

Sunday, February 19, 2023 am

CLOSER TO GOD (42)

When We Compromise (2)

Israel – An Example of Compromise

In our last lesson we addressed the subject of compromise. We related it to our theme, “Closer to God” and recent lessons addressing fellowship. We noted what compromise is, understanding that there is a time for compromise, but NOT at the expense of truth. And we must make the distinction. We devoted the remainder of our lesson addressing some of the dangers of compromise including: 1) How it can set aside the first commandment – to love God first; 2) How it can make us “double-minded” (“two-souled”); 3) How it impacts truth - by blending or replacing it with error – we noted how we corrupt the purity of the gospel when we either pollute or dilute it; 4) Compromise causes us to lose our militancy as soldiers in the Lord’s army; 5) It can lead to corruption in many ways; 6) It can help the enemy; and 7) rarely does compromise with truth end where we intend – the next generation always takes it farther. Therefore, compromise can lead to apostasy and forfeiting our fellowship with God.

Today, I would like to do a case study in compromise. We want to look at the nation of Israel and where compromise led them.

I. The history of Israel, an example of compromise:

- a. A study of the history of Israel shows continued compromise, almost from the beginning.
- b. At Mount Sinai, the LORD made a covenant with Israel to be their God, BUT He gave them specific instructions.
 - i. Exodus 34:13-16 – when they entered the promised land they were to NOT make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, they were to destroy their altars, etc., lest they make a covenant (compromise) and “play the harlot” with their gods.
 - ii. Exodus 23:32-33 – make no covenant with their gods, “they shall not dwell in you land” – you do NOT tolerate them in your midst.
- c. In the wilderness with Balaam – Numbers 22-25. Balak, king of Moab hires Balaam trying to curse Israel. It does not work. But in Numbers 25, the children of Israel committed harlotry with the Moabites and Midianites, sacrificed to their gods and joined themselves to Baal of Peor (25:1-3). The LORD was angered and many of Israel (24,000) fell in the wilderness. The cause - Balaam found a “workaround” to his inability to curse Israel (Numbers 31:16). Israel, because their heart was not following God compromised and suffered their fate.
- d. During the period of judges – they failed to drive out “the nations around them.”
 - i. Joshua – a warning. 24:15, 19-20 – the warning from the very beginning. Israel has gained a great victory over Canaan. The LORD gave them the promised land in impressive fashion. After the war was over, they began to divide the lands, but they are not done. Joshua sees this and in his farewell address he warns them about their idolatry. They say they will do so and they are successful, but they did not drive them all out.
 - ii. Judges 1 records how they did not finish the job. Judges 1:27-36 describes numerous inhabitants that they did not drive out. Some of them were difficult, which is likely why they did not expel them. Joshua 2:1-4 records the Angel of the LORD rebuking them for their failure and how their idolatrous inhabitants would be a snare to them. After the death of Joshua, vs. 10 is telling – after all that generation had died, “*there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.*”
 - iii. This leads to a cycle of apostasy against the LORD as recorded in the book of Judges – described in chapter 2:11-23. Over and over, 1) they would compromise and be unfaithful to the LORD, 2) an oppressor would come, 3) they would repent and plead for deliverance, 4) a

judge (deliverer) would be found and deliver them, 5) they would enjoy short lived peace. Before long, the cycle would begin again.

- iv. WHY did this continually happen? It goes back to the very beginning.
 1. They did NOT expel the ungodly nations, destroy their idols and high places.
 2. They were overconfident, thinking they could handle the ungodly in their midst. Judges 1:28
 3. They did NOT ground the next generation to follow the LORD – Judges 2:10
 4. The result: **In time**, they would adapt to the ways of the idolatrous nations, build their own high places, worship foreign gods, intermarry with the ungodly nations (Judges 3:5-6)
 5. Judges 21:25 – everyone did what was right in his own eyes. In essence, they believed they knew what was best.
- e. Israel asks for a king. As the period of the judges was coming to an end, the people saw corruption in the priesthood. Their solution was to ask for a king. They approach Samuel the prophet (1 Samuel 1:8) and ask for “a king to judge us like all the nations”. Samuel warns against it (Israel was supposed to be a “theocracy” – a nation governed by the Law of Moses, its priesthood and godly leaders), but they demanded a king. 1 Samuel 1:19-20, *Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, “No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.”* This will be a pivotal moment in their history. And while a king was inevitable and even expected by God, notice WHY they wanted it – “to be like the nations around us.” Their kings (leaders that were more often filled with compromise) would lead them astray, starting with King Saul.
- f. Solomon – 1 Kings 3-10 –
 - i. Solomon was Israel’s 3rd king and the son of David (who was a very godly king, though not perfect).
 - ii. Solomon prospers greatly and builds the temple of the LORD. The LORD appeared to him and gave him great wisdom at his request (1 Kings 3:1-15). After building the temple, the LORD appears to him again and promises him even more if he remains faithful (1 Kings 9:3-7ff). Solomon remains faithful for a while.
 - iii. BUT he loved women, and they turned his heart from God. 1 Kings 11:1-6 records his compromise and downfall. Likely, most of these women were alliances with other nations. But they brought with them their idolatry as the noted and Solomon gave in. Bear in mind, he was disobeying God’s command in marrying them (vs. 2, Exodus 34:13-16, Deut. 7:3).
 - iv. NOTE: This is just ONE example of why, who we marry matters (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:14, Matthew 19:8-9, etc.)
- g. Jeroboam – 1 Kings 12:25ff
 - i. Because of Solomon’s rebellion, the kingdom of Israel was divided into 2 nations (Israel and Judah). Judah followed the lineage of David and Solomon and continued only because of promises YHWH had made to David. But most of the other tribes being led by Jeroboam rebelled and formed their own nation. This too was the will of God.
 - ii. However, because Jerusalem was in Judah and worshipping God involved going to Jerusalem, Jeroboam proceeded to create a false religion. He erected golden calves in Bethel (a city approaching the border of Judah) and Dan (in the northern part of the kingdom). He would tell the people it was too far to go to Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:28). He created a substitute religion that had many of the elements of the Levitical worship, but it was nothing but corruption and compromise. This became the downfall of Israel. In its history of about 200 years after the kingdom divided, Israel saw 19 kings, ALL described as evil and most described as following the religion of Jeroboam (1 Kings 16:2 – Baasha “walked in the way of Jeroboam; 1 Kings 16:26 – Omri; 1 Kings 22:51-52 – Ahaziah, etc.)

- iii. Some of the qualities of Jeroboam's compromising religion included:
 1. He did not trust the LORD to take care of him
 2. He replaced true worship with golden calves – idols
 3. He made it more convenient – what the people wanted
 4. He changed whatever he wanted – the place of worship, the timing of worship, the leaders, etc.
 5. He made it similar – he created feasts, appointed his own priests
 6. 1 Kings 12:33 notes that he devised these things in his own heart.
 7. All the above are the product of compromise.
- h. Throughout the history of the divided kingdom, continually we read of kings, good and bad compromising with their idolatrous neighbors, tolerating immoral behavior, adopting their ways, etc. We read of kings mostly good, "but they did not remove the high places" (cf. 2 Chronicles 20:23)
- i. The captivity of Israel described – 2 Kings 17:5-23.

II. We are spiritual Israel.

- a. The Bible describes us as this –
 - i. We must understand that under the LOM, Israel was God's chosen people.
 - ii. We understand that the Old Law was nailed to the cross – Colossians 2:14. We are now under a new covenant – Hebrews 8:7-13
 - iii. As a result, we are NOW God's people – or His Israel.
 1. Consider: Galatians 6:15-16 – we are a new creation and "the Israel of God"
 2. Galatians 3:7 – only those of faith are "sons of Abraham"
 3. Romans 2:28-29, *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*
 4. 1 Peter 2:5, 9-10 – we are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood... we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people...
- b. When it comes to compromise, are we acting any different than physical Israel?
 - i. Are we ungrateful for the blessings of God?
 1. That was continually the attitude of Israel in the wilderness, and beyond. When they committed harlotry in the wilderness, it was the product of their ingratitude toward all that God had done. Numbers 14:22 notes that Israel had put the LORD to the test 10 times while in the wilderness.
 2. A constant theme of the New Testament is how blessed we are (Ephesians 1:3) and how we ought to be thankful and glorify Him (Romans 15:6 – with one mouth we glorify Him; 1 Thessalonians 5:18 – in everything give thanks). That is where true service to God begins. When we are ungrateful, compromise because much more appealing.
 - ii. Do we fail to trust God and His ways?
 1. Jeroboam created his false religion because he did not trust the LORD.
 2. Many today, fail to trust God to sustain us – both as individuals and churches. The result is often adding innovations to our work and worship.
 - iii. Do we refuse to completely drive out sin, including immorality?
 1. After receiving the land, Israel failed to drive them out.
 2. Whether in our own lives or as the Lord's body, will we repudiate sin? Romans 6:14 "sin shall not have dominion over you"; 1 Corinthians 5:1-2 – they should have mourned and removed the sinful deed.
 - iv. Do we refuse to reject false teaching and teachers?

1. The idolatry of Israel demonstrated that they did NOT reject false teachers and prophets. This in spite of the direct command to do so – Deuteronomy 18:19-20, 13:1-5.
 2. We have continually emphasized the importance of truth, including when it comes to fellowship. 1 Timothy 4:7 – reject profane and old wives’ fables...; Titus 1:10-11 – mouths that must be stopped. 2 John 10-11, Romans 16:17-18, Ephesians 5:11.
- v. Are we making covenants with God’s enemies?
1. Israel continually made covenants with their neighbors in spite of their idolatry. Be reminded of Solomon and his many wives and their idols.
 2. We must beware of our allegiance to God and NOT make a covenant with the devil. James 4:4 – friendship with the world is enmity with God. John 15:19, as Jesus said to His apostles, “You are not of the world... therefore the world hates you.” Again 2 Corinthians 6:14 – do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.
- vi. Have we let up on fighting the good fight?
1. After Israel was given the land in Joshua, we noted that they did not finish the job of driving out the idolatrous inhabitants.
 2. Last week we noted that compromise often leads to losing our militancy. We cannot do that and stay strong. 1 Timothy 6:12, Ephesians 6:10-18, etc. Revelation 2:4 – Ephesus had left its first love. More than likely, that means they had quit fighting as hard.
- vii. Do we believe that we can control error and sin in our midst?
1. After Israel subdued the land they begin putting those left behind under tribute. That became profitable for them (Israel). Likely they believed because they had the upper hand, they would never falter. Joshua knew better and so did the LORD.
 2. Do we know any better? 1 Corinthians 10:12 warns us, “Therefore, let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall”. Think of Peter’s boldness when he told the Lord he would NEVER forsake Jesus (Matthew 26:31-35). Who was right? Romans 11:20-21, *Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.*
- viii. Do we believe that our way is better than God’s way?
1. When everyone did what was right in their own eyes, they were boldly declaring they knew what was best, even if it was not God’s way. When Israel asked for a king “to be like the nations around us” they declared they knew better than God what they needed.
 2. When we change God’s pattern, it is almost always a compromise with the world somehow. We do that because we think we know better than God what is best. 1 Corinthians 4:6 – Paul charged them to not think beyond what is written.
- ix. Do we put convenience over truth?
1. That was the appeal of Jeroboam’s golden calf. “Jerusalem is too far”.
 2. 2 Timothy 4:2-4 – they had itching ears desired to be tickled. Many doctrines today are doctrines of convenience – “once saved, always saved”, loosened moral standards, casualness in worship, etc.
- x. Do only partially follow God’s rules?
1. Like King Saul as he returned from destroying the Amalekites – 1 Samuel 15.
 2. Many today will do MOST of what God says, but they leave out that “one thing” they disagree with. James 2:10 warns us it only takes stumbling in 1 point to be violating the law.

Israel is a continued case study in where spiritual compromise will lead. If we are to be pleasing to God and we hope to maintain fellowship with Him, we CANNOT compromise His truth. What about you? Are you standing firmly for the truth of His word? Think about it!