

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 P. Aligning With God's Standard Of Fellowship For Edifying Group Worship (Deuteronomy 23:1-18)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

As we meet here at Nepaug Bible Church today to worship the Lord, we face exposure to a very unedifying world around us as we can all too easily illustrate (as follows):

(1) We face unedifying theological error: (a) Brannon Howse's book, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 15-16 documents how "a spirit guide" whom Howse holds was "a demon" predicted to Alice Bailey (1880-1949) that in the "coming age . . . the will of the individual will voluntarily be blended into group will." That is, this age would "be about socialism -- collectivism," and evidence of it is abundant: The Wall Street Journal editorial, "Perkinsnacht" (January 30, 2014, p. A12) claimed Liberal progressives are obsessed with the typically Marxist view of "economic class warfare" and are "promoting personal vilification and the abuse of government power to punish political opponents." Thus, a demonic ideology in Marxism is being thrust upon us in the secular realm. (b) Also, it is being thrust upon evangelicals by even many of their own church leaders, silencing those who object to political activism and the compromise of Bible truth for the promotion of Marxist ideology, *Ibid.*, Howse, p. 16, 247-267.

(2) We face a world of great sinful conduct: after our morning service last Sunday with its sermon on sexual purity, one of our members who is in the military told me of group organized brothels that are regularly set up ahead of time by soldiers, some of whom are married, when they are sent out from their home bases on assignments. This member heartily approved of last week's message that called for men to lead in setting moral standards in society.

(3) We face a world of abusive lovelessness: (a) outside the Church, The Wall Street Journal, *Ibid.*, p. 1A reported how Syria was blocking aid to the town of Homs that was under siege though the "situation is desperate, and the people are starving." (b) In the evangelical community, we consistently hear reports of verbal and emotional abuse by church leaders or members in the pew. In one case, a man from an area church has recently told me of an oppressive theological system [that we hold to be errant] is being pushed on his church's people "from all over."

(4) We face a world of personal unholiness, with vices like substance abuse and pornography that not only afflicts the lost world, but increasingly we hear that it infects many professing Christians to their personal grief.

Consequently, we come here to this service in need of protection from evil as well as nurture in righteousness.

Need: So we ask, "*In view of our exposure to an unedifying world in both secular and religious realms, as we MEET here today in this WORSHIP service at Nepaug Bible Church, HOW does God want us to be EDIFIED?!*"

- I. **When Deuteronomy 23:1-18 was written, Israel faced exposure to the Canaanites who were known for great unedifying ungodliness in both religious and secular realms, cf. Leviticus 18:1-30.**
- II. **Thus, Deuteronomy 23:1-18 set EDIFYING GUIDELINES for Israel's CIRCLE of FELLOWSHIP for GROUP WORSHIP to COUNTER the UNGODLY INFLUENCE of the WORLD AROUND HER:**
 - A. Deuteronomy 23:1-18 directed who was qualified to attend Israel's religious assemblies at the tabernacle [and later at the temple], Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 307-308; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 303.
 - B. These qualifications addressed Israel's needs for edification in living in Canaan amid surrounding pagan nations of enormously wicked influence in religious and secular realms:
 1. God directed Israel to **EXCLUDE** unedifying, ungodly parties from her circle of worship assembly:
 - a. Israel was to **exclude** people who believed and practiced unedifying theological error, Deut. 23:1: some pagans practiced male castration for religious purposes, so, to avoid even the opportunity to compromise with that error, all eunuchs were excluded from Israel's worship assemblies, *Ibid.*, Ryrie, fn. to Deut. 23:1.
 - b. Israel was to **exclude** those who practiced open wickedness, Deuteronomy 23:2, 17-18: (1) people born of immoral sexual unions [who were called **mamzer**] often due to cult prostitution were excluded from religious assemblies to impress Israel unto uncompromising moral purity, Deut. 23:2. (2) Also, female **cult** prostitutes (**qedeshah**, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 299; B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 873) and male **cult** prostitutes (**qadesh**, *Ibid.*, Kittel; *Ibid.*, B. D. B.) prostitutes were forbidden (Deut. 23:17) **AS WERE** were **secular** female prostitutes (**zonah**) and **secular** male prostitutes (**keleb**) from attendance in Israel's worship assemblies, *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 304, Deut. 23:18. Israel was thus to exclude **BOTH religiously AND secularly** openly wicked people in her worship service assemblies.

- c. Israel was to **exclude** loveless, abusive folk from her worship assemblies, Deut. 23:3-6: the people of Ammon and Moab, though distant relatives of Israel as the offspring of Abraham's nephew, Lot (Genesis 12:5; 19:30-38) had lovelessly mistreated Israel in her wilderness journeys in not providing her bread and water, and the Moabites had even abusively hired Balaam to curse Israel. Thus, such loveless, abusive people were to be excluded from the edifying circle of fellowship of Israel's worship assemblies.
 - d. Israel was to **exclude** those living in personal unholiness: the Deuteronomy 23:9-14 restrictions each dealt with matters of private uncleanness, signifying "(e)ven in a person's most private moments the holy God was with him, observing his behavior," Ibid., and so **GOD** required **personal** holiness for all in the worship assembly lest their **private** unholiness influence **others** unto **unedifying personal sin!**
2. God had Israel **INCLUDE** supportive and afflicted parties needing asylum in their worship assemblies:
 - a. Pagan Edomites and Egyptians after the probationary period of several generations were to be included in Israel's worship assemblies, for the Edomites were relatives of the nation Israel, having descended from Esau, the twin brother of Jacob, Israel's forefather (Genesis 25:19-30), and Israel had sojourned in Egypt for many years, making her obliged to be considerate of Egyptian folk, Deut. 23:7-8. A **probationary** period of several generations was required to insure the **attitude** of an Edomite or an Egyptian was **upright before** he could participate in Israel's worship assemblies! (Deut. 23:8b) Israel was thus to offer fitting probationary periods of time for outsiders who were yet supportive folk to qualify to attend her assemblies.
 - b. Oppressed runaway slaves of Gentile masters who sought asylum in Israel were to be included in her worship assemblies (if they of course heeded God), Deut. 23:15-16; Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Deut. 23:15-16.

Lesson: *To address the need for edification in Israel's worship assemblies amid the very unedifying, wicked influence of the surrounding Canaanites, Israel was to EXCLUDE those with unedifying theological error, with open sinful conduct, with abusive lovelessness and with personal unholiness while INCLUDING with appropriate probation periods those who were supportive and who sought asylum from Gentile oppressors from outside Israel.*

Application: *May we (1) trust in Christ for salvation (John 3:16) and (2) rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit for a holy walk in upright theology and lives to participate in upright Church worship services, Galatians 5:16. (3) May we as a CHURCH heed God's interests to EXCLUDE from our circle of worship fellowship unedifying theological error, open sinful conduct, abusive lovelessness and personal unholiness and those who practice such things while INCLUDING with fitting probation the supportive and those oppressed by outsiders who seek asylum in our midst.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

This sermon's Deuteronomy 23:1-18 passage has great **continuing** application for us as a **Church** (as follows):

(1) In facing unedifying theological error in the world such as "socialism" and "collectivism" predicted by Alice Bailey's demon guide (Ibid., Howse), we must **continue** to **reject** it and the fellowship of those who hold it while replacing its errant "entitlement mentality" with the 2 Thessalonians 3: 10 view that if any will not work for a living, neither should he eat off of what another earns. Though we must not forget to help the poor and especially the infirmed as Galatians 2:10 directs, all of us, the poor included, must be taught to do their best to work for a living.

(2) In facing open sin in the world such as immorality, we must **continue** to **reject** it and the fellowship of those who heed it, replacing it with Biblical marriage, Heb. 13:4; Gen. 2:24; Rom. 1:18-27; Lev. 18:1-24.

(3) In facing loveless abusiveness in the world, we as a body must **continue** to **reject** it and the fellowship of those who practice it, replacing it with humility and consideration for the needs of each other, Philip. 2:3.

(4) In facing personal unholiness in the world, we as a body must **continue** to **reject** it and the fellowship of those who practice it, replacing it with personal purity in life and in our Church functions, Ephesians 5:1-5.

(5) Then, as outsiders approach our fellowship, expressing support for our beliefs and wanting to be a part of us, with appropriate probationary periods, we must **continue** to **accept** them and their fellowship, Deut. 23:7-8.

(6) Also, as outsiders approach us seeking asylum from oppressive beliefs and leaders, with the understood appropriate probationary period, we must **continue** to **accept** them and their fellowship, Deuteronomy 23:7-8, 15-16.

[(7) As your pastor, I must thus **continue** to teach **Scripture** truth, **not extrabiblical ideologies**, 2 Tim. 4:1-5.]

May we (1) trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. Then, (2) may all in our Church (a) CONTINUE to rely on the Holy Spirit's power (Gal. 5:16) (b) to CONTINUE to REJECT unedifying error and sin in our lives and fellowship. (c) May we also CONTINUE to ACCEPT with probation those coming to us from without who support our Biblical beliefs and those who seek asylum from ideological and theological oppression from without. (d) Then we will CONTINUE to see God use our Church meetings to edify all involved!