

MORAL DECADENCE—THE MARKS OF FALSE RELIGION

Pastor Lucas Almeida—Judges 17-18—Central Baptist Church—August 6th, 2023

INTRODUCTION

False religion is built on the ideas of men, but true religion is built on the word of God.

Matthew 7:24–27—[24] “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. [25] And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. [26] And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. [27] And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

SINCERITY APART FROM TRUTH

Sincerity is not the foundation for Christian worship; Christian worship rests on faithful obedience.

God cares not only that he is worshipped, he cares about how he is worshipped his way.

Leviticus 10:1–3—[1] Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. [2] And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. [3] Then Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the LORD has said: ‘Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.’” And Aaron held his peace.

John 4:24—“[24] God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

At Central, our services are shaped and saturated by the word of God.

- Preach
- Sing
- Pray
- Read Scripture
- Observe the ordinances

GODLESS LEADERSHIP

Levites

- A member of the tribe of Levi (a priestly order / leaders of the worship of Israel)

- Never allotted a piece of land
- Directly responsible for the worship of the temple or of the tabernacle
- God instructed Moses to appoint cities for the Levites
- The job of a Levite was to represent the people before God

By far the most important aspect of spiritual leadership is godliness.

SELFISH AMBITION

The king should be so familiarized with God's Word that he should give the people direction.

Deuteronomy 17:18–20—[18] *“And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. [19] And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, [20] that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.*

Tribe of Dan

- Samson's own tribe
- Supposed to have settled in a land just north of Judah
- Failed to conquer the land (see Judges 1:34)

The Country of Laish

- About 100 miles north of the land the Lord had given to the Tribe of Dan
- Considerably beyond any land that the Lord had given to his people
- A movement away from Judah and the city of the King, Jerusalem

Proverbs 23:10–11

*[10] Do not move an ancient landmark
or enter the fields of the fatherless,
[11] for their Redeemer is strong;
he will plead their cause against you.*

Convenience and comfort are not the most important principles in decision making for Christians—nearness to God is.

False religion seeks to fulfill one's own self ambition, but true religion is selfless to the point of death.

Galatians 5:15—*...and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*