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Elders of Israel Have a Great Idea, on: 2010/10/9 17:08

In the days of Samuel the prophet, Israel was at war with the Philistines. In one particular battle, Israel was defeated and 4,000 Israelite soldiers were slain. When the people came into their camp again they were dejected and confused. They wondered why the Lord had not given them victory over their enemies. Were they not His people, had He not given them the land? Why had their enemies prevailed over them?

Then some of the elders of Israel had a great idea. They would send to Shiloh, to the tabernacle of Moses and have the two sons of the high priest bring the ark of the covenant into the camp that they might carry it before them into battle. Surely through the ark, God would grant a great victory.

Soon there was hope and expectancy in the hearts of the men of Israel as they waited for the most holiest possession of their nation - the very representation of the presence of the Living God. And it happened that as the ark of the covenant came into the camp that all of Israel shouted with a great shout.

When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout and understood that the ark had come into the camp of Israel, they became terrified. And instead of fleeing for fear, the Philistines greatly encouraged one another and resolved to fight with utmost courage.

That day Israel suffered a mighty defeat and 30,000 of their soldiers were slain and the rest were completely scattered before their enemies. Not only that but the Philistines captured the ark of God and took it away to their own country.

Why did such a calamity happen to the people of God? Because someone came up with a reasonable plan - such a sensible scheme. And all of it was done in behalf of God.

Are you beginning to recognize something in these illustrations from God's Word? It is a common principle found in each of these stories. That man has a propensity and even a drive to do something toward, for, or on behalf of God. Since the beginning of creation, one abomination after another has been done by man in the name of God. We have a way of judging these things by our own yardsticks, our own values, likes, dislikes; and we never ask this question, "Has the Living God commanded me to do this thing?" Never mind that your scheme is so necessary, reasonable, or logical. Never mind that it is so simple. Never mind that your motives are so pure - how would you really know your own motives anyway?

Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and His people should inquire of their King and seek His command. To do otherwise is to deny His sovereignty. The problem with this is that He might not tell you to do what YOU want to do. And that will not satisfy your addiction. But you ask, "What addiction?" The addiction known as "my ministry".

The work of the Holy Spirit in your life takes years, a lifetime. As I said in a previous article (Out of the Firepan and into the Fire - http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=35279&forum=34&1)

God is not interested in YOUR ministry, He is interested in YOU. I am not talking about your spiritual gift or a supernatural empowering. I am talking about transformation. The inner working of the Holy Spirit in your heart. It consists of pain and suffering. Pressure! The work of the cross. And without the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, regardless of your spiritual gifts, you will make the offering of Cain, build the city of Babel, offer the strange fire of Nadab and Abihu or march confidently carrying the ark of God right into the jaws of destruction.

If God is merciful to you, He will bring your folly to a swift end. If God is not merciful to you, He will let your abomination done in His name grow larger and larger. And more and more addictive to you. It will look like man, it will act like man and it will have the foul stench of man. and you will lie awake at night agonizing over how to keep it going and how to make it bigger - all in the name of God.

You may protest that these judgments are too harsh. "Look at all the needs around us in the Body of Christ and this lost world. WE have the ability - indeed the mandate to meet these needs regardless of the methods."

John Saunders - with the Lord, now.

Re: Elders of Israel Have a Great Idea, on: 2010/10/9 19:36

Amen and Amen!

As the old timers used to say, "that hit me between the eyes".