turn, **God** directs the pastor **faithfully** to expound Scripture to disciple the hearers, a ministry that in turn God uses to lead to the *hearers' faithfulness* in *donating for the pastor's income*, 1 Timothy 4:13-16.
- D. In the end, the pastor is *driven* to avoid the idolatry of materialism by *faithfully expounding Scripture* to the meeting of his *income* needs by **trusting God's** work in the congregation! (2 Timothy 2:6; Psalm 62:10-12)

Lesson: God directed that the tribe of Levi, the spiritual teachers of the Levites and priests, survive by **PURE FAITH** in GOD in His income provisions **THROUGH** His **DISCIPLING** the **OTHER TRIBES** they were to lead **BY** worship and spiritual instruction as an **ANTIDOTE** to their relying on **ANY OTHER FALSE IDOL** for that income. This arrangement would motivate the Levites to live for GOD and **INSTRUCT** the other tribes in **GOD'S TRUTH** in **ACCOUNTABILITY** to GOD, directing the nation to live free of idolatry and cleave to God **ALONE**!

Application: (1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) Then, may **ESPECIALLY** we **PASTORS**, and, by them being examples (1 Timothy 4:12), **EVERY** believer, realize **GOD** allows us to be **DISAPPOINTED** in **FALSE IDOLS** of human institutions much as He intended for the tribe of Levi in Ancient Israel, that we might look to **GOD ALONE** for our **SUPPLY** in **ALL** realms, **ESPECIALLY** relative to our **INCOMES**, that we **FAITHFULLY PERFORM HIS WILL** in avoiding idolatry in every way for blessing!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

To minister well, I at times must research issues of interpretation, and that requires access to books. In one case years ago, I had to find how Augustine had initiated the belief that faith in Christ was authored by God, not man. I had not found a Bible verse with this idea by my studying either the Bible or Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, so I knew it must have originated in Church History with Augustine, the theologian Calvin heavily used. I needed to research Augustine's works to see if he had found a Bible verse with the idea that God authored salvation faith lest I had failed to find it, and I needed this insight so I could teach you the truth on faith with a clear conscience!

However, the only resource I knew for gaining this information was the 38-volumed The Early Church Fathers that retails for \$1,100.00. It was available at a discount, but the cost was still prohibitive for my budget at the time!

Thus, the Lord provided! While doing research for a regular pastoral lesson in our Church library, I found there B. B. Warfield's book, Calvin and Augustine, 1974, and noted in its Foreword by J. M. Kik, Associate Editor of Christianity Today, that Warfield was held to be eminently qualified to write on Calvin and Augustine. I thus perused the book and saw on page 378 a citation of Augustine's "'De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum, I. 2. 12" where he wrote that 1 Corinthians 4:7 led him to the idea that "'the faith by which we believe in God is . . . the gift of God.'"

I was shocked! 1 Corinthians 4:7 deals with spiritual gifts for service, not salvation faith! (H. A. Ironside, Addresses on The First Epistle to The Corinthians, 1966, p. 153-154) Augustine had erred in interpreting that verse, with huge repercussions in Church History! I realized then that Augustine's Neo-Platonic bias, the tendency to think pantheistically where God is equated with the universe, and man then becomes an extension of God's actions, a bias Warfield repeatedly conceded had impacted Augustine's writings (Ibid., Warfield, p. 372-375, 395-396), had led him to write that man's faith was an extension of God's authorship versus the Bible's teaching that faith is authored by man and not by God! I also then realized that Calvinism was in error by way of the pagan influence of Neo-Platonism!

God provided me access to this information I needed without my having to spend a penny so I might teach you the truth on salvation faith! This is just one example of the MANY times the Lord has thus provided! As He did for the men of Levi, God has often similarly provided the means so I could do my job relative to your needs!

May all of us who believe in Christ, pastor and "layman" alike, abandon the "idol" of any entity that threatens our total reliance on God as our Dominant Provider, that we might see Him meet our every need!