

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

A. Overcoming Compromise With Paganism By A Constant Focus On Scripture (Deuteronomy 12:1-32)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We Bible-believing Christians today face the risk of being deceived unto compromising with pagan beliefs:

(1) A week ago, one of our members asked me what I thought of "Christian" yoga. I warned the member about it, for I knew yoga had a pagan origin, so the term "Christian" yoga sounded very suspect. Later, I read Brannon Howse's claim that "(y)oga is a form of meditation and self-hypnosis by which one can . . . encounter a spirit or master guide, but these guides are actually demons. The word *yoga* means 'yoke or union' with a Hindu god in Sanskrit." (B. Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 237)

(2) This incident is just a small sample of a broad based challenge Bible-believing Christians are facing today:

(a) Pastor Rick Warren, author of The Purpose Driven Church, in 2011 hosted Dr. Mehmet Oz at his Church (Ibid., p. 234, citing Erika Ritchie, "Rick Warren, Dr. Oz to Partner on Health Plan," The Orange County Register, January 11, 2011), and Dr. Oz promotes "Reiki," a form of "psychic communication," and "many Reiki practitioners report having verbalized channeled communications with the spirit world." (Ibid., Howse, p. 238, citing a press release by PR Web, 1/9/2010 and Phylameana lila Desy, The Everything Reiki Book, 2004, p. 144)

(b) Bible teacher Beth Moore in a video (worldview.com/world-view-times/article.php?articleid=7870) says of Matthew 17:20-21: "When [God] spoke the worlds into existence, He didn't just think them. He spoke them! And He set a precedent, and He's saying to us, 'My words are omnipotent, but your words are potent!' You stir up the faith within you, you look at that mountain, and you say, 'Move it!'" (Ibid., Howse, p. 382, citing Moore's video)

However, as Brannon Howse noted, "God speaking the world into existence is not a precedent for *us* . . . Standard Word of Faith heresy teaches that man's words can create. That is not only heresy, it is shamanism; it is pagan; it is taught within the occult." (Ibid.) Howse corrected her error, noting, "It is not you or I that move the mountain with our words, but it is God Who does what we think is impossible." (cf. Mark 12:22-24)

(c) Moore's error is made more problematic by another video where she claims, "[God] began to say to me, 'I'm gonna tell you something right now, Beth, and boy you write this one down, and you say it as often as I give you utterance to say it . . .'" (<http://worldviewweekend.com/world-view-times/article.php?articleid=7882> as cited in Howe, Ibid., p. 381). If she claims special revelation while extolling a pagan idea, there is no check to her error!

(d) Moore's error takes on a sinister face if we note that former Dallas Theological Seminary professor Jack Deere of the Vineyard Movement now holds that "a doctrine that teaches God no longer speaks to us except through the written word . . . is demonic . . ." (John H. Armstrong, gen. ed., The Coming Evangelical Crisis, 1996, p. 78 in citing Jack Deere, "Vineyard Position Paper #2: The Vineyard's Response to The Briefing," 1992, p. 22-23) If Beth Moore can teach a pagan view, claiming also to receive special revelation from God, and if a former Dallas Theological Seminary professor can add that holding to Scripture alone for the truth is demonic, the average believer who exposes himself to these teachers is very vulnerable to adopting significant error versus the teaching of Scripture!

Need: *Thus, we ask, "How are we to handle the great push today to tolerate or cooperate with pagan beliefs?"*

- I. Deuteronomy 12-26 presents God's specific treaty stipulations for Israel, Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 260.
- II. These stipulations were NOT an EXHAUSTIVE list of God's laws, but instruction on applying them to special *CHALLENGES* Israel would face once she entered the Promised Land, Ibid., p. 283; Deut. 4:1.
- III. Accordingly, Deuteronomy 12:1-28 called Israel to and *UNCOMPROMISING WORSHIP of GOD OPPOSITE* the *PERVERTED PAGANISM* of the ungodly people who had previously dwelt in Canaan:
 - A. Israel was to worship *God* in *His one chosen place OPPOSITE* the *Canaanite pagans*, Deut. 12:1-7, 9-12:
 1. God's people were to destroy the many Canaanite pagan worship centers and occult objects, Deut. 12:1-3.
 2. Instead, they were to worship **only** at the **PLACE GOD had CHOSEN**, Deuteronomy 12:4-7, 9-12.
 3. Since pagan man believed in **MANY local** deities **opposite** Israel's **ONE** God of the **universe**, Israel was to be *uncompromisingly intolerant* of many worship places and worship **God** in the *one* place *He chose*.
 - B. Israel was to *AVOID eating blood OPPOSITE* the *Canaanite pagans*, Deuteronomy 12:13-16:
 1. Canaanite pagans partook of the blood of a still living animal, believing this practice prolonged their lives.

2. However, Genesis 3 reveals **death** is the *product* of Adam's **SIN**, so God decreed that though life was present in the blood, since the **substitutionary death** of God's **sacrifice** paid for **SIN**, the *cause* of death, Israel was **NOT** to **INGEST blood as did the pagans to gain life**, but pour it out on the earth, signifying the loss of life as the atonement for sin that God might give the sinner life as a gift from His forgiveness, Deut. 12:13-16; Lev. 17:11. Note how this instruction anticipates man's salvation by faith in the Substitutionary Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 3:24-28.
 - C. Israel's tithing of her agricultural produce was to be eaten at God's chosen sanctuary *opposite* other locations in **uncompromising CONTRAST** to **pagan multiple shrines** of such worship, Deuteronomy 12:17-19.
 - D. In the event of the **hardship** of *great distance* from **God's chosen place of worship**, Israel was **still uncompromisingly** to **AVOID** (1) pagan practices of ingesting blood and (2) eating of her tithes to God and (3) sacrificing to Him without taking them first to God's sanctuary in honor of Him, Deuteronomy 12:20-28.
- IV. Indeed, Israel was WARNED UNCOMPROMISINGLY to AVOID godless PAGAN CULT PRACTICES once she entered the Promised Land, Deuteronomy 12:29-31.**
- V. The WAY Israel was to achieve this uncompromising worship and avoid godless pagan cultic practices was by FOCUSING on SCRIPTURE VERSUS RELYING on EVEN her OWN THINKING:**
- A. In Deuteronomy 12:32, Moses called for Israel to heed the Word of God he was speaking **without** either *adding to* it (*yasaph*, "add," Kittel, *Bib. Heb.*, p. 284; B. D. B., *A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T.*, p. 414-415) or *subtracting from* it (*gara'*, "diminish, restrain" *Ibid.*, p. 175) **in relying upon her own human judgment!**
 - B. This directive is supplemented by Deuteronomy 12:8 earlier in the chapter: Israel was to **achieve** an **UNCOMPROMISING** posture in relation to **paganism** by **NOT DOING WHATEVER WAS RIGHT IN HER OWN EYES**, but to **SUBMIT** her **OWN THINKING** to what **GOD DECREED** in **SCRIPTURE!**
 - C. The **need** for Israel to heed this directive is later made expressively clear in Israel's history of apostasy:
 1. In the later era of the judges, the phrase, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" is a clear critique on Israel in view of the Deuteronomy 12:8 command, and it appears in Judges 17:6 and 21:25 to explain the apostasy and a horrible atrocity that occurred in Israel and led to costly civil war, Judges 17-21.
 2. Then, in Isaiah 8:19 ESV, we read that some of Israel's people eventually even consulted with mediums and necromancers for insight. God's prophet Isaiah critiqued this practice, writing that if the people were not saying, "To the teaching and to the testimony!" a phrase approximating our "Back to the Bible!" phrase of today, they had no light of "dawn," no hope of spiritual illumination, Isaiah 9:20 ESV.
 - D. Thus, pagan deception is so strong, and the mind of man so vulnerable to being swayed by it, the practical means of victory over it is a **constant focus on Scripture versus following even one's own thinking!**

Lesson: *Israel was to exercise an uncompromising intolerance of Canaan's paganism to be effectively practiced not by resorting even to her own thinking that could easily be misled, but by constantly focusing on Scripture.*

Application: *May we (1) trust in Christ to be saved from sin and hell as John 3:16 teaches. (2) Then, as believers, may we OVERCOME pagan influences that exist even in Christian circles today by (a) forsaking reliance on our OWN thinking and instead (b) constantly focus on so as to heed the written Word of God, 2 Timothy 3:13-17.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In our introduction, we noted some disturbing errors that are promoted by Christian leaders Rick Warren, Beth Moore and Jack Deere. However, our decision to rely on Scripture alone as final authority for the truth has spared us:

(a) We knew from 2 Timothy 4:1-4 that we must preach Scripture to counter apostasy, 2 Timothy 4:3-4. Thus, when the big push came to heed the Rick Warren program, we kept on focusing on Bible teaching. That kept us from exposure to Warren's later promotion of Dr. Oz who extols the Reiki practice that leads to interacting with demons!

(b) Some years ago, we had also taught in our Adult Sunday School Class that 1 Timothy 2:9-15; 5:11-15 and Titus 2:3-5 called for Christian women to focus on excelling in their homes and for older women to teach younger women in their **local** church. Thus, we taught that multi-church ministries by women as in the case of Beth Moore were not God's will. We faced criticism for that, but it has kept us from her (presumably unsuspecting) occultic error!

(c) Regarding Moore's claim to have received special revelation from God on par with Scripture, we know from passages like Jude 3 and 2 Timothy 3:15-17 that the canon of Scripture is closed, so by focusing on Scripture alone, we were kept from Moore's error (d) besides the error of former Dallas Theological Seminary professor Jack Deere who claims that holding to Scripture as our sole authority of God's Word is a demonic view! (*Ibid.* Armstrong)

For God's blessing, may we *uncompromisingly focus only on written Scripture for all faith and practice.*