

Christ – The Prophet of Prophets

Men's business meeting next week. We have a lot of planning to do for next year so we are meeting at 3:30.

The book of Deuteronomy contains many warnings and admonitions for the people of God as they are about to enter the land of Canaan. The eighteenth chapter of the book contains a remarkable passage regarding the origin of the prophetic institution. God was going to raise up a body of men and put His word in their mouth (Deut. 18:9-22).

The Levites were the appointed teachers of the Law. However, in the Promised Land there would be new circumstances which would require further revelation from God. Canaan was a land filled with superstition -- they claimed detailed knowledge of the future, but their sources were declared abominations by God, so Jehovah promised to raise up prophets to make known His will. In this article we will notice the superstitions employed by the Canaanites during the time of Moses (as described in Deut. 18:10-12), and then see how Christ was "the Prophet" God would raise up.

Superstitions Of The Canaanites

The first superstition of the Canaanites mentioned by Moses was febration -- the

practice of one making "his son or his daughter pass through the fire" (Deut. 18:10). The purpose of febration was to obtain an oracle, or to avert national disaster (cf. Deut. 12:29-31). This practice was common among the worshipers of Moloch, the national deity of Ammonites (Lev. 18:21). This abomination caused God to root out the Canaanites (Lev. 18:24-30).

"To Baal-Haman, in great crises, living children were sacrificed, as many as three hundred in a day. They were placed upon the inclined and outstretched arms of the idol and rolled off into the fire beneath; their cries were drowned in the noise of trumpets and cymbals; their mothers were required to look upon the scene without moan or tear, lest they be accused of impiety and lose the credit due them from the god." (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, p. 42).

The next three terms used by Moses describe various methods of divination, including "one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens." God wanted His people to know these practices were powerless against His people, as expressed in Numbers 23:23, "For there is no sorcery

against Jacob, nor is there any divination against Israel." No soothsayer has any power against Israel, for Israel receives her information from the Lord. Moses also mentions two other classes of divination, "a sorcerer, or one who conjures a spell," followed by two groups who seek after the dead, "a medium, or a spiritist." Manasseh reinstated many of these crimes when he was King in Judah (2 Kings 21:1-6). "Although these two words, 'ghost' and 'familiar spirit' are used side by side, there was nevertheless a distinction between them. The person who was possessed of an ob (ghost) was evidently a ventriloquist. Like the witch at Endor he might call up the ob and describe what he saw. Those about him would probably hear only a muttering or twittering which seemed to come from the ground. The 'familiar spirit' however, was evidently a spirit that was at the beck and call of a particular person." (Edward J. Young, *My Servants The Prophets*, p. 23). "One who calls up the dead" is a comprehensive term which covers all forms of spiritualism. "The context refers to sorcery, divination, spiritism, and other similar practices.

Jesus in the Old Testament

The Kingdom Splits and Falls

Points to Consider

1. The Kingdom Splits
2. The Kingdoms Fall
3. Lessons to Learn

The Kingdom Splits

1 Kings 1:28-30 *Then King David answered and said, "Call Bathsheba to me." So she came into the king's presence and stood before the king. 29 And the king took an oath and said, "As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my life from every distress, 30 just as I swore to you by the Lord God of Israel, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,' so I certainly will do this day."*

Before David's death he chose _____ to sit on the throne after him. He gives Solomon everything necessary for him to build God's _____.

1 Kings 2:1-4 *Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: 2 "I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. 3 And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; 4 that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'*

David warns Solomon that the promise God made concerning David's family was contingent on _____.
God said _____ your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.
Solomon successfully builds the temple.

1 Kings 8:25-26 *Therefore, Lord God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk before Me as you have walked before Me.' 26 And now I pray, O God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David my father.*

While praying at the dedication of the temple, Solomon asks God to keep the promise He made to David. Solomon remembers that that promise _____ on his obedience.

1 Kings 11:1-5 *But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites — 2 from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to*

these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David.

Solomon _____ the Lord by marrying foreign women.

God told them not to marry foreign women, and He told them _____.

Solomon proved God to be correct when his foreign wives turned his heart _____ from God.

1 Kings 11:9-13 *So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded. 11 Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. 12 Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."*

As a result of Solomon's disobedience, God tears _____ of the kingdom away from his family.

God allows David's family to retain the part of the kingdom that contained _____.

Since God's love for David was so strong, the kingdom would not split until after Solomon's death.

1 Kings 11:29-39 *Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two were alone in the field. 30 Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. 31 And he said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you 32 (but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), 33 because they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do what is right in My eyes and keep My statutes and My judgments, as did his father David. 34 However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. 35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you — ten tribes. 36 And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there. 37 So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. 38 Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. 39 And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.'"*

God sends Ahijah to Jeroboam informing him that God was giving him and his descendents _____ of the twelve tribes.

_____ the kingdom in the family was contingent on the family's obedience to God.

God's love for David and his commitment to His promise compelled Him to allow David's family to keep Judah.

The tribe of Judah was going to produce the _____.

1 Kings 12:12-17 *So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had directed, saying, "Come back to me the third day." 13 Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; 14 and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!" 15 So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the Lord, that He might fulfill His word, which the Lord had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 16 Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: "What share have we in David?*

We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David!" So Israel departed to their tents. 17 But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.

God kept His promise by taking most of the kingdom away from _____, Solomon's son.

The tribe of Benjamin ends up following the kings of Judah.

The Kingdoms Fall

1 Kings 12:28-31 *Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" 29 And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. 31 He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.*

Israel, the northern kingdom, was _____ from the very beginning.

Jeroboam did not obey the Lord, and the kingdom was taken _____ from his family.

The main prophets to Israel were Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, and Amos.

2 Kings 17:5-6 *Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. 6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.*

In the ninth year of Hoshea's reign, _____ captured the nation of Israel.

2 Kings 17:13-18 *Yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets." 14 Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the Lord their God. 15 And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had*

testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not do like them. 16 So they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, made for themselves a molded image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. 17 And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. 18 Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone.

God was very _____ with Israel. He continued to send prophets their way to convince them to turn away from idols and to turn back to Him. They did not listen.

The king of Assyria brought people he captured from other cities into Israel. This effectively destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel _____.

The only tribe left was _____.

2 Kings 24:18-20 *Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 19 He also did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 20 For because of the anger of the Lord this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.*

Zedekiah was the _____ rebellious king in a row.

God's patience ran out, and He finally _____ them out.

Jer 29:10-11 *For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

Jeremiah prophesied that He would deliver Judah from Babylon in _____ years.

Lessons to Learn

1. God loves us
2. God will not be denied.
3. God demands obedience.
4. God expects _____.
5. God is patient.
6. God will keep His _____.

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Thanks for being here today!
If you are visiting with us, feel
free to ask any questions you
have when services are over.
We hope worshiping God with
us benefits you. Our goal is
to bring glory to the one who
has promised us "an exceed-
ing and eternal weight of glo-
ry."

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.portagechurchofchrist.com

News and Notes

Keith Barclay in his
own words:

The biopsy from Mon-
day was of a benign
mass and thus has re-
vealed nothing con-
cerning the type of
Lymphoma from which
I am suffering. What
this means is, at a min-
imum, another P.E.T.
scan sometime next
week and then another
biopsy on another
mass as was done last
Monday. If there is
nothing that can be bi-
opsied that way, a sur-
geon will have to go in
and find something. It
is also possible that the
neurosurgeons can bi-
opsy my spine again.
So we ride the roller
coaster a little longer.

Pete Sedan had an
operation last month
and was in the hospital
five days. He is doing
better now. Pete takes
care of his parents day
and night and Pat also
is very much involved
with their care. This is

very hard physically
and emotionally. Pat
asks for our prayers for
all of them. She will let
us know if we can help
with food.

Pete's Sedan's mom
is in very bad shape
right now. She is in
Hospice Care at home.

Windell Claxton has
to have open heart
surgery soon. Re-
member brother Clax-
ton in your prayers.

Sondra Gunter is
starting her second
round of chemo treat-
ments. They found
some spots on her
brain they are hoping is
scar tissue and not a
growing tumor.

Kenny Gilmore,
Steve Sink's uncle,
has cancer in his
lungs and liver. He
is presently taking
chemo treatments.
His wife, Karen, is
Sandy Sink's sister.

Continue to remember
**John Guerra, John
Guerra's uncle,
Tommy Pozywala,
Linda Tuzinski, Lana
Lucas, Harvey's
mom, Bill King, Lora
Winland, Jim Conn,
Retha Claxton, Sue
Purdue, and Gail
Gilliana** in your pray-
ers.

Keep Praying

Steve Burdine is look-
ing for a job.

Eric and Lori found
out the baby they are
expecting is a little girl.

Keep the adoption of
Nolan in your prayers
as well.

Excavations at different sites have uncovered a great number of figurines, charms, amulets, and other objects connected with sorcery, fertility cults, demon exorcism, and pagan superstitions that at times propagated themselves in Israel to such an extent that legislators, prophets, and some rulers had frequently to warn the people against them." (Gonzalo Baez-Camargo, *Archaeological Commentary On The Bible*, p. 55).

"The list is indeed impressive. These superstitious practices which were so much in vogue among the Canaanites of ancient time are the reason why the Lord will dispossess these people of their land. Moses then advances a step. Not only are these practices in themselves abominations, he says, but also every one that doeth them is an abomination in the sight of the Lord. It is for this reason that God will drive out the Canaanites from their land. It is well that we should grasp this fact, for it has sometimes been maintained that the God of the Old Testament was an arbitrary despot, who drove out the Canaanites and brought Israel into Palestine, and this, it has been said, was a cruel, arbitrary act. Such a judgment, however, is unjust, and out of accord with the facts. God, in dispossessing the Canaanites, was doing a gracious and merciful thing to the remainder of the world. The Canaanites, through their abominations, had themselves become abominations. If there was to be any salvation for the world, Canaan must go. The cup of their iniquity had filled, and they could no longer be permitted to exist as heretofore. Let no one, then, charge God with lack of justice in His treatment of Canaan." (Edward Young, p. 24). In spite of all of the means of divination used by her neighbors, Israel would not have to resort to such means, for God would raise up a Prophet "from your midst, from your brethren" (Deut. 18:15). Therefore, there would be no reason for Israel to turn to heathen soothsayers. God was going to raise up a body of prophets to declare His words, and later He would raise up one great Prophet, who alone could compare to Moses.

Christ Is God's Final

Prophet

The New Testament often speaks of Christ as "the Prophet," a reference back to the promise given by God to Moses in Deuteronomy 18.

As John opens his account of the life of Christ he tells of the work of John the Baptist. On one occasion priests and Levites from Jerusalem went to John and inquired as to whether or not he was the Christ (John 1:19-23).

When John denied being the long-awaited Messiah the priests and Levites then asked if he was Elijah, to which John answered "I am not." They then asked, "Are you the Prophet?" They wanted to know if John was "the Prophet" Moses had promised centuries before -- the answer was "No." It was in the region of the Sea of Galilee that Jesus fed the 5,000 with "five barley loaves and two small fish" (John 6:1-14). When the people had been fed and there was still bread to spare, they said, "This is truly the Prophet, who is come into the world" (John 6:14).

On one occasion Jesus healed a lame man at the Pool of Bethesda. "Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:18). Jesus told these Jews, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39). There are many Old Testament passages which speak of Christ, but the one He had in mind on this occasion was found in the writings of Moses. Jesus said, "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you -- Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (John 5:45-47). What did Moses say about Christ? God told Moses, "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him." (Deut. 18:18-19). This passage was speaking of Christ, for Peter quoted it in Acts 3:22-23 and applied it to Him. Stephen

quoted this same passage in the sermon which cost him his life (Acts 7:37).

On the Mount of Transfiguration our Lord stood with Moses and Elijah and discussed His impending death. Peter, overwhelmed in the moment, said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" (Matt. 17:4). However, "While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!'" (Matt. 17:5). The point is clear: as great as Moses and Elijah were in their won right, we are to listen to God's Son today!

Jesus is God's final spokesman. The Hebrew writer reminds us of how "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son..." (Heb. 1:1-2).

Conclusion

Concerning "the Prophet" who was to come, God said, "whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18:19). The Hebrew writer mentions the consequences of neglecting the message of Christ. "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" (Heb. 2:1-4).

Have you listened to the words of Christ, God's final spokesman? If you reject the message of Christ, you will have rejected your only means of eternal salvation!

David Padfield