

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

#### **II. 2 Samuel: The Reign Of David Over Israel**

#### **F. Learning To Heed Scripture Over Traditions**

#### **(2 Samuel 6:1-15)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Our Church does not teach the observance of the 40 days of Lent. However, many evangelicals observe it, and I recently read a blog by a fellow Dallas Theological Seminary grad who told of other DTS grads who observe it! Since today's 2 Samuel 6:1-15 passage happens fittingly to apply to the issue of Lent, we address this subject today:

(1) On the one hand, Roman Catholics and those Protestants who observe Lent claim it began close to the time of the apostles if not with the apostles themselves: they cite Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp who in turn was "a close associate" of the Apostle John (Diane Severance, Ph. D., "Irenaeus: John's Spiritual Grandson," christianity.com), and Irenaeus wrote that the "fast" linked to "Easter" began "'in the time of our forefathers.'" (Eusebius, History of the Church, v. 24)." (Fr. Wm. Saunders, "History of Lent," catholiceducation.org) Their argument goes that if Lent began with the earliest Church Fathers, if not with the apostles themselves, then every Christian should observe Lent today.

(2) Yet, Lent presents grave theological problems for conservative Christians: (a) the Bible never refers to Lent, though the King James Version does render the Greek word *pascha* for "Passover" as "Easter" in Acts 12:4 (Ryrie St. Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Acts 12:4), but this translation reflects the post-New Testament canon Christian use of *pascha* for "the Easter festival" (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 638-639). Thus, Lent began as an extra-biblical tradition, and Protestants hold to Scripture over tradition. (b) Then, history shows that Lent observance soon greatly changed over a 125-year span by pagan corruption: Irenaeus wrote of a two or three day fast in union with Easter, but by 325 A. D., the Council of Nicea claimed it had grown all over Christendom to today's 40-day fast (Ted Olsen, "The Beginning of Lent," August 8, 2008; christianitytoday.com), and this is explained in the Eleusian mystery religion's impact on Lenten observance via its myth on the annual cycle of vegetation: "In the spring, those [in this religion] who had shared [in goddess] Demeter's grief for the loss of her daughter welcomed the return of Persephone [from Hades] with all the joy that the returning life of vegetation might kindle. And today the Greeks mourn over the dead Christ . . . (T)hen at midnight before Easter Sunday the Metropolitan at Athens, the priest in smaller towns, comes out of the church announcing that Christ is risen . . . and as they prepare to break their Lenten fast the multitude drop all restraint in the expression of wild joy." (Arthur Fairbanks, A Handbook of Greek Religion, 1910, p. 288 as cited in a paper by Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Influence of the Mystery Religions on Christianity," fn. 29; kinginstitute.stanford.edu; brackets ours) Fairbanks added, "This religion was not blotted out by Christianity. On the contrary, whatever life it had was perpetuated in Christianity, since the conquering religion had adopted many of its forms and some of the old content in these forms." (Ibid., Fairbanks, p. 293 as cited in King, Ibid., fn. 30)

Even more troubling, this myth's theme of the annual cycle of vegetation came from the Babylonian myth of the death and resurrection of god Tammuz. (Compton's Ency., 1973, v. Three, p. 10) God condemned the worship of Tammuz in Ezekiel 8:14, and this cult is the root of the "Babylon the Great" that God will judge in Revelation 17-18!

(c) Also, the web site of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches claims, "Roman Catholicism continues to believe that Lenten good works (penance, voluntary fasting, self-denial, alms-giving) are . . . a form of holiness that mixes with the good works of the Virgin Mary. The church can then apply these merits to the negative merits of believers still in purgatory (or believers still on earth)." (garbc.org, "Should Baptists Observe Lent?") This belief counters Protestantism's core doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone!

Need: *So we ask, "In trying to discern the truth about it, does God want us to observe Lent, or not? Why?!"*

#### **I. David followed a 100-year-old religious precedent established by the pagan Philistines in how he initially tried to transport the ark of the covenant from Abinadab's house up to Jerusalem, 2 Samuel 6:1-5:**

- A. To transport the ark that had been in Abinadab's house for 100 years (2 Sam. 6:1-3; B. K. C., O. T., p. 463), David set it on "a new cart," *'agalah hadashah*, words that occur together in the Old Testament *only* to depict what David or the Philistines used to transport the ark, B. D. B., A Heb. & Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 722, 294.
- B. The Philistines had tried to show God reverence by not using a cart that had been employed for ordinary uses (Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, Com. on the Whole Bib., 1977, p. 209), so they had set the ark on "a new cart."
- C. Thus, with the same good intent as the pagan Philistines before him, David followed their 100-year-old precedent to transport the ark on "a new cart" along with a big musical production in worship, 2 Samuel 6:4-5.

**II. However, since this 100-year-old pagan religious precedent violated Scripture, a man was killed in God's judgment when the religious precedent led to a transportation crisis involving the ark, 2 Samuel 6:6-8:**

- A. While the oxen were pulling the cart, they stumbled at a threshing floor, so Abinadab's son Uzzah with good intent reached out his hand, touching the ark to support it, but God slew him for this deed, 2 Sam. 6:6-7a ESV.
- B. The Scripture at 2 Samuel 6:7b indicates Uzzah had committed a great error by touching the ark this way, what would not have occurred had Moses' original Scriptural directions for transporting the ark been obeyed:
  1. Moses had told Israel to have the high priest and his sons cover the ark with the veil that separated the holy place from the holiest of holies, then to cover that veil with a water-proofing sea cow hide skin only to lay a blue cloth over that skin and insert poles into the ark's side rings to transport it, Numbers 4:5-6 NIV.
  2. With the ark thus covered, men from the Kohathite family of the Levites were to carry it by holding the poles that stuck out from under the ark's coverings, being careful to handle only the poles and not to touch the body of the ark itself lest the Lord slay them for violating His holiness, Numbers 4:15.
  3. In this way, God's holiness would be honored, and those bearing the ark by the poles would compensate for one another as they crossed rough terrain that the ark might never topple, but have a smooth ride!

**III. When David studied Scripture and then applied it to transport the ark, God blessed his effort so that he could finally bring the ark all of the way up to Jerusalem, 2 Samuel 6:9-15 with 1 Chronicles 15:12-15:**

- A. God's suddenly striking Uzzah dead upset David, and he wondered how he could bring the ark to Jerusalem. He thus left it at the nearby home of Obed-edom, fearful of moving it any further, 2 Samuel 6:8-10.
- B. God then richly blessed Obed-edom's household, indicating He really wanted to bless Israel, 2 Samuel 6:11.
- C. After David heard of this blessing, he took courage to bring the ark up to Jerusalem, 2 Samuel 6:12. However, the 1 Chronicles 15:11-15 account reveals David had learned from the tragedy of Uzzah to do his job as a king by reading Scripture for blessing like Deuteronomy 17:18-20 directed, and this had revealed that he had not heeded Numbers 4:5-6, 15 in transporting the ark by the old pagan Philistine method. When he then read and heeded God's Word, God blessed David's effort to move the ark all the way up to Jerusalem, 2 Samuel 6:9-15.

***Lesson:*** *God required that David pay attention to heeding Scripture over utilizing even well-intended, old pagan tradition in how he transported the ark that he might enjoy God's blessing.*

***Application:*** *In reference to Lent, (1) may we heed Scripture by trusting in Christ for salvation versus relying on any human meritorious works, John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9. (2) Then, may we heed Scripture above well-intended, old pagan tradition or any other tradition for that matter, that we might enjoy God's blessing in our lives!*

***Conclusion:*** (To illustrate the message . . . )

This message provides comprehensive applications regarding the issue of Lent observance (as follows):

(1) First, as in David's case in 2 Samuel 6:1-15, 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2 claims the canon of Scripture is complete so as to equip us believers to do every good work to be pleasing to God at Christ's return. We must heed Scripture as our final authority on all matters of faith and practice, ***not Scripture plus tradition, including the tradition of Lent!***

(2) Similarly, though some may cite Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp who was an associate of the Apostle John (Ibid., Severance) who wrote that the "fast" associated with "Easter" began "in the time of our forefathers" (Ibid., Saunders, citing Eusebius, Ibid.) in order to assert that Lent was practiced by the earliest fathers or by possibly the apostles themselves in its beginning so that we should observe Lent today, we must **STILL** follow ***Scripture*** above all such extra-biblical traditions! Why? **Even the first generation Christians and the apostles themselves erred:**

(a) The Apostle John in John 21:22-23 KJV tells of a saying that spread widely among believers in his day that Jesus had claimed that he would not die, but John corrected this, stating, "(Y)et Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (b) Also, the Apostle Paul in Galatians 2:11-16 reports that he had to correct the Apostle Peter and Barnabas for their serious error of misrepresenting the Gospel of God's grace!

(3) Third, Colossians 2:11-17, 20-23 calls us believers in Christ not to let anyone judge us regarding man-made holy days or food or drink rules. We are thus free of all Lenten dietary and holy day observance rules.

(4) Fourth, the effort of observing Lent cannot gain merit before God for the saving of anyone's soul, for Ephesians 2:8-9 claims that salvation is by grace through faith alone, not by works, lest any man should boast.

(5) Fifth, Galatians 5:1 NIV claims that it was for freedom that has Christ set us free, that we should thus stand firm and not let ourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery imposed on us by man-made rules and traditions.

**May we trust in Christ for salvation. Then, may we learn from David's effort to transport the ark to heed SCRIPTURE, NOT HUMAN TRADITIONS or RULES or COMMANDS, that we might please the Lord.**