

Holding in Contempt God's Word

"Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD; for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt."
1 Samuel 2:17

In 1 Samuel 2 God describes the wickedness of Eli's sons. In essence they abused the privileges of the priesthood, violating the specific instructions of the Lord. When they failed to adhere to the specific instructions of God, He charged them with holding His Word in contempt.

The Old Testament Law is filled with great detail on how things were to be done. The greater the detail, however, the greater the temptation to modify the instructions. "God doesn't really care about the details; it is the spirit that counts," is how we rationalize. Like the sons of Eli, such people frequently get into trouble with God.

In the New Testament, by and large, God does not give a great deal of detail. In rites such as baptism, the Lord's Supper, and congregating in His name, no specifics are given. Thus we are free to improvise as we please. But instead of enjoying our freedom in Christ, we fragment over the details. Denominations come into existence over mode of baptism, the exact meaning of the bread and wine, and what we do when we congregate in His name. Unity is lost in violation of His wish that we be one.

On the other hand, we ignore with seeming impunity the specific commands of God with which we do not agree. It seems that no matter what God asks, we want to argue with Him. Instead of obeying His simple commands, we emulate the wicked sons of Eli.