

Sunday June 28th 2020
The Word of God
A Survey of the Bible – Lesson 20B
Alas, Sinful Nation

1). Ex 23:1 *And God spoke all these words, saying: 2 “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.*

De 5:6 *“I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 7 “You shall have no other gods before Me.*

We had seen last time that the Lord had required faithful obedience from His people to the commandments, He had given them after He had delivered them from Egypt. And this requirement was the same for the first and the second generation of Israel to come out of Egypt. And for all subsequent generations.

a). And God’s commandment to faithful obedience had a specific end in view – De 5:12 *“Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you.*

It was with a view to ‘the Sabbath day’, the 7th Day, the Day of Rest, and the rulership that would take place in that Day, as pictured in the first 34 verses of Genesis. This day was to be kept ‘holy’, separated from the other 6 days and was to be the constant focus of all that Israel did.

b). And the particular commandment that has been our focus, in relation to Israel and the Sabbath Day, is seen in the verses we began with – ‘You shall have no other gods before Me.’

c). Now, as we look at this command it would be good to keep in mind that there is context into which this command is given; a context that has the 7th Day as its goal, that will explain not only the seriousness

of the command itself, but will also explain the severity of God's response to Israel's disobedience to it.

2). With that said, let us now lay the foundation and set the context into which this command is given - Ge 9:26 *And he said: "Blessed be the Lord, The God of Shem....."*

Following the flood of Noah, the Lord made clear that Shem was the only one of Noah's sons whom God would work through, and it would therefore follow that only those from the lineage of Shem would be the ones God would work through as well. Simply put, Shem had God, but his brothers didn't. Not that this was of itself a disadvantage for them, it just meant that the brothers' access to God and His spiritual blessings could only come through Shem. An unalterable principle set in place following God's judgment upon the inhabitants of the earth.

a). And if we follow Shem's lineage we will come to Abraham, and it was to this one man, through whom God would work, that God gave the promises that we know so well - Ge 12:1 *Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

It was to be the 'great nation' which would come from the loins of Abraham, of the lineage of Shem, that God would choose to be the conduit of His blessings to the rest of the human race, all with the 7th Day in view. Promises and a choice that had been foreshadowed in Noah's son - Ge 9:27 *May God enlarge Japheth, And may he dwell in the tents of Shem; And may Canaan be his servant."*

As we know, it was through one man, Abraham's son Isaac, that the 'great nation' who would bless all the families of the earth was to come - Ge 21:12 *But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for **in Isaac your seed shall be called.**"*

13 Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed."

Abraham of course had 2 sons, Isaac and Ishmael, who were both his 'seed'. However, it was Isaac, the son of the freewoman, that God chose to be the seed of Abraham through whom He would continue to work, and the blessings would come, not Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman.

b). And although we see that Ishmael, the son of Abraham and the bondwoman, Hagar, was also made 'a nation', it could only be through Isaac's descendants that the nation coming from Ishmael could access God's spiritual blessings. Simply put, Isaac had God, as did Shem, but Ishmael didn't.

c). Now, Isaac also had 2 sons, Jacob a mild man living in tents and Esau a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but it was Jacob alone who was in possession of the birthright and therefore it would be through Jacob and his offspring that God would continue to work towards the 7th Day. And just as we have seen with Ishmael, it can only be through the descendants of Jacob that the descendants of Esau could have access to God's spiritual blessings. To put this simply once again, Jacob had God and Esau didn't.

d). And Jacob was the one man that God had chosen to bring about a completely separate creation – Isa 43:1 *But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel:.....*

Ge 32:26 And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" 27 So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." 28 And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

Adam was a separate creation from that which had existed before, and Adam's creation was specifically for the purpose of rulership in the 7th Day. In Jacob God brought about another entirely separate creation, bringing about a division in the human race, Jew and Gentile. And as with Adam, the separate creation in Jacob was specifically for rulership in the 7th Day. The Church is also the new creation in Christ, another entirely

separate creation bringing about another division in the human race, Jews, Gentiles and those who are neither Jews nor Gentiles, the one new man in Christ - Christians. And as with Adam and Jacob, the separate creation in Christ is specifically for rulership in the 7th Day. No doubt we will note the pattern here.

e). Because of the separate creation God brought about in Jacob, all of Jacob's descendants would now be completely set apart from the rest of those on the face of the earth. There would now be Jews, who had God, and Gentiles who didn't. And as we have previously seen, it can only be through the Jewish people that the Gentile nations can access God's spiritual blessings. To say this simply again, Israel has God, the nations of the world don't.

f). This separation brought about in Jacob, is further marked in Moses's day by the inception of Israel as a nation, and the nation's adoption as God's firstborn son – Ex 4:22 *Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord: "Israel is My son, My firstborn.*

And in the declaration made to Pharaoh is the simply stated fact that national Israel is the son that God had chosen to rule the Gentile nations of the earth within a Theocracy. The purpose for their creation in Jacob. And such a Theocratic rule was possible within the OT economy and will be possible in the future, beyond the Tribulation, because of Israel's uniquely created position - Nu 23:9 *For from the top of the rocks I see him, And from the hills I behold him; There! A people dwelling alone, Not reckoning itself among the nations.*

Israel is a people, known by the name of one man, who are to dwell alone, distinct from all others, who are not to be reckoned, are not to be counted, among the other nations, because of their separate creation.

g). Israel remains the only nation with God, and as we have seen from Shem onwards, the only way that the Gentile nations of the earth can access God's spiritual blessings is through Israel. This is exactly what God had promised to Abraham, and this is how it must be.

h). And from the time when the nation of Israel was brought into existence, during Moses day, God has looked upon and dealt with the Gentile nations only through Israel – Zec 2:8 *For thus says the Lord of*

hosts: "He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple [Lit. pupil] of His eye.

And the way God both views and deals with the Gentile nations can never change – Ro 11:29 *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*

And so, on the night of Passover, the separate creation in Jacob, God's adopted firstborn son was delivered from Egypt with God in their midst, to rule at the head of the nations within a Theocracy from the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Completely apart from Satan's kingdom and yet to have dominion over it.

i). And it was into this context that God gave the command, 'You shall have no other gods before Me'. Any other 'god' could only be a part of Satan's kingdom and to have another 'god' in place of the One true God would be to reject God's purpose and defile the nation's calling through touching that which was not to be touched.

2). To bring a complete end to the present system of rulership under Satan has been God's purpose from the beginning. It is the reason for the creation of Adam, the reason for the creation in Jacob and the reason for the new creation in Christ. And if we go to the Book of Daniel, we can gain insight into how the present system of rulership functions – Da 10:20 *Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I [Gabriel] must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. 21 But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.....*

We can see from the Book of Daniel that the Gentile nations of the earth, in this instance Persia and Greece, all have a 'prince' who rules over them. These 'princes' are fallen angels who rule with other subordinate rulers through human counterparts on the earth within the kingdom of Satan.

a). Michael, Israel's 'prince' is not one of these, however. He is one of the angels who did not rebel with Satan, therefore he and the nation over which he has oversight, which is not to be counted among the other

nations, are completely separate from the present world system under Satan – Da 12:1 *“At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people;*

Re 12:7 *And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought.*

And so, on the one hand, we see the rebel kingdom of Satan comprising all the Gentile nations of the earth with their demonic heavenly rulers, and on the other hand Israel and Michael, their prince, set as diametric opposites. And what is at stake is rulership of the earth.

b). For Satan to keep his hands upon the scepter of rulership, he had to do something about Israel, the one nation over whom he does not have jurisdiction, the nation with God.

c). Once Israel had left Egypt on the march to the land of promise Satan had attempted to stop them by having Balaam pronounce a curse upon them. Something that could not be done. Israel had passed through the Red Sea and this could not be reversed – Nu 23:19 *“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? 20 Behold, I have received a command to bless; He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it. 21 “He has not observed iniquity in Jacob, Nor has He seen wickedness in Israel. The Lord his God is with him, And the shout of a King is among them.*

God remains faithful to His promise to Abraham, even though the fulfillment of His promise through Abraham’s seed is still to be realized – Nu 24:17 *“I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult.*

Unable to control Israel directly as they remain separate from his kingdom, he employed the same tactic against them that he had used in the Garden against the Woman – Nu 25:1 *Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate*

and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel.

In the Garden Satan had told the Woman, 'You shall not surely die', despite that which God had said concerning His prohibition against eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And a claim like this concerning Israel's covenant status must have been made by Balaam with regards to God's prohibition on Israel's involvement with the nations from whom they were to be separate.

d). And just as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil appealed to the Woman in the Garden, so the women of Moab and the sacrifices of their gods appealed to the sons of Israel at Acacia Grove.

e). Let's remember, Baal was a demon 'god' worshipped by a Gentile nation under Satan's control. This was not a momentary aberration on Israel's part, but a capitulation. They turned away from the One true God and the command He had given to have no other gods before Him, to embrace and submit themselves to a fallen angel. They rejected their heavenly Husband and their earthly calling for the illicit embrace of the one who is the embodiment of death - Ho 9:10 *"I found Israel Like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers As the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season. But they went to Baal Peor, And separated themselves to that shame; They became an abomination like the thing they loved.*

3). The incident of Baal Peor was not the end of the matter, but rather the setting of a pattern of behavior that would have far reaching consequences for both Israel and the Gentile nations as we had seen through the type of Vashti in the Book of Esther.

a). Let's look at that which God told Moses prior to his death - De 31:16 *And the Lord said to Moses: "Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. 17 Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day,*

'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?' 18 And I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods.

And that which God had told Moses is exactly what we have seen come to pass, recorded in the Book of Judges – Jg 2:11 *Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals; 12 and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger. 13 They forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.*

Not only did the nation created to be a firstborn son of God continue to serve the enemy they had been brought into being to replace, but they also desired to be like all the other Gentile nations in Satan's kingdom, to cease from being separate, thereby despising their unique creation – 1 Sa 8:4 *Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." 6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the Lord. 7 And the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. 8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also.*

God had been Israel's Husband and King since the Theocracy began at Sinai, but here in 1 Samuel we see Israel reject God as their King, preferring instead to appoint a man to the role so that they would be no different to all the other nations. Their thought always seems to have been assimilation rather than separation. We can clearly see the hand of Satan in this.

b). The nation continued after this fashion until the time came when God divorced His harlot wife, brought the Theocracy to an end and

initiated the times of the Gentiles through the Babylonian captivity, which followed the Assyrian captivity, about 100 years later –
Ps 106:36 They served their idols, Which became a snare to them. 37 They even sacrificed their sons And their daughters to demons, 38 And shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and daughters, Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with blood. 39 Thus they were defiled by their own works, And played the harlot by their own deeds. 40 Therefore the wrath of the Lord was kindled against His people, So that He abhorred His own inheritance. 41 And He gave them into the hand of the Gentiles, And those who hated them ruled over them.

Jer 3:6 The Lord said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: “Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. 7 And I said, after she had done all these things, ‘Return to Me.’ But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. 9 So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. 10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense,” says the Lord.

Even though a remnant returned to the land after the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity, as prophesied by Jeremiah, they still remained under Gentile dominion, separated from the Theocracy that should have been theirs.

c). And as we had seen last time, this was exactly the situation that existed at the Lord’s first advent. And perhaps with all this foundation in place we can more fully appreciate why the offer of the Kingdom of the heavens to Israel could begin only one way, ‘Repent’.

d). The nation’s harlotry was seen at an apex at the Lord’s crucifixion through the pledge of allegiance to Caesar, the pagan Gentile king who thought he was a god.

e). And Israel in the land today is no different. The remnant that returned there, recognized as a nation on May 14th 1948, returned through the ministrations of the Gentile nations, not by the power of God and remains unrepentant.

f). And those in the land today as well as those still in the Gentile nations continue to bow down to the gods of those nations that they should rule over – no longer gods of wood and stone, but the gods of secularism, material prosperity, the global economy, nuclear weapons, regional power and democracy. Declaring, despite the clear teaching of Scripture, 'Never again'. Denying that which God has preordained.

g). On the one hand we can see that Satan has seduced God's wife into an illicit relationship that has spanned millennia, separating her from her Husband and from God's purpose. But on the other hand, this is exactly where Israel must be in order for God's purpose for His son to be realized – Jer 46:27 *"But do not fear, O My servant Jacob, And do not be dismayed, O Israel! For behold, I will save you from afar, And your offspring from the land of their captivity; Jacob shall return, have rest and be at ease; No one shall make him afraid. 28 Do not fear, O Jacob My servant," says the Lord, "For I am with you; For I will make a complete end of all the nations To which I have driven you, But I will not make a complete end of you. I will rightly correct you, For I will not leave you wholly unpunished."*

We will need to continue with this next time though – if the Lord is willing.