

## DECIDING BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG

Each Christian is called to be an ambassador for Christ and to represent Him to the world. In a real sense, the nation of Israel had that same calling thousands of years ago. Perhaps we can learn from the mistakes they made from their history and avoid some of the same pitfalls. One of the obvious things from their history was that the nation split into two factions soon after the death of Solomon. That lack of unity did not help them to reach out to the world with God's message of salvation. Rather than just having a split, the church today is fragmented into many parts and sub-parts.

Even before the split, the nation of Israel had problems with people embracing false philosophies and idol worship. This occurred from the time of the judges up until the Babylonian captivity. It was not as if they denied the existence of God but they just added all the others to their "religious" practice. Especially in the Northern Kingdom they tried to blend the pagan practices with the worship prescribed by God. In doing so, they had fooled themselves into thinking they were doing the right thing. It seems we have also incorporated false religious practices into our celebrations in the church. What started out to honor the saints who had died has turned into a mockery of God by church people dressing up in devil and witches costumes. We have confused the Resurrection of Jesus with multicolored eggs and rabbits that were part of fertility rites of the ancient Babylonians. We have introduced the Druid religion of worship of the spirit in the trees into the celebration of the birth of Jesus. We have mixed the worldly with the sacred. The problem with such things is that it opens the door for overt involvement in false religion and idolatry.

**1 KINGS 16:29-34** Once the door has been opened by allowing the subtle influence of paganism to creep into our lives we will then encounter an Ahab who will attempt to create a wide-open society in which anything is alright. Ahab was blatant in what he did. He married a foreign woman who worshiped idols. He built a temple to Baal, made idols of the goddess Asherah, and imported religious advisers for the false religion (450 for Baal and 400 for Asherah). Finally, Ahab allowed the city of Jericho to be rebuilt contrary to God's wishes. We are a bit more subtle today. We have state supported schools that teach evolution and deny creation, teach and advocate transdental meditatio and yoga. Our government sponsors "research" into hypnotism and paranormal phenomena. Our government has legalized abortion to kill unborn babies, it has declare homosexuality to be OK and has tried to prohibit the name of Jesus from any public situation other than a "church meeting."

**1 KINGS 17:1-7** We could use an Elijah to boldly point out to us where our practices are taking us. He came from the other side of the Jordan and walked in, uninvited, into the palace of Ahab and announced his drought message. Those of the royal court probably laughed at such a character, his actions and his message. We are not told whether Elijah had given previous messages to Ahab regarding the error of his actions and we do not know if Ahab was told any more than these few words.

After the message from God had been delivered to Ahab, Elijah then went into hiding.

1 ¶ Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."

2 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah:

- 3 "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan.
- 4 You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there."
- 5 So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there.
- 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.
- 7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.