

Of course, this is an analogy designed to explain God's attitude toward those who alter "the plan," or instructions from which he has given them to build. A prime example of one who did this is Saul, chosen and anointed to be the first human king over Israel:
Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

This is a pretty straightforward command; take them out, and everything they possess. But this isn't what Saul did (my emphasis):

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The "Amen" at the end of this passage means "so be it!" or in modern vernacular, from now on, it's this way or the highway, folks! By claiming this plan of his to be a "**mystery, kept secret since the world began....in other ages...not made known unto the sons of men**" (Eph. 3:5), Paul is plainly and unequivocally saying it could not have been revealed prior to his revelation of it.

Yes, Gertrude, that means it is not in the four gospels, and teaching that they (the gospels) are the primary section of the NT in which Christians are to find their marching orders, "for the obedience of faith," is flatly wrong, and those that teach and follow this doctrine, according to what Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 3:15 and 2 Timothy 2:15, will be "ashamed", and "suffer loss" when they appear to give an account of what they said and did at "the judgment seat of Christ."

3

And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

God's response to this was blunt and straightforward:

Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

For those of you not familiar with "the rest of the story," when confronted by Samuel, Saul explained,

4

The "Bandwagon" Mentality

Christians, by and large, say this certainly can't be true, because it contradicts, as more than one has informed me, 20 centuries of church teachings. In other words, it is a "majority rules" kind of thing. How, they say, could God allow all these systems to exist and flourish for so long if they were teaching the wrong thing? The simple answer to this is found in Paul's claim, in Colossians 1:25, to have completed the word of God:

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

This is it, and the world has it in a King James Bible. It started about 1500 years earlier with Moses' penning of the five books of the law, and ended with the above declaration by Paul.

4

the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God

Samuel's response:

And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. (my emphasis)

5

The final instructions "for the obedience of faith" are in it in Paul's 13 letters, written in plain sixth grade reading level English for anyone to see, if they will. And herein lies the problem; they simply refuse to acknowledge it. The plain fact is, God has said it, and he is finished with it. He is therefore not in the business (as men are) of running "to and fro" in the earth passing judgment. The judgment is the word itself, and there are plenty of prophets issuing forth the warning (and, for the most part, being ignored and ridiculed, just as they were in olden times) that religions aren't following the right plan.

The error of religions is the same error of the builder; they have convinced themselves that God has given them the latitude to choose the plan (or mix the plans, as they see fit) that produces the best results (the biggest crowd of followers). What this says is, they are far more concerned with earthly success, and the approval of their fellow humans, than they are with being "approved unto God", and securing a heavenly reward.

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This story should give pause to Christians, under whatever label they have placed themselves (e.g., Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal, Evangelical, etc.) to consider where the plan is for "the church" in the world today. If asked, most would exclaim, with the most ardent certainty, that the plan is found in the new testament, primarily in the four "gospels", Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the doctrine of which is supported, they will say, by the rest of the books/letters of the NT.

If you are one who believes this, please consider the following declaration from the Apostle Paul: Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel... Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; rightly dividing the word of truth. (my emphasis)

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"Well, we're naming the name of Christ, brother; that's all that really matters." I'm afraid not. This is the same attitude the builder took when he altered the developers plan. I'm sure he thought, "what's the beef? I didn't change the foundation, or the layout, or cut corners on the materials? And I was acting in the best interest of the developer?" The "bottom line" is, what is achieved here on earth, in the so-called "name of Christ," may very well be at the expense of the truth, and thus result in the loss of heavenly rewards. If we say that the foundation of our doctrine is Christ, then we had better "take heed" what we "buildeth thereupon," looking to "the wise masterbuilder for the plan from which we are to build, for **at the judgment seat of Christ...he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.**" Amen.

Mike Schroeder

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