

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Deuteronomy: Moses' Great Appeal For Israel To Obey God For Blessing Part V: Specific Treaty Stipulations Of The Great King, Deuteronomy 12-26

B. Overcoming Potent Peer Pressure Unto Error (Deuteronomy 13:1-18)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We are facing remarkably strong and sinister peer pressure today to yield to errant beliefs and practices:

(1) The secular scientific community has long made it hard for creationist scientists to communicate important scientific facts that support Biblical creation: eighteen years ago, Ross S. Olson's June 1, 1995 article, "Peer Pressure and Truth" (answersingenesis.org) claimed: "There is a strong peer pressure, even a herd instinct, in science . . . Dr. Jerry Bergman . . . documents many instances of withholding degrees, terminating positions and denying tenure to creationists." (citing Jerry Bergman, The Criterion: Religious Discrimination in America, 1984)

(2) However, that pressure is starting to affect the homeschooling movement: Ken Ham's article, "Beware the Roaring Lion," Answers, July-Sept., 2013, p. 33 reported that a recent article in the Atlantic claimed "a new class" of homeschoolers wants more evolutionary ideas in their curriculum! The relentless pressure by secular evolutionists for Christians to compromise with evolutionary thinking has led many Christian institutions to adopt the view that God used evolution to create, or "theistic evolution," and that idea now presses in upon the homeschooling movement.

(3) Pastors and churches also face strong pressure to compromise with sin and error. Brannon Howse wrote: "Many pastors read books . . . and run to church-growth conferences hosted by change agents who tell them how to grow their churches by attracting unbelievers through seeker-sensitive church programs. Yet most of these change agents are not Christians. Often, they do not believe in absolutes. They are Fabian socialists, globalists, pagan spiritualists, and communitarians. Many church-growth conferences are sponsored by people and organizations such as the Rockefellers and the Council on Foreign Relations." (Brannon Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 210)

Howse claims these "change agents" try to get pastors to fill their churches with unsaved people to produce a doctrinal conflict between the lost and the saved in the Church. This Marxist "Hegelian Dialectic Process" is intended to lead to a "consensus" where the lost and the saved both compromise their beliefs to keep peace in the Church. The real aim of the "change agents" is then to get committed Christians to shift away from their initial "moral absolutism" so that secular powers outside the Church can control it in "establishing a new world order," *Ibid.*, p. 207-210, 244.

Need: "So, we ask, 'How does God want us to handle such strong peer pressure toward going into sin and error?'"

- I. Deuteronomy 12-26 presents God's specific treaty stipulations for Israel, Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 260.
- II. These stipulations were NOT an EXHAUSTIVE list of God's laws, but instruction on applying them to special **CHALLENGES** Israel would face once she entered the Promised Land, *Ibid.*, p. 283; Deut. 4:1.
- III. Thus, Deuteronomy 13:1-18 called Israel to **OVERCOME POTENT PEER PRESSURE** unto **APOSTASY**:
 - A. Deuteronomy 13 is comprised of three warnings on (1) handling **false miracle-worker** influences unto sin and error (Deut. 13:1-5), (2) handling **close family** influences unto sin and error (Deut. 13:6-11) and (3) handling **large group** influences unto sin and error (Deut. 13:12-18), *Ibid.*, p. 286-287.
 - B. The Hebrew text in *each* of these warnings **emphasizes** the need to **overcome STRONG PEER PRESSURE**:
 1. In describing the **false miracle-worker** (Deut 13:1), Moses noted he might rise "from your **midst**" (*qerem*, Kittel, Bib. Hebr., p. 284; B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 899), placing this phrase early in the sentence to show the influence of the miracle-worker would be **potent** because he was one of **themselves**.
 2. In describing the **close family** apostate (Deut. 13:6), Moses **repeatedly** noted the **force** of the **relationship**:
 - a. Regarding one's brother, Moses wrote, "If your brother, the son of your Mother . . .", meaning "your very own brother," *Ibid.*, Kittel, p. 285; Deuteronomy 13:6 NIV.
 - b. Regarding one's wife, Moses wrote, ". . . or the wife of your bosom" (*heq*, *Ibid.*, B. D. B., p. 300-301), the wife with whom the husband was intimate, "the wife you embrace," Deuteronomy 13:6 ESV.
 - c. Regarding one's friend, Moses wrote, ". . . or your friend which is like your life principle" (*nepesh*, *Ibid.*, Kittel), and since *nepesh* is what God produced in Adam when He breathed into him the breath of life in Genesis 2:7 (*Ibid.*, Kittel, p. 3), this is like one's very life, one's "soul mate" in today's terminology!
 3. In describing the **large group** apostasy (Deut. 13:13), Moses noted that the worthless men who would have led the entire city into idolatry would have been men "from your **midst**" (*qerem*, *Ibid.*), the same word used in Deuteronomy 13:1 to describe the rise of the false miracle-worker in Israel's midst.

- C. The **strength** of the *STAND* to be taken was to be **UNYIELDING INTOLERANCE** in **each** case:
1. If the miracle-worker performed actual miracles, using them to teach others to depart from the Lord to serve other gods in violation of the Scriptures (Deut. 13:2-4), Israel was to see it as a test from God as to whether she would heed **Scripture above miracles**, Deut. 13:3b. Indeed, Israel was to be **rigidly INTOLERANT** of the miracle-worker and thus to execute him, Deut. 13:5! *[Note how this command counters the Charismatic movement's placement of alleged miraculous experience above Scripture!]*
 2. If the close friend or family member even **secretly** enticed another Hebrew to serve other gods besides the Lord God Himself (Deut. 13:6), not only was the innocent party not to heed this call or even to conceal the guilty, but even to be the first to throw the stone in executing the guilty by stoning, Deuteronomy 13:8-11!
 3. If an entire city, a **large group**, was charged with heeding the teachings of evil men to abandon the Lord and go after false gods (Deut. 13:12-13), upon a careful inquiry to establish the validity of this charge (Deut. 13:14), the entire city was to be treated as a condemned Canaanite, pagan city to be destroyed and all of its spoil consumed by fire in holy war unto the Lord, Deuteronomy 13:15-18!
- D. Moses **repeatedly** clarified the **PURPOSE** of such **intolerance** in Deuteronomy 13:3-4, 11, 17-18:
1. The judgment on the false miracle-worker was designed to direct Israel to **retain complete allegiance** to the Lord versus to any false gods, Deuteronomy 13:3-4.
 2. The judgment on the apostate close family member was designed to direct **individuals** to **retain complete allegiance** to the Lord in **accountability** to Him at the most personal level of relationships, Deut. 13:11.
 3. The judgment on the apostate **large group** was designed to direct Israel as a nation to revere the Lord toward obtaining His blessing in the face of **apostasy** of **MANY** others to the **contrary**, Deut. 13:17-18.
- IV. *[Note: 1 John 2:18-27 reveals that the indwelling Holy Spirit in the believer in the Church era acts to warn believers of antichrist-type theological error, so today, God counters much apostasy through us!]*

Lesson: *God directed Israel to be UTTERLY INTOLERANT of errant idolatry REGARDLESS if the peer pressure for it arose from a miracle-worker in their midst, a close friend or family member or a whole city in their midst! The PURPOSE of this intolerance was to secure God's BLESSINGS, for GOD is PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUS!*

Application: *May we (1) trust in Christ to be saved from sin and hell, John 3:16; Rom. 3:21-28. (2) Then, may we (a) rely on the Holy Spirit for the will and the power (Phil. 2:12-13; Rom. 8:3-4) to be INTOLERANT of sin and error (1 Peter 1:13-16) to be blessed. (b) May we also trust the Holy Spirit's work IN us to WARN us of key errors!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

On a personal level, today, I am **SO** glad for having been intolerant of error on a specific personal issue:

For some years, my late Mother attended a seeker-friendly mega-church in the San Francisco Bay area, and, one day several years ago, she told me by phone how upset she was over a remark by a member of that Church who implied that if I, her son, pastored a church that did not have hundreds of people in it, my ministry was unimportant.

I replied to Mom that I had taken the Biblical route in the pastorate, not the seeker-friendly church growth route. I was relying in part on how my former pastor and seminary professor when I attended Dallas Seminary, Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost, had said in an interview recorded in the Winter 2000 Dallas Connection that "some of our . . . grads . . . are entertaining the people . . . whereas we are called to teach the Word . . . I would want them to make the Word the center of their ministry. It may not . . . build mega-churches, but it will fulfill that to which they are called upon to do in ministry." I knew 2 Timothy 3:14 directs us to heed such Biblical words by our past reputable teachers!

Some time after that conversation with Mom, a nationally known theistic evolutionist held meetings in her mega-church, and she became unsettled over what he was teaching. When she asked me about it by phone, I exposed the teacher's errors. She was very grateful for this clarification, expressing deep appreciation for it.

I suddenly realized the **Lord** had just **vindicated** my stand before Mom on the seeker-friendly movement -- He had just used my own pastoral ministry to correct disturbing error taught in that kind of a church to my Mother!

So, in preparing to fly to California this week for Mom's graveside service, I'm **SO** glad I kept my stand with her on a Biblical pastoral ministry. She was able to enter the Lord's presence firm in belief in pure creation versus having diluted it with false, troubling theistic evolution taught to her in the mega-church. Also, in view of what I've learned since she passed of the intrusion of theistic evolution in the homeschooling movement and secular forces behind much seeker-friendly church-growth, I am **SO** glad I kept my stand on pastoral ministry with my Mother!

May we trust in Christ for salvation, and, as believers, may we rely on the Holy Spirit to be intolerant of sin and error in all of its forms. From my own experience with Mom, let me tell you -- you won't regret it!