

## *Supporting Pastors by Ministering to Christians in Need of Guidance and Deliverance*



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Dear APF Supporter:

### **Greetings!**

Welcome to 2010! I hope that Christmas and New Year's went well for all of you. I also hope that 2010 will be a good year for everyone.

### **Praises:**

Praise God for His mighty work of deliverance, as more were set free in December!

Praise God for the APF Board, as they give support and guidance for the ministry. Members include: Nelson Martin, Rich Yoder, Anita Yoder, Harley Miller, Keith King, Ginny King, Barb Tapley, and Wes Bontreger.

Praise God for His blessing on *A Pastor's Friend*, as the finances were solid for 2009. Financial support covered each pay period for payroll and taxes!

### **Something to Consider:**

**Exodus 23:23-25**—<sup>23</sup> *My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out.* <sup>24</sup> *Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces.* <sup>25</sup> *Worship the LORD your God...*

In the passage above, God is preparing the Israelites for entrance into the Promised Land. One problem existed: the Promised Land was already filled with a number of groups of people, and these people embraced idolatry. God had already forbidden the Israelites to practice any form of idol worship. A few chapters earlier (Exodus 20:22-23), God directed them to never make any form of an idol. It is often repeated in the Old Testament just how bad idolatry is.

Idolatry was and is so serious, God told the Israelites that He would drive out the nations in the Promised Land. There was to be no mingling: the people are to be destroyed. In Joshua 6:21, the people completely wiped out all living things in Jericho because of their idolatry. God did not want the people of Israel to be enticed to worshipping false gods.

Not only that, God directs the people to not “follow their practices” (verse 24). These practices are connected to idolatry because they are empowered by demons. The Apostle Paul makes it clear in 1 Corinthians 10:20 that idol worship is nothing more than demon worship. These practices that the Israelites are to avoid are occult practices. Deuteronomy 18:9-13 gives a general listing of these practices. Again, it is often repeated in the Old Testament to avoid such practices. For example, Leviticus 19:26... “Do not practice divination or sorcery.”

The consequences of idolatry and occult practice were disastrous for the Israelites. They failed to wipe out the peoples living in the Promised Land. After King Solomon was enticed by his many foreign wives into idol worship, Israel, God's chosen people, were split into two different countries. The Northern Kingdom, which kept the name Israel, eventually is completely wiped out because of the continued idolatry and occult practice.

The Southern Kingdom, called Judah, lasted a bit longer. Eventually, the Babylonians took the majority of the people into captivity. The sin of idolatry and occultism destroyed the people. God did not take their idolatry lightly, and neither should we.

Occultism is not harmless. In fact, it is still extremely destructive today as it was in the times of the Old Testament. A recent case affirms it again, as a person in serious turmoil came for help. Life was miserable and God seemed far away. After confessing personal and ancestral involvement in the use of a pendulum for predicting the sex of the baby, life changed dramatically. One family member told me that the person is “completely different.” The reality is that participating in occultism (being involved with demons, whether we know demons are there or not) leads a person into spiritual captivity just as the Israelites were taken into physical captivity in Babylon.

The Good News: the Lord Jesus Christ came to set us free from Satan and destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). Unlike the time of the Old Testament, we don't have to destroy the people who participate in occultism or idolatry or isolate ourselves from them. We can share the Gospel and lead them to salvation and deliverance. People can be set free from the bondage of demons by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ! Christians need discernment to know what is in the realm of the occult so we can avoid demonic bondage and still interact with those who are involved in occultism to help them to freedom in Christ.

### **Prayer Concerns:**

Upcoming Events:

January 6—returning to Griner Mennonite Church on Wednesday evenings with the youth.

January 19—at Epic Community Church in Portland, MI to share with a group called “180.”

February 4—at Griner Mennonite Church (1:00pm) in conjunction with Freedom Hills Ministry, to share on occultism.\*

February 11—APF open house at the APF office. If you were unable to attend the one in December, you have an opportunity to come and see the building. If you came in December, feel free to come again for hot drinks and cookies!

Please pray for me to have strength and energy, as ministry can be taxing on my emotions.

### **Final Thoughts:**

Often times, those who believe as I do in regard to occultism are called “intolerant” because of viewing negatively an aspect of someone's culture. Others will say that I'm too restrictive and sheltering, especially in regard to children. After seeing how involvement in occultism has harmed many, and after looking at the Biblical record of how it destroyed a whole nation, I see no reason to be involved in the slightest way with the powers of darkness. Such a view is not popular, but my purpose is not to offend anyone. There was a sign on the wall at Clinton Christian School for the first number of years I taught there: “What is popular isn't always right, and what is right isn't always popular.” Amen. I'm not here to condemn other people or other cultures, but when it comes to any part of any culture that embraces idolatry or occultism, I have to reject such practices. I say it is better for them to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ than allow them to live in darkness in their own culture!

\*If you want to learn more about these occult practices, I invite you to come and learn at this event.

In Christ,



Ben Snyder