



FEED MY SHEEP

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Idolatry in the Church Must Die

Since there are many people who will be receiving this issue of FMS who have never seen it before, it is appropriate to provide a few paragraphs of brief explanation and introduction to the studies we have been doing.

For quite a period of time we have been studying the respective character traits of Saul and David. King Saul is a representative, a symbol, a type of believers who are not overcomers. David symbolizes the Christian overcomers. The Sauls, the non-overcomers, are also called “the Wheat Company.” The overcomers are “the Barley Company.”

Saul was crowned king on the day of wheat harvest, which is the feast of Pentecost and therefore, King Saul is associated with the Pentecostal church. That term “the Pentecostal church” is not referring to the Pentecostal and/or charismatic denominations *per se*—although many individual believers among those groups are included—but “the Pentecostal church” refers to the church as a whole during the entire New Testament church age which began on the day of Pentecost in Acts, chapter two.

Many of us believe that we are now—since May of 1993 (see *Secrets of Time* by Dr. Stephen Jones, \$23 ppd. from us.) — in a transition period between the age of Pentecost and the age of Tabernacles. (The age of Passover was from the exodus from Egypt until the crucifixion of our Savior.) There will be a Tabernacles church, but it is going to be very different from the Pentecostal church. It will be the church of the Millennial Kingdom when Christ and the overcomers rule and reign on the earth (Revelation 5:10).

We have mentioned the wheat and the barley grains as symbols or types. In the animal kingdom, the donkey (KJV: ass) is the pre-eminent symbol of Pentecost. We found that Saul was a cattleman, always connected with asses or other cattle. Of course, David was a shepherd. During the Pentecostal church age, there has been a predominance of Saul leaders. (See FMS # “How Church and State Control People.”) They are the church leaders who *drive* their members like cattle. We have had relatively few true shepherds who *lead* the flocks by example, with patience, kindness, gentleness and above all, with mercy.

As we have studied the lives of David and Saul, we have seen how David was persecuted by Saul. This was prophetic of how overcomers throughout history have been persecuted by the non-overcomers *in the church*. We have shown many times how this has applied both in a corporate sense and to each of us as individuals.

Presumably, every believer wants to be in that high calling of the body of overcomers, and if so, then we can expect to have our own personal Sauls. The main thing to understand about this painful process of being persecuted by our Sauls is that God has ordained this method for refining us, for chiseling the rough edges off our character, for pruning us so that we can bring forth more fruit and higher quality fruit. So let us always remember that the spears which are thrown at us by our Sauls are really pruning hooks from the Father.

It has been some time now in these studies since the death of King Saul and the accession of David to

the throne over all Israel. But even though Saul is now out of the picture, we have discovered that other Saul types are coming on the scene who are being used by God to continue to refine, chisel, prune and mold the character of King David. Sadly, though, we found that it was members of his own family who followed after the pattern of King Saul. Most notably and most recently is the example of David's son Absalom. He turned out to be almost more rotten of character than Saul himself.

We are now in 2 Samuel, chapter 18. In recent issues of FMS, we have witnessed the betrayal of David by his trusted counselor Ahithophel. When Ahithophel saw that his advice was not accepted by Absalom and that they would lose in the attempted coup d'état, Ahithophel went and hanged himself. This was a type and shadow of Judas betraying Jesus.

In our last issue, the rebellion of Absalom came to a climax with the would-be usurper having been caught in the low branches of an oak tree as his mule (note the Pentecostal ass symbolism again) kept on moving. Before the battle, David had instructed his military commanders not to harm Absalom. But instead, David's top general, Joab, expressly disobeyed and personally participated in the assassination of the helpless Absalom.

As we pick up the story, we were noting the uncertainty of the location of this battle. The Bible states that it occurred "in the wood of Ephraim." There are some scholars who think that there must have been a forested area on the east side of Jordan by that name. The reasoning is that David was staying in Mahanaim and the narrative has already stated that Absalom crossed Jordan going into the land of Gilead, so the case is made that the battle occurred *east* of Jordan.

However, there are other scholars who make an excellent case for the forest of Ephraim being in the territory of Ephraim which is *west* of the Jordan. We do not have the space to go into all the evidence for that, but if that were the case, then a very fascinating and significant connection is possible.

As Ron Oja and I discussed the Saul and David scenarios over many months (while I was giving these studies as lectures), Ron told me that he believes that the oak where Absalom died is the very place, maybe the very oak tree, where Rebekah's nurse, Deborah, died. (When we originally gave the full two hour lec-

ture on this subject, Ron was our guest speaker, and used my lecture on the death of Absalom as his point of departure to provide a "gazillion" more details on the significance of the oak tree and how it is connected with witchcraft in the church today. It is available in a one hour teaching called *The Death of Witchcraft* (available on tape or CD, please specify, for \$6 ppd.)

We will sketch a few of the broad outlines of the significance of this here. If this is the same oak tree, then let us refresh our memories on some of the background first. As we pick up the story in Genesis 31:29, Jacob and his family have fled Laban, Jacob's father-in-law, who had been trying to cheat him. It is now a few days later and Laban has caught up with Jacob and he is in effect telling Jacob how lucky Jacob is that God is preventing him from kicking Jacob's "hinder part" all the way back to Canaan land. Laban says:

Genesis 31:29 It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.

30 And now, *though* thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?

So Laban appears to be more upset about losing some little carved idols from his house than he is about anything else. Why did you steal them, he asks Jacob. Of course, Jacob was unaware that his favored wife, Rachel, had indeed made off with these false gods from daddy's house. In his ignorance, Jacob responds to Laban with a foolish promise.

31 And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me.

32 With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before [i.e., *in the presence of*] our brethren [relatives] discern thou what *is* thine with me, and take *it* to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.

33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found *them* not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.

34 Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found *them* not.

The camel's *furniture* referred to the rather large basket-type compartment, often with a little shade roof over it, which was fitted to the camel's back and in which Rachel had been riding. So look at it as being a combination saddle and luggage compartment.

35 And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images.

To summarize, Rachel is the one who stole the false gods, the little statues; and she had hidden them under her seat. She told her father she was on her monthly period and trusted that he would pardon her for not rising in his presence.

Laban goes home without finding the idols. Jacob and his large and growing family then journey on to Mahanaim, where Jacob prepares to meet his feared adversary brother, Esau. He wrestles with the angel all night, gets his name changed to Israel by dawn, and then meets Esau, and speaks to him in Genesis 33.

10 And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.

We have spoken of that revelation before; namely, of each of us coming to a point where we can see the face of God in our enemies. In other words, seeing that God is behind all things and uses every event for His good purposes. As William Cowper's classic hymn says: "Behind a frowning Providence, He hides a smiling face." (See FMS #104, "Seeing God in your Enemies.") After the encounter with Esau, Jacob and company move on *across Jordan to the west* where Jacob buys a portion of a field near the place later called Shechem.

Next, Jacob's daughter, Dinah, is raped by the Hivite prince named Shechem. In retaliation, Jacob-Israel's sons, Simeon and Levi slaughter all the men of Shechem's city. At that point, God

puts in a phone call to Jacob and says: "Jake, I think you and the gang better hit the road again."

Genesis 35:1 And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.

2 Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:

Here are these idols again, and apparently Rachel is not the only one with these little statues. Idolatry has become widespread among Jacob's family (and his entourage, for he had accumulated much wealth and many servants during his more than two decades of service to his father-in-law). Israel now demands that they turn over the false gods to him. This is a type of a non-believer in any age becoming a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Upon coming to faith in Christ, a person renounces idolatry, he becomes clean through faith in the blood sacrifice of Jesus, which profession of faith is "walked out" in water baptism, whereupon the new believer has "changed his garments" (put on the garments of righteousness. Isaiah 61:10).

3 And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.

4 And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.

The point to remember here in connection with *The Death of Witchcraft* is that the idols were buried under an oak tree.

5 And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

6 So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him.

7 And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

Then, seemingly out of nowhere, and with no connection with anything else in the story, comes this enigmatic statement.

8 But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak; and the name of it was called Allonbachuth [which means "oak of weeping"].

There is no other mention by name in the Bible of this Deborah who was Jacob's mother's nurse. Furthermore, since Jacob had left Isaac and Rebekah some 20 some years earlier, we have not even had a mention of Rebekah herself, so why did the Holy Spirit inspire that this statement should be entered into the Holy Writ?

Could it perhaps be the connection between the idols, the oak trees and death? Absalom, who is another picture of the Saul church, dies at an oak tree. The idols, the false gods in the family of Israel, are buried beneath an oak tree, and Deborah is buried under an oak tree at Bethel.

The burial of the idols and the burial of Deborah at Bethel occur just before Rachel *dies*. Her death occurs immediately after giving birth to Jacob's youngest son, Benjamin. Note that Benjamin is the only one of the 12 sons who was born an "Israelite." All the rest were born when he was still Jacob. The name change from Jacob to Israel signified Jacob's spiritual growth to a type of the overcomers.

(For much more detail on the Benjamin connection, we have the following audio lectures available: #475 & 476: *Unless Benjamin Is With You*; and #489 & 490: *The Tribe of Benjamin, Ancient and Modern*. \$10 per pair ppd. or all four for \$18 ppd. Specify tape or CD. All are part of my 30-part lecture series called *Joseph the Overcomer*, a multiple-album tape or CD package, \$95 ppd.)

Applying this on the corporate level to the church age, the Saul church's main problem has always been pride and idolatry. Can all these connections with the oak tree then symbolize the death of pride and idolatry in the church?...Because *Bethel* means the "house of God." Rachel herself is also a picture of the church. Rachel—the church—was sitting on the false gods. They were under her seat. Could it also mean that idolatry is under the seat of the church?

The Roman Catholic church claims that the "seat of the church" is in Rome. Do they really understand what they are claiming? Typologically speaking, probably not. History records how Rome at the time of the emperor Constantine began importing the idolatry of Babylon's mystery religions into the Christian church. It has been there ever since. The Reformers were granted the spiritual sight to see that indeed, the church of Rome had become the Great Harlot described in Revelation 17, and the papacy fulfilled the prophecies of anti-Christ. (That is one fulfillment. In *Sacred Secrets of the Sovereignty of God*, I reveal another—this one closer to home, so to speak.)

For my new readers, regarding Roman Catholicism, I know whereof I speak because I was raised as a "staunch" Catholic and educated as a seminarian. I left the seminary and the Roman church in 1967. The truth is that the false gods—whether of wood and stone or the more powerful idols in the mind—wherever they exist in the church, must be put away. This includes *all* denominations, for what the Reformers began has deteriorated into the "harlot daughters" of Mystery Babylon). The Protestants and the "non-denominations" are all included. I speak this truth in love, not in condemnation, for all of this was in the sovereign Plan of our Father.

The church was never going to be perfected under a "Pentecostal anointing." It was programmed to fail by our Father. We must enter into Tabernacles before the perfection comes. It is even now on the threshold. But before that which is perfect comes, the imperfect must fall. Along with the idolatry, the pride of Saul and Absalom in the church has to die before Benjamin, the Israelite-overcomer company, can come forth. The Saul and Absalom-types must depart as the Greater David and His Body (the perfected overcomers) assume the leadership roles in the age of Tabernacles. God speed the day!

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