

The Satisfaction of Human Need

Wayne Waibel – 06/02/2024

This kid Samuel was something. His mother just up and gives him to Eli the priest as a servant to God. He gets called as a prophet at a very tender age and functions as priest, prophet, and judge - until the children of Israel start whining for a king. He then anoints Saul, then David, but not before he warns them of the consequences of imperial rule.

“The king will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen... He will take your daughters... He will take the best of your fields and vineyards... the best of your cattle and donkeys... and you shall be his slaves.”

What your hearing resonate right now is the echo of I Samuel chapter 3, verse nineteen, “As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.” Indeed, even to this day - his words have not yet fallen to the ground.

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“The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.” So, there ARE times – like now – when the word of the Lord is rare; and visions are not widespread.

Of course, now we have the sludge of endless postmodern manipulations competing for and ultimately capturing our attention. The struggle to have a free and legitimately independent stream of consciousness is considerable.

So, Paul reminds us that "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;"

No matter how well intentioned our efforts are to establish and maintain a righteousness, we invariably go too far in its pursuit. The Pharisees began by attempting to define what is and is not "work," so the Sabbath might be kept holy, and ended up going out and immediately conspiring with the Herodians to the intent of destroying Jesus.

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Again, Paul comes to our rescue:

"For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

I don't know if it is even possible to imagine what the world was like back in the time of the prophet Samuel, but we are destined to hurtle civilization back to that era if we're not careful.

I think it was Einstein who quipped that we can't be certain what kinds of weapons would be deployed in World War three, but he could say for sure that World War four would be fought with sticks and stones.

So, we have this radical Son of God claiming to be Lord of even the Sabbath walking all over the ruling elite of first century Palestine. And He does so in a most grace filled way. The man with the withered hand was not in immediate peril – his affliction could have waited until sundown, but Jesus is a huge fan of making a point.

And he drills that point home not by wild gestures or eloquent prose, but by simply telling the man to "stretch out his hand - and it was restored," fully demonstrating that "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath."

Whether the issue is hunger or healing, the satisfaction of human need trumps reverent religiosity every time. Amen.