

January 14, 2000,

1 Samuel 6

Vv. 1-9

In this chapter, we see that as a result of sin, God gave the Philistines the victory over His people, and even delivered the ark into the hands of the Philistines as a reproach to the sins of His people.

The ark remained in the hands of the Philistines for seven months, and while it was there, the *God of the ark* smote the Philistines with physical illnesses they could not deal with. The Philistines knew their problems were caused by the God of Israel, represented by the ark. They kept the ark as long as they could, but finally admitted they had to rid themselves of the ark, rather than repenting and trusting in Israel's God. They called their wise men together to see how they should deal with the situation. And they sent the ark back to Israel.

Notice some points from vv. 1-9:

1) V. 2, the *priests and diviners* knew the truth of the matter, yet they did not tell the people to repent.

I am suspicious that these men did **not want the people to repent**, because they would lose their power.

ILLUSTRATION:

I remember a visit I made in MD. It was with a Catholic man who had worked for the rail road. I was trying to witness to him about salvation. And no matter how I tried or what terms I used, I could not talk him out of his profession. I asked him to explain to me what he had done.

He told me he had been caught in a coupler between two cars. They would not uncouple the cars because they said he would die when they did. So they called a priest to administer the Last Rites. According to this man, the Last Rites consisted of clearly explaining the gospel of Christ to the person. And the man had as clear of an understanding of the gospel as I did, and I could not shake him from what he now believed about Christ.

My point being that the priests of the Church of Rome evidently know the truth about Christ and salvation, but they keep the people in darkness. When the people know the truth about Christ, they are set free from the bondage of false doctrines:

John 8:32 *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

John 8:36 *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

Throughout the Old Testament, the prophets of God had some very strong words to say against the religious leaders who know the truth yet refuse to tell the people. The reason they do not tell the people the truth is in order to retain their power over the people. One of the stronger passages is found in the Book of **Ezekiel 34**:

This passage is a prophecy against the *shepherds of Israel*. And Christ explains what the prophecies meant:

Matthew 23:13 *But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.*

Luke 11:52 *Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.*

Those Old Testament passages were against the religious leaders of Israel. We are told several times that they knew the truth about Christ, yet they refused to accept the truth themselves and they refused to let the people accept the truth, BECAUSE THEY WOULD LOSE THEIR POWER OVER THE PEOPLE if they let the truth be known.

According to the prophecies, God Himself judged the wicked shepherds when He destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD.

However, that destruction did not solve the problem with the wicked shepherds. They exist in abundance today men who know the truth of Scripture, but they **will not tell the truth** because the truth would undermine their power. And the Church of Rome is not the only guilty party I have mentioned several times about pastors who tell me that they realize a passage does not teach what they have said it teaches, but they will not change their teaching because it might undermine their people's confidence in them. In other words, they are fearful of losing their power from over the people.

PERSONAL:

I have tried to be a faithful shepherd, and tell the truth from the Word of God as the Lord's Spirit has laid it on my heart. However, it seems that people have left over that very thing. It seems to me that many do not want the truth, so they find groups where the truth is not emphasized.

1 Samuel 6:2, the Philistine *priests and diviners* knew the truth of the God of Israel, but they did not tell the Philistines to make peace with that Israel's God.

(It is quite distressing to see pastors who fail to tell their people the truth grow so much that they must build to hold the crowds. I HAVE AN ARTICLE ABOUT SUCH A GROUP on the front table.)

2) V. 2, *What shall we do to the ark...* They knew what to do, send it back; they did not know how to do it. Every man knows what to do, **Worship God**. But we must have the word of God to tell us how to do it.

3) V. 3, *send it not empty...* Even the pagan Philistines knew better than try to serve Israel's God empty handed. This is a lesson that many Christians have not learned as they **refuse to even tithe on the increase God has given them**.

4) V. 3, *return him a trespass offering*, not a **sin offering**. The pagans knew they had erred in taking the ark of the Living God, but they did not see it as a terrible sin, requiring an offering for their sin.

How like fallen man when pressed, he will admit that he has erred or had a moral failure, but he resists with all that is within him from naming that failure.

I get so sick people, public figures especially, who get caught in their evil ways say, I made a mistake, or I had moral failure. That is like having a tire failure, a tire blow out on the highway. I was driving down the road, minding my own business, and my tire blew out. Actually, it was a manufacture defect they were Firestone tires, so it really was not my fault. Very few people will name their sins, and come out and say, I did wrong; I made a wrong choice, and the fault is mine. (They might say, I made a wrong choice in choosing Firestone tires, but it is the tire's fault. (See CALVARY CHAPEL paper.)

Only the Spirit of God can make him see his sinful condition, and his need for a Saviour.

5) V. 3, the **pagans here understood that they were being punished justly**. They knew they needed an offering to return to the Lord.

But KNOWING THESE THINGS DOES NOT SAVE.

James 2:19, *The devils also believe, and tremble.*

James 4:17, *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

The gifts of gold could not buy them peace with God and eternal life. Their problems stopped when they sent the ark back, but their actions did not secure for them life and peace.

Hebrews 9:22, FROM THE TIME OF the first man until the time of the last, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.

I must confess that I knew these things about the Lord God and His word, but I was not saved. Knowing what the wages of sin are, and knowing the facts about Christ and His payment does not save, for even the devils know that. Only faith in His work will save a person.

To here, January 18, 2001
Cont to m20010121