

Profaning the Divine

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God spoke to Aaron, the high priest, and directed him to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean. Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, failed to do this and it cost them their lives (Lev. 10:1-2, 10). The Greek word for 'profane' is *bebelos*, which means quite literally, "to cross the threshold" (Vine). It consists of making a common or temporal use of a sacred thing and to show disregard for God or holy things. This is what angered Jesus when He cleansed the temple (Jn. 2:14-16).

One of the surest signs of degeneracy in the Jews' religion was the failure to distinguish between the holy and the profane and the unclean and the clean. This finally led to their 70 years of captivity. The prophets would prophesy falsely and the priests would rule by their own authority (Jer. 5:30-31). Jeremiah witnessed this and was broken-hearted when he wrote about the prophets and priests who had become polluted (23:9-11). They prophesied by Baal and led God's people astray. They did not condemn adultery or falsehood which resulted in an actual strengthening of the hands of evildoers, so that no one turned back from his wickedness. In the sight of God, they had become like Sodom and Gomorrah (23:13-14).

Also, Ezekiel, while in captivity, writes from Babylon of the conspiracy between the corrupt prophets and priests in Jerusalem. He likened the conspiracy to a roaring lion tearing its prey. The priests had done violence to God's law and profaned His holy things; they had made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they had not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and hid their eyes from God's Sabbaths. The result of all of this was that God Himself was profaned among His own people (Ezek. 22:25-26). When the Jews returned home to Jerusalem from captivity, they were prophesied to act differently. Ezekiel writes: "Moreover, they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean" (44:23).

What about the NT?

The principle of profaning the divine is just as true today as it was then as we shall see in this brief treatise. Ignorance of God's word is the primary cause of profaning the divine today. Hosea wrote: "my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (4:6a). The apostle Paul prayed the following prayer for the Philippian church: "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent ("distinguish between the things that differ," or GK. "prove things differing"), in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:9-10). Real knowledge gives discerning power which is

necessary to judge between good and evil (Heb. 5:12). This is why we must be diligent in our study of God's word, accurately handling the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

Application

God has made known His will clearly so there is no excuse. We now have all the truth, the mind of God revealed so we can read and understand it. Therefore, any deviation from the divine plan which God has spoken is a profaning of the divine. Christ promised to build His church and add to it all who believe and obey him (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47; Heb. 5:8-9). The very existence of denominationalism is a flagrant profaning of the divine.