

GOD'S ABHORRENCE OF MIXTURE

Deuteronomy 22:9-11 reads: “Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with diverse seeds, lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown and the fruit of thy vineyard be defiled. Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of diverse sorts as of woollen and linen together.”

Leviticus 19:19 is similar: “Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee.”

Here God tells Israel not to mingle or confuse together seed, animals or textiles. These rules, unlike the Ten Commandments, are not part of what we would call the moral law, but they do have a spiritual meaning. Let me explain myself. Take the example of the Levitical food laws – they are quite literal, though the NT teaches us that they are no longer binding, and may be obeyed or ignored, so long as nobody tries to compel other people to obey or ignore them – but they have a spiritual meaning, and that is that “we are what we eat”. We should not feed our souls on unclean “food”

Paul, with his rabbinical mind used the same principle when he quoted Deuteronomy

25:4: “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn”. Both in 1 Cor 9:9 and 1 Timothy 5:18 (in context) he uses this rule about animals to teach that those who preach the gospel should be supported by their work. So we can see that it is permissible to look for a straightforward spiritual lesson from parts of the Torah, which we might not keep in the literal sense.

1. Mixture of the seed – mingling true and false doctrine

Jesus tells the parable of the sower and the seed. In his interpretation the ‘seed’ = the word of God, the true gospel (Luke 8:11). He tells another parable of tares sown amongst the wheat. The final crop of wheat means “the children of the kingdom”, and the tares are “the children of the evil one”. In other words the preaching of the pure gospel produces born again people & the spreading of false doctrine produces false disciples. No wonder we should not mix two kinds of seed! No wonder the mixture causes both the crop & the vineyard to be ‘defiled’!

In Matthew 16:6 Jesus commands us to “beware the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees”. In verse 12 we find that ‘leaven’ = doctrine. So what did the Sadducees teach that was so bad? They denied resurrection, angels, spirits and the miraculous. They were the rationalist and modernist theologians of their day. They are still with us in the person of those who deny the virgin birth of Christ, his miracles, the atoning nature of his death & his resurrection. Of course

they rubbish the book of Genesis & deny creation, Adam & Eve & the historicity of the universal flood. As for prophetic scriptures and the return of Christ, they have no time for them. We certainly need to beware listening to these men.

As for the Pharisees, they professed to believe the Bible, but added to it their own man-made traditions. Jesus said to the Pharisees in Mark 7:9: “Ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition”. Any church or teacher who adds to the word of God finishes up with another gospel, which is not the true one. Think of the idea of salvation through sacraments, taught by RCs and Orthodox churches. By adding this and many other traditions they have finished with a gospel devoid of grace & denying salvation by faith.

But we see those amongst the more exotic Charismatics who do much the same. Take the gospel of Hagin & Copeland & others who teach ‘Word of Faith’ & ‘name it & claim it’ doctrines, who teach that the atonement was not made on the cross, but in hell. It is ‘another Jesus, another gospel’, which is far from that preached by Paul. So many teachers say they have special revelation. We only need the Bible. All other ‘revelation’ is no more than leaven.

2. Mixture of animals – mingling clean and unclean

The Torah recognizes two kinds of beasts – clean and unclean. The clean may be eaten & offered in sacrifice. The unclean may

not. The ox is a clean beast and the ass is unclean. You are not to yoke an ox and an ass together for ploughing.

People who are saved are ‘clean’ – those not saved are unclean. They should not be yoked together in fellowship to serve the Lord. Paul refers to this principle in 2 Cor 6:14: “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”. When you read the whole context he is saying “come out from among them”. We should not seek to serve the Lord yoked with those who are unbelievers. In 1 Cor 5:9-13 he goes even further & tells us to have no fellowship with professing believers who live like unbelievers.

The pressure on believers today is to have fellowship with those who hold false doctrine – it’s called ‘the Ecumenical Movement’ – today things have gone much further, and we are pressed to join with non-Christian religions in interfaith dialogue – with Rabbinic Judaism, with Islam, Buddhism etc. “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, or what communion hath light with darkness ... what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” asks Paul.

3. Mixture of linen and woollen – this is to do with worship

The clue to this bit of mixture is found in Ezekiel 44:18, where the priests are commanded to wear linen. Woollen clothes are forbidden because they cause sweat. And here is the clue – sweat. Sweat is the mark of human effort as opposed to divine grace. The priests are called upon

to worship God, and only what is of God is acceptable to God. Sweat is only mentioned three times in the Bible – once in Genesis 3, where God tells fallen Adam “in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” – from then on man is cursed to live by his own effort. The third place where sweat is mentioned is in Gethsemane, where Jesus’s “sweat was as it were great drops of blood” (Luke 22:44). Adam sinned and condemned himself and all his descendants to live by human effort. Jesus, as the sins of the world were loaded onto him in the garden, began also to sweat. It was his effort, his suffering that paid for our sins.

We as believers today are a holy priesthood, and we are to worship God led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, not by our fleshly effort.

How does the Holy Spirit lead us to worship God?

A. He will keep us true to the word of God. True worship is Biblical worship.

B. He will keep us close to Jesus; centred on his Person and his saving work on the cross. True worship is Christ-centred.

C. He will keep us from idolatrous worship. This is more relevant than you might think to us as Bible believers today. For example the **Emergent Church movement** encourages a return to the mystical practices of **Eastern Orthodoxy & Roman Catholicism**. Would you believe it – some professed Evangelicals have taken up the burning

of candles & incense & using icons as an aid to meditation. Some Campus Crusade leaders formed the Evangelical Orthodox Church, which later joined with the Antioch Orthodox Church. One of the early leaders of the Fountain Trust, whom I had many years ago to preach in my Church, when I was a Methodist Minister, is now a priest in a branch of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Worship which is not according to Scriptural norms is not led by the Holy Spirit. Am I being arrogant? No! Why can we so confidently say that? Because the Holy Spirit gave the Scriptures & will not inspire worship that runs counter to revealed truth.

Keith Parker



Congratulations to Keith & Jean who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on October 10th