

PTB8a: What Is Most Important to You?



INTRODUCTION: What do you think about?

What is most important to you? That is your God! Jesus, Who came to fulfill not destroy the 10 commandments, summarized them for us in the words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart, mind, and soul; and the second is like unto it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

So what do you love with all your heart, mind, and soul? Family, children, country, career, status, prosperity, a car, a boat, a

house, sports, hunting or fishing? Well, whatever your answer is, that is your god, that is your idol; and the daily process by which you do that is IDOLATRY. Nations, like the US and Israel are selfish and self-centered, clear violations of what Jesus said about love of God and neighbor. Jesus in the parable of the good Samaritan was describing both love for neighbors and who is a neighbor: a neighbor is someone you recognize or observe that is in need, a neighbor is a person or persons that you seeing their need have the capability to do something about.

I. The Ten Commandments according to Jesus and the Apostles, recorded in the New Testament and quoted from the OT, then explained for the proper meaning. A reminder, the Bible through the authorship of God the Holy Spirit is self-interpretative.

NOTE: the bottom line of the Law, especially the 10 commands, is that given by the Holy Spirit to the Apostle Paul in Romans 10, and it is the bottom line for Israel today and Gentiles today, summarized as the broken cisterns are works of "going about to establish their own righteousness". Of course, both Jew and Gentile today have many creative ways, assisted by sin and Satan and pride of life, to strive to establish and justify their own existence and rightness, or righteousness.

Romans 10 New King James Version (NKJV)

Israel Needs the Gospel

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for [a]Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.” 6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down from above) 7 or, “ ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

1. Exodus 20, Luke 18:20, Mark 7:10, Matthew 5:38, Romans 13:8,9, and James 2:11. **{These are the Ten Commandments according to Jesus and the Apostles.}**

2. Exodus 21:17 and Mark 7:10: speaking evil of mother and father was considered so serious to God that those who did such were to be put to death.

3. Exodus 21:24 and Matthew 5:38: under the law it was to be life for life, eye for eye, and tooth for tooth so greatly did God respect human life and welfare and desire Israel to do the same.

4. Exodus 32:6 and I Corinthians 10:7: Paul reminds Christians at Corinth not to be idolaters even as the children of Israel were while Moses was on Mount Sinai getting the Ten Commandments.

There is a lot of sentimental slop about Mount Sinai today from both the Jewish Aish society and the fictions of the Scofield mites such as John Hagee, sort of like efforts to rewrite history. What we need is to get a better perspective from a lawyer expert of the first century, a Hebrew himself, the Apostle Paul who wrote in I Corinthians 10 about the true events of Mount Sinai.

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. ⁷ And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." ⁸ Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; ⁹ nor let us ^{la}tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; ¹⁰ nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ Now ^{lb}all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our ^{lc}admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to ^{ld}bear it.

1. The real scope on Mount Sinai and the wilderness wanderings, with the unnecessary 40 more years attached, is clearly presented by this Hebrew scholar of the first century as God was not pleased with most of them, only a remnant as always.

"But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness." (I Corinthians 10:6)

2. A Hebrew leader that was there at Mount Sinai in his last will and testament, Moses, what did he have to say in his farewell address to the nation. Many consider the whole book of Deuteronomy, which we will start considering next week as the Farwell Address of Moses, one such quote is from chapter 4 –

"³² "Indeed, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and inquire from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it? ³³ Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived? ³⁴ Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? ³⁵ To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him. ³⁶ Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire. ³⁷ Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power, ³⁸ driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in and to give you their land for an inheritance, as it

is today. 39 Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other. 40 So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time."

3. Idolatry was the main problem at Sinai, the main problem in the United Kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon, and during the dispersion the Jews learned above all not to make idols; yet idolatry did not stop, only new ways were found like the rest of the Gentile world to commit idolatry. Just before the destruction of Jerusalem during the time of the Prophet Jeremiah, God Himself spoke to Israel to identify that new form of Idolatry.

"You have committed two evils, forsaken Me the fountain of living waters; and hewn out for yourselves cisterns, broken cisterns that will hold no water."

Idolatry! Idolatry in the Bible.

Jeremiah realized in Jeremiah 8:18 to 9:6 that "Judah's idolatry is incurable" {from Sampey in the heart of the Old Testament}, the readers of Jeremiah do not fully comprehend that until the events and dialogue in Egypt as recorded in Jeremiah 44. And that is understandable as this was the first time that the women and their husbands openly admitted that they would continue to worship and burn incense to the Queen of Heaven. Moreover all the Jews in Egypt gave a reply of rebellion to Jeremiah against the Word of God.

"As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to you! But we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, were well-off, and saw no trouble. But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and famine." (Jeremiah 44:17,18)

NOTE: It is true that with the commitment to follow God comes a cross. It can not always be peace and prosperity, that is not guaranteed as promoters of the false gospel of prosperity claim {see "False Gospel of Prosperity online at www.biblecombibleman.com}. At the peak revelation of the cross that comes with commitment, of course in the New Testament, comes, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

NOTE2: Words in this message in magenta are additions to the basic outline of the Bible, OT quotes in the NT with a topical summary.

3-1: Faith in the Living God Leaves, Confusion Appears.

God's People, leaders in government and religion, and the people themselves became thoroughly confused once they had secretly while still in Jerusalem and Judah given

up faith in the Living God. It was easy for them after forsaking the God of the fountain of living waters, to make many broken cisterns of idols that could hold no water. They didn't know whether to worship and service all these idols of other countries or Yahweh, so that tried to do both.

1. In the official temple services as described in Jeremiah 7 and 23, they officialized worshiped the Living God, the LORD God, with words like these:

"The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these", repeating it in a praise chant of worship as worshippers do often today with such repetitive and meaningless words when they are not sure what they believe.

2. Yet secretly throughout the parts of the Temple as Ezekiel witnessed in horror as God took him from Assyria to Jerusalem for a tour of the Temple, there were 4 groups of idolaters worshipping many different idols. Barclay's commentaries call what Ezekiel was allowed to see, and recorded in Ezekiel 8:1-18, about the real condition of the Temple, "The Art of Idolatry".

"The four scenes with which this great vision begins, taken together, form a comprehensive condemnation of Israel's worship. All were involved, with no exception. {this hasty generalization we must later question in more detail as we know that both Daniel and his three friends of the fiery furnace were once part of Temple and city activity in Jerusalem before captivity in Babylon, and even before that Ezekiel, a prophet in Jerusalem, had been taken captive to Assyria earlier, likewise like in the time of King Ahab, Jezebel, and the Prophet Elijah, we suspect that both the prophets Jeremiah and Elijah were not aware "of the 7,000 which God had reserved for Himself who had not bowed their knees to Baal} The idol of Asherah at the north gate indicated the popular worship of the people. The secret room of sacrilegious murals demonstrated the distinctive failure of the nation's leaders, the elders. The weeping women illustrated the loss of faith in the Living God. And, in the midst of it all, even the priests ere turning backwards in their misdirected attempts at worship. And not only were all the people engaged in this folly; they were without discrimination in their choice of idols. The idol of Asherah represented the religion of Canaan; the secret murals were drawn from the religion of Egypt. The weeping women turned to a god of Babylon, while the priests worshipped the sun, whose cult was practiced in almost every nation of the ancient Near East."

What shocked Ezekiel most, and the Jewish elders in Assyria to whom he told the visions was how far gone into idol worship 70 of the most prominent leaders in Jerusalem, those he spied through a hole in the wall as they worshipped all kinds of creeping things from murals on the wall. These were some of the best of the best in Judah, and which included Jaazaniah whose father Shaphan had been a large part of the previous reform under King Josiah.

3-2: Idols and Idolatry in America Like in Jerusalem of Jeremiah.

A Little Frank Discussion on Idols and Idolatry: Can this wickedness of idolatry be applied to God's people of the United States today, in spite of never hearing the names of idols like Baal, Asherah, the Queen of Heaven, and the Sun god, etc.?

For example, we were shocked to learn in the message {Advanced Bible Studies in Jeremiah} "Dreamers of Deceit and Delay" that the peculiar group of Southern Baptists known before take-over of the SBC as Bible Baptists, and other religious groups today, are guilty of the same kind of deceit on God's people as the official prophets and priests of Jeremiah's time; that is, first they contradicted God by saying that Judah would not go into Babylonian Captivity, and then once in Captivity, they said it would be a short time. {This is the same kind of deceit about the immediate future that leads these fundamentalists and others to postulate a fictitious rapture before the Second Coming, and one thousand years that delays the second coming of Christ.} In short, since we have a cult or religious body here in charge of a large body of God's people, the fundamentalists running the SBC, practicing deceit and delay, is it also possible that this same large body is guilty of the most gross of all national sins on the part of Judah, that of idolatry. We don't want to think so; however, sins like friends are known by their company; and from exegesis we must determine the similarities between most of God's people at the destruction of Jerusalem, and in Egypt, and similarities to God's people today. And all of this must be done with both great intellectual honesty, contemporary history, and the sociology of religion today.

NOTE: Surely, we are not yet ready to say from our Advanced Studies in Jeremiah, that the fundamentalists are also guilty of idolatry simply because they have been deceivers of deceit on eschatology. The two national sins went hand in hand for God's people of Judah, but must they also go hand in hand for the fundamentalists. Many of us have known some mighty good preachers who are wholeheartedly committed to the false rapture and fictitious one thousand years of Scofield, both false doctrines of which tend to delay by deceit in the minds of God's people the imminence of the Second Coming!

1. First of all, even though many of us got jumpy after Bailey Smith made the statement that God does not hear the prayer of Jews--this being perceived by the extreme tolerance of most Americans as intolerance and discrimination, still it is true, and Jeremiah has the nerve to say so in Jeremiah 2:11, that anytime a god is worshipped in this country or elsewhere obviously not the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, IT IS IDOLATRY, because these others, like in Judah before destruction, are not gods at all. "Has a nation changed its gods, which are not gods?" (Jeremiah 2:11)

You know we as Americans and Christians are always faced with two sociological choices: (1) we can practice intolerance toward sound doctrine "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine..." (II Timothy 4:4,5), traveling further and more quickly down the road of the Falling Away until shortly within 40-80 years we move into the fourth and fifth stages of the Falling Away, turning away from truth and being turned into fables {yes, much like the confused worship of Jerusalem and the Temple for many idols}; or (2) Allow the American Democratic Faith of extreme tolerance for all gods and religion to dominate over our love of the sound doctrines of the Bible. This latter puts us in the peculiar position of trying to admit the existence of a "god" that does not really exist!

2. We must get back to the seriousness of the first two commandments about “having no other gods before” the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and about “not making for yourselves images of this God or other gods, and not “bowing down to or serving other gods”. You know, most of you preachers and otherwise, probably have not read them in a long time, perhaps because you think they are antiquated in spite of Jesus saying that He came to fulfill them rather than destroy them!

“You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image--any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God {and you begin to comprehend how jealous God is as you study Ezekiel and Jeremiah}... (Exodus 20:3-5)

NOTE: Please never forget as such good preachers as Charles Allen in “God’s Psychiatry” and “God’s Pattern of Thinking” and good Christian writers as J.B. Phillips in “Your God is Too Small” have made the point that you are in violation of these first two commandments anytime you allow to be created in your mind a “concept” or mental image of God that is so unlike the God of the Bible and the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, the LORD God of Creation.¹ If you do not read, heed, and take seriously these first two commandments from the LORD God of the Universe, then naturally you run the risk of the confusion of idolatry like happened to God’s people of Judah and Jerusalem.

3. In spite of the difficulty of finding any sermon preached, famous or otherwise, on idolatry, likewise a chapter in a commentary on Bible teaching book, still many good Christian preachers maintain that anytime you allow a thing, person, or even status or goal to take the place of first loyalty in your life over the God, you are in violation of the first commandments; and furthermore whatever image of God you must rationalize in your brain to justify such second place in loyalty toward God is a violation of the second commandment in that you make also an image of God. You see it doesn’t have to be a god on a pole, or some entity like, since these gods do not really exist anyway. In fact, if you are honest about it, you will realize that since these other gods do not exist, and the only other supernatural being is Satan and his fellow demons, that as you worship other gods you are engaged in the milder forms of devil worship, if there is any such thing as mild demon worship. And you see that is exactly what the leading 70 men of Judah were doing in the basement of the Temple; in secret, they were worshipping Satan and his demons.

3-3: Judah's Idolatry is Incurable, Jeremiah 8:18 - 9:6.

1. Reminders that had to be on the minds of Judah and Jerusalem, especially after the discovery of the Book of the Covenant {the law of Moses or the first five books of the Old Testament} under king Josiah. Quite often “Covenant” and the Ten Commandments or the law were used interchangeable.

¹This author tried to deal with it in the book, “God Is Greater than Your Conscience”, dealing with the contemporary trend in America where Americans use a social and collective conscience to justify a small image of the Great God.

a. In the “you shall have no other gods before me” of the NIV, the notes state about the word “before”:

“In Genesis 16:12 and 25:18, the Hebrew for this words is translated ‘in hostility toward’ which can be the same literal meaning in the second commandment of Exodus 20:3. In any event no other deity, real or imagined, is to rival the one true God in Israel’s heart and life.”

b. Similar meaning is found in Exodus 20:23:

“Do not make any gods to be alongside Me, do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold.” (Exodus 20:23)

In double jeopardy of two commandment violation are those rich, or would be rich and prosperous, that make silver and gold to be their priority, effectively make them idols in the place of the God.

c. The danger of being led astray by “the world”, the community and environment around you is in the detail explanations of the 10 in the book of Deuteronomy and in the New Testament.

(1). “Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you...” (Deuteronomy 6:14)

(2). Ephesians 4:17-20.

“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ.”

2. Yet in spite of over 163 years of warning and chastisement on the judgment that would be actuated on them in the destruction of Jerusalem, and in spite of so many chastisements that there was no room on their back for more stripes, Jeremiah wrote; and with God getting up early and staying up late to send prophets to warn them of the consequences without repentance {the words or the Temple Message of Jeremiah was really “change your ways and doings}, they refuse to change their ways and doings, especially on the matter of Idolatry. And of course if you break the second commandment, you must also break the first commandment, once again double jeopardy.

3. God and Jeremiah began to mourn poetically as they realize that the Idolatry of God’s people was incurable, beyond hope; and further that God, having already told the Prophet not to any longer pray for the people, now is ANGRY!

a. First God.

“Why have they provoked Me to anger with their carved images--with foreign idols? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!” (Jeremiah 8:19,20)

b. Then Jeremiah.

“Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place for travelers, that I might leave my people, and go from them! For they are all adulterers, and assembly of treacherous men.” (Jeremiah 9:1,2)

The daughter of the people is like the children of Judah in captivity in Babylon, where the cry of the daughter of my people come from a far country, actually two far country with the captive of Judah in Babylon and the captive of the northern kingdom of Israel in Assyria, some scattered to many other countries as in Joel 3:6, it is mentioned that some of the people of Judah and Jerusalem were sold to the Greeks, far from their borders.

3-4: Cause of the Coming Judgment--Idolatry--Ezekiel 6:1-14.

1. The “Exile” was a process, rather than a couple of single dates, in both the northern kingdom of Israel and in the southern kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem; and Ezekiel agrees with Jeremiah that the single dominant cause of this captivity and exile was IDOLATRY. From 734-722 B.C. the Assyrians made repeated raids against Israel and warfare, some killed, and some taken east to Assyria. Tiglath-pilezer first carried the people east of the Jordan and in Galilee captive, and then in 722 B.C. the people of Samaria were taken into the land of the Medes. The Babylonian exile of the southern kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem was similar in that it started as early as 605 B.C., the same year that Daniel and many other of the nation’s finest were carried captive to Babylon; in 587 B.C. Jehoiachin and many people were taken captive; and then the total destruction of Jerusalem and the temple came in 587 by the Chaldeans, Zedekiah and most of the remaining people were carried also to Babylon. Actually Ezekiel, formerly a priest before becoming a prophet 5 years after captivity in Babylon, was taken captive in the bunch with King Jehoiachin in 587 B.C.

According to Sampey in THE HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:

“Jeremiah and Ezekiel taught their people that the captivity itself was brought about by Israel’s God as a chastisement for their idolatry and immorality. The Exile {70 years for Judah} was Jehovah’s school of discipline for His rebellious people.”

2. While Jeremiah’s messages were primarily for Judah, where Jeremiah remained even after under the land was under the rule of Babylon and with the vassal governor Gedaliah, Ezekiel was first in Judah as a priest then in 587 was taken captive by Babylon to the southern part of the country where after 5 years he began his prophesy.

“On the fifth day of the month, which was in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin’s captivity, the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans {or Babylonians} by the River Chebar...” (Ezekiel 1:2,3)

3. A Preliminary Outline of Ezekiel as given by Block in the NEW INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARIES.

a. PART I: Message of Doom and Gloom for Judah/Israel (1:1-24:27)

(1). Call of Ezekiel to the Prophetic Ministry (1:1-3:27).

(2). Signs and Visions of Woe for Israel/Judah (4:1-11:25).

(3). Collection of Prophecies of Woe Against Israel (12:1-24:27).

4. It is in Ezekiel 6:1-14, obviously in the "Signs and Visions of Woe for Israel and Judah, that Ezekiel makes a strong case of IDOLATRY against the total nation of Israel, Judah and the northern kingdom.

"Then those of you who escape {are not killed initially} will remember Me among the nations where they are carried captive, because I was crushed by their adulterous heart {like in the Prophet Hosea and in Jeremiah, lack of loyalty to the LORD God is called adultery also here in Ezekiel} which has departed from Me, and by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols {you know this almost borders on adultery as taught by Jesus when a man looks on a woman with lust in his heart, something quite often not obvious to the Moral Majority}; they will loathe themselves for the evils which they committed in all their abominations {recall how the Temple message of Jeremiah in chapters 7 and 23 spoke of the abominations in violations of the 10 commandments, of mistreatment of the people in the land, and of idols--you will recall in particular how the people in Jerusalem during temple worship had the nerve to say that "we are delivered to do all these abominations"}. And they shall know that I am the LORD; I have not said in vain that I would bring this calamity upon them." (Ezekiel 6:9)

3-5: Idolatry in the Chief of Prophets, Isaiah.

Never forget that it was the Prophet Isaiah and Joel and others who made prophetic predictions of the inevitable destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. In fact, you will recall what helped to spark the reformation under King Josiah was the accidental discovery of the Pentateuch in a closet of the Temple as they were in the process of clearing out all the idols. And this reading of the law shook up the King and the kingdom of Judah as it also predicted a destruction of Jerusalem! A quick survey of the word "idol" in Isaiah will show us how this master of Prophets dealt with Idolatry.

1. In Isaiah 2:8, after in 2:1, "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem" comes words about "The Day of the LORD" because of what the house of Jacob is doing, "filled with eastern ways", soothsayers like the Philistines, and "their land is full of idols"--

"They worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. People bow down, and each man humbles himself; therefore do not forgive them." (Isaiah 2:8,9)

NOTE: Much of the idolatry in America today is found where individuals, especially the rich and wealthy {for the distinction and proper definition see the last chapter}, are so committed to the inventions and constructions of their own hands {you know the self-made man sort of thing}, that this commitment has become more of a worship of "mammon" {man made objects} than of God.

2. In this day of the LORD, a calamity of the second kind that leads to destruction of the whole earth, "when He arise to shake the earth mightily" (Isaiah 2:21), and the

people of the world cast away their idols to the moles and bats (2:20) in order to hide in the cleft of the rocks during the world disintegration.

3. Isaiah proclamation against Egypt of 19:1 included both the “idols of Egypt” being tottered, and the heart of Egypt being melted.

4. More about judgment on Egypt in 19:2-4:

“I will set Egyptians against Egyptians; everyone will fight against his brother, and everyone against his neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. The spirit of Egypt will fail in its midst; I will destroy their counsel, and they will consult the idols and the charmers, the mediums and the sorcerers. And the Egyptians I will give into the hand of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them,” says the Lord, the LORD of hosts.” (Isaiah 19:2-4)

Years later, Jeremiah also warned the Judah remnant at Mispah, who desired to escape to Egypt, that (1) God would “watch over them for adversity and not for good” since they went to Egypt against his will and refused to abstain for IDOLATRY, in particular on the Queen of Heaven; (2) even though a small number of Jews in Egypt would escape, most would be devoured by the 2 kinds of calamities of “famine” and “sword”; and (3) God will give Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies as He previously gave Zedekiah, the king of Judah, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon (Jeremiah 44:7-30).

3-6: Cause of Calamities: Worship and Service of other gods.

It is always best to hear it in God’s own words so that you know not only exactly what God said, but you also know what He was thinking. In Jeremiah 44:2,3, God says that all the calamity and destruction that came on Jerusalem and Judah, and all that about to come on the Jews in Egypt {do you realize that this continued chastisement has further implications for the future up until now}, is primarily because of **THEIR WICKEDNESS TO WORSHIP AND SERVE OTHER GODS.**

NOTE: For more on this subject read the chapter on “Cause, Cure, and Curse of Idolatry” and “Calamities Chase Chastisement”.

3-7: “The Religion of Idols Is Foolish” (Jeremiah 10:8)

Jeremiah 10:1-16 is called by Thompson “A Satire on Idolatry: Yahweh and the Idols.”

NOTE: You will want to read this for yourself straight from the Word of God to get the full impact. Please read it spiritually.

“ Inasmuch as there is none like You, O Lord (You are great, and Your name is great in might), 7 Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your rightful due. For among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like You. 8 But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine. 9 Silver is beaten into plates; It is brought from Tarshish, And gold from Uphaz, The work of the craftsman And of the hands of the metalsmith; Blue and purple are their clothing; They are all the work of skillful men. 10 But the Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth

will tremble, And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation. 11 Thus you shall say to them: "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens." 12 He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion. 13 When He utters His voice, There is a multitude of waters in the heavens: "And He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain, He brings the wind out of His treasures." 14 Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge; Every metalsmith is put to shame by an image; For his molded image is falsehood, And there is no breath in them. 15 They are futile, a work of errors; In the time of their punishment they shall perish. 16 The Portion of Jacob is not like them, For He is the Maker of all things, And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance; The Lord of hosts is His name." (Jeremiah 10:6-16)

3-8: Contrast 70 at Sinai with 70 in the Basement of the Temple.

A Contrast between the Faith and Spiritually Filled Nature of the Seventy Prominent leaders at Mount Sinai as compared to the shameful 70 prominent leaders in the basement of the Temple confused with allegiance to other gods. The point is, then and now, that is ultimately comes down to a proper personal relationship and knowledge and faith in God with a corresponding filling of the Spirit of God, and then preaching {prophesying}.

These 70 leaders in the nation were secretly in the darkness of the basement of the temple, underground you might say, worshipping 70 distinct images or symbols on the wall, one for each of the towns and villages of Judah. Each had his own little cubicle as if hidden from the rest of the 70 so that he could burn incense in privacy and so worship the image on the wall. Surely there is no need to look for some kind of sexual acts in the privacy of these cubicles, although we do not that many of the idols of Judah and the surrounding neighbors did involve sexual acts. However, primarily these 70 false gods of Judah and Jerusalem were symbols of something like fertility, prosperity, peace, and so on and on in the same manner that Americans today create symbols to represent the prime motivations in their lives.

3-9: Sins, wickedness, or abominations, of America and Jeremiah, start with many words, phrases, and concepts; but eventually come back to just plain idolatry.

1. Jeremiah's Concept of "den of thieves" starts with Idolatry.

Many times as you look at sin in the Bible, you are inclined to think that it is all IDOLATRY! Take the "Den of Thieves" concept of the Temple Message of Jeremiah 7:11, "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes?" The train of thought for this concept from God through Jeremiah starts to flow, with "the ways and doings" of Jeremiah 7:6 {another way to describe a life style of sins}, first consisted of (1) improper judgment between a man and his neighbor, (2) oppression of strangers in the land, fatherless, and widows, and (3) shed innocent blood, and with the bottom line, "walk after other gods to your hurt" (7:6c).

“walk after other gods” , this time with the modification “whom you do not know” (7:9) is repeated again in Jeremiah 7:9, only 3 verses later than above; and preceded by the sins of 10 commandment violation: steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely...

And the worse part in the sight of God comes in the next verse, Jeremiah 7:10, it would not, it seems, have been so bad if these sins had been committed by God’s people while they were absent from the house of God; but God’s people of Judah and Jerusalem had the nerve to come to church each week with all these abominations behind them, stating, “we do all these abominations, we are still here so that what we are doing must be right”. In worship and service to God, each week at the Temple, they had to nerve to come into the very house of God, dedicated to the Great God of the Universe Himself, and named “as a house and temple of God” after the very name of God, stating as almost a profession of faith, “we are delivered to do all these abominations” (7:10)

2. The concept of “den of thieves” of Jeremiah comes back to Idolatry.

The issue and gist were THE DESECRATION OF THE HOUSE OF GOD AND THE NAME OF GOD. And the second part of the issue according to their God was that they thought they were hiding all these abominations and desecrations from God. {Remember how the 70 elders at this time in the temple basement of Jerusalem were worshipping and serving in the dark 70 idols of the cities of Judah, saying, (1) God does not see us, and (2) God has forgotten this land. {Perhaps this is where the term “God-forsaken land” came from.}

“Behold, I, even I, have seen it’, says the LORD.” (Jeremiah 7:11)

God’s people, just like any den of thieves, desires to do after a robbery, or murder, or some other crime, desired to run for the hills and hide at a known and secure place of hideout; unfortunately what God’s people of the nation during the time of Jeremiah were doing, was making that hideout, or den of thieves, the very house of God! {Enough to make God angry, of course!}

3. Any desecration of a house of God comes back to idolatry, because to have to have in your mind and as part of your worship and service another god who will allow perverted uses of the house of God. You see, our God and the God of the Bible, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, does not allow such desecration.

a. When in Matthew 21:13,13 when Jesus Himself used the “den of thieves” phrase and concept of Jeremiah 7:11 and Isaiah 56:7, it was because religious businessmen had perverted the temple from “a house of prayer” to a “den of thieves”. Specifically what were doing: (1) buying and selling in the temple area {obviously a use of the temple of God for personal gain and profit}; (2) exchanging money for a profit as worshippers needed to purchase with holy coin, also for a profit; and (3) selling doves in the temple area.

b. The other occasion of John 2:13-17 when Jesus drove out of the temple the sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves, and the money changers {all doing business for profit in the temple area, an obvious desecration of the house of God}, He made it clear that the

house of God, in fact "His Father's house", was not to be made "a house of merchandise!" (John 2:16)

4. The Apostle Paul, writing Scripture under the inspiration of God, in Romans 2:22, and all in one sentence, makes the jump from "robbing temples" to idolatry; and you see how this was Old Testament based, especially from the Temple Message of Jeremiah 7 and 23, and also based on prior teachings of Jesus as He twice drove the moneychangers out of the temple.

"You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?" (Romans 2:22)

NOTE: Many Americans and church members have one of their few convictions today, along with the false concept that they like the Jews before Paul and Jesus, were good people, also had the false conviction that above all they did not commit IDOLATRY. In fact, they hated idolatry. Yet the Word of God through Paul is once again saying that if you desecrate houses of God by a misuse of any purpose than for the service and worship of God, then you are an IDOLATER!

5. Okay, we will take it one step further before the conclusion of this section and this chapter on IDOLATRY: WHEN YOU COVET OR LUST AFTER SOMETHING, THAT SOMETHING BECOMES AN IDOL AND YOU ARE GUILTY IN THE SIGHT OF GOD OF IDOLATRY!

Did you notice that in an earlier chapter, when we quoted from Ephesians 5:1-6, the startling phrase, "nor covetous man, who is an idolater", (Ephesians 5:5) equating the sin of covetousness with IDOLATRY! You know this is a serious sin in the sight of God for this covetous idolater, along with fornicators {notice all these are descriptions of a lifetime of continuous habits}, and unclean person can not have any inheritance in the kingdom of God and Christ. Now, that is serious!

W. O. Carver in THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE CHRISTIAN CALLING, paraphrases this Scripture in the following words:

"For keep this constantly in your practical knowledge; every fornicator, or impure person, or man-of insatiable-passion, who is, in fact, nothing less than a sex-idolater, is barred from having any share in that Kingdom which is founded and constituted by the Christ and which under the dominion of the Christ, is also the realm of God."

And translates Ephesians 5:5 in the body of the commentary as:

"For be well assured of this: that no fornicator or unclean person, or sex pervert, who really is an idolater (putting sex before all else) has any place in the kingdom of our (the) Christ and God."

NOTE: Gays and lesbians in their unrepentant state are sex perverts, participating in sex that is not NORMAL in the words of Romans 1. The parenthesis of "putting sex before all else" is from Carver, which really explains how covetousness can become Idolatry; and like any substitute for the worship and service of God, when that habit becomes a priority over service for God, it also becomes IDOLATRY!

II. The Laws of a Holy God **{the laws went beyond the commandments to regulations, civil law which would be the law of the new nations, and how to organize}.**

Leviticus

1. Leviticus 4:18-20 and Hebrews 9:22: not a paraphrase or a quote, but rather in Hebrews 9:22 Paul summarizes what blood could do in the laws and ordinances of the Old Testament, the practices of which Leviticus 4:18-20 is typical.

2. Leviticus 11:44 and I Peter 1:16: God requires that His people be Holy since He Himself is Holy.

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” (I Peter 1:14-16)

3. Leviticus 18:5,16 and Galatians 3:12: any person who desires to live under the Laws must live by keeping the Laws.

4. Leviticus 19:12 and Matthew 5:33.

(1). In these just and holy requirements of the Law of Leviticus since “I am the LORD”, His name is not be sworn by falsely nor profaned.

(2). With this quote as a starting point, Jesus says don't make any oath.

God considers homosexuality as not normal and not holy or healthy, so it is

ULTIMATE IDOLATRY!

The influence of gays and lesbians, especially in a church, is deadly because they are saying "It is normal and okay to be gay or lesbian." Just consider what it takes to be such from Romans 1, such as a lot of family influence of refusals to even think about God, definitely not in the words of Romans "retaining God in their thinking". Of course the gay or lesbian had freedom of choice, yet their social context quietly and subconsciously exerted tremendous pressure to ignore God our heavenly Father. Yes, they need prayer and sympathy, because as you read their downward spiral of character and personality in Romans 1, it is a pathetically sad story of darkness. It affects the brain; it affects emotions; it affects the will; demolishes any godly character, and Christ influence of personality.

Much lack of righteousness can be hidden, but not after what has been taking place inside of the gay or lesbian shows itself in that unnatural human behavior. You can see how from many years in a family or individuals of that family, this refusal to think about God or retain God in the thought patterns and value systems remains unseen and not obvious until...until the unnatural behavior becomes obvious, then it is all different, for this within itself is THE EVIDENCE of a refusal to think about God, and further that is the way God designed it in order to serve as a warning to any society or nation. Yes, and He warned and continues to warn in Romans 1 any family or person that does not keep God each week in their thinking!

It is with great significance that the Bible translators label Romans 1:18-32 as God's Wrath on Unrighteousness. At the end of the passage it tells the eternal consequence of such cognitive thinking and behavioral modification' however in most of Romans 1:18-32 it tells what is happening to them and inside of them in their lifetime. It is like a dark tornado inside that eats like a cancer.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and [d]Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their [f]women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the [g]men, leaving the natural use of the [h]woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, [i]sexual immorality, wickedness, [j]covetousness, [k]maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 [l]undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, [m]unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them."

They first develop a mild form of self-destruction and self-denial in that they SUPPRESS truth inside of themselves and with any influence they have. (1:18)

It is not that they, heathen or US citizen, did not have ample opportunity to learn enough about God. God manifests some knowledge of himself inside every creature born on the face of this earth, God shows Himself! (1:19)

THEY, gay or lesbian and any other habitual practitioner of unrighteousness, are without excuse. Yes, all sin and come short of the glory of God; but what is under discussion in God's Word of Romans 1:18-32, is not one week or a month of sin, or of a few sins and mistakes, but a life of habitual sin--day after day, and week after week, and month after month, year after year habitual unrighteousness. God has made it clear that He demands no idolatry among His people, yet this select group of homosexuals have gone beyond idolatry to glorify and extend this bad behavior of a lifetime. (1:20)

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:28 NJKV)

And further, you whoever you are do wrong when you allow them contrary to the Word of God to make any kind of excuse. Believe me they will and do make excuses, hasty generations, and considered rationalizations; they life is at stake, or so they think! Average person on the street or in the home or atheistic scholar in a large University, they are primed by their own internal condition to jump on the band wagon for gays and lesbians, or any other unrighteous behavior. Their morality, they think, is to tear down and rebel against all that is God or that represents God.

What happened to them and the little knowledge of God with which they were given. First, they refused to give God the glory for even Creation--"**although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God.**" How subtly a bad life starts with what we consider a minor sin, unlike murder and adultery, with simply not worshipping God or giving Him in any way some Glory that He as Creator, Sustainer, and Saviour of the world deserves. Nor were they thankful to God, or God forbid, for them to express gratitude to God in prayer. How did gays and lesbians pray over the table at thanksgiving, it must be frightful, if at all.

Let us get the dark and downward evolution of their character and personality inwardly with terse phrases from Romans 1:18-32 before any more detail consideration.

4-1. Become futile in their thoughts (1:21b).

4-2. and their foolish hearts were darkened (1:21c)

4-3. Very vocal about their wisdom and self-image, in the words of God, THEY BECAME FOOLS. (1:22)

4-4. They become creative out of a heart that is desperately wicked and not born again, create their own image of God, most like in the DOM way (the Deification of Man or woman), often they have and still do go beyond that to create a god-image like animals. (1:23)

4-5. God gave them over to uncleanness (1:24) This is the first act of God that happens to them internally long before eternal judgment. God after witness the futility of the mind, the darkness of foolish hearts, their self image of great wisdom, and having labeled them in His sight and mind as FOOLS, God lets them go their on sadistic way to a lack of clearness, beyond that to uncleanness worse than the lepers in the NT who were required by law to say in public as a warning, "Unclean, unclean, unclean" like a lantern that moved in front of them.

NOTE: It is the opposite in modern American society, for they strive to look and be normal.

4-6. This uncleanness goes outward as human behavior and has come from "the lusts of the heart". We do not see in Romans here, left to other places in the word of God, in particular in I John and identifies what has been happening all along to gays and lesbians as well as others that have take the way and method of the world to their bosom, the way of the "love not the world, neither the things that are in world, which are not of the Father but are of the world" of I John. Namely, before their obvious uncleanness becomes obvious, internally they have stored much lusts--the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (Pride of life comes close to being a worldly self-image.) If there are religious dimensions of personality as Wayne Oates the Christian psychologist writes, then there must also be Non-religious dimensions of personality. In verse 1:24a begins the evidence of the outward uncleanness.

4-7. They DISHONOR THEIR BODIES AMONG THEMSELVES, and for the first time in society and in the life of an individual gay and lesbian there is EVIDENCE, evidence of a life and family of ignoring God the Heavenly Father. (1:24b)

4-8. Romans 1:25 is a reminder of how this EVIDENCE happened--"**who exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.**"

4-9. And once again in 1:26 GOD GIVES THEM UP, this time to vile passions: "**For this reason God gave them up to vile passions...**" A Reminder of the reason God gave them up to vile passions in the verse before 1:26, there was an exchange in their own life and mind as the truth of God was replaced with a LIE, as the creatures were worshipped and served more than the Creator.

NOTE: Along with the excuses and rationalizations of the world would include: a beautiful woman or a handsome man as DOM, Deification of Man and Women; worship of family substituted for God worship; atheistic scholars for truth. Recall Jesus said that if you do not love Him more than mother and father or other relatives, you are not worthy of Him. Yes, we are sadly awakened to the fact that things so good as family, wife, husband, or children, like cars, houses, boats, can become an IDOL as they take first place in life over God the Heavenly Father. So many matters no way bad in themselves become downright evil when they are adored and catered to more than God Himself. THAT IS IDOLATRY, called the fornication of God's people in

the Bible. Also for gays and lesbians, it comes in their own minds and hearts ultimate idolatry in that the partner has replaced God.

III. How Did the Law Read during the time of Jesus.

1. Luke 10:26: "And He {Jesus} said to him, 'What is written in the Law' How does it read to you'" (NASV)

2. Leviticus 19:18 and Luke 10:27: (1) To Love God with all the heart, mind, and soul; and (2) To Love your neighbor as yourself.

3. Leviticus 18:5 and Luke 10:28: "And He (Jesus) said to him, 'You have answered correctly; DO THIS, AND YOU WILL LIVE.'" (NASV) {NOTE: If you could really do this, keep these laws, you would live eternally. If now and during NT times, as the Scriptures tell us is true, that is if "the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, was it also the schoolmaster to bring the remnant of the remnant in OT times to Christ. I think so, although they looked forward to the atonement while we look behind; and we are told that the Gospel was preached to Abraham, how can we fail to see that it was also preached to all God's people of the OT times. Indeed, we will see how much in the last chapters, with all the "Prophet Messiah" references in the Prophets, how much really the Writing Prophets did speak of Christ, and of the Gospel aspects of Christ. Can we say then that God's people of the OT, like the Gentiles and the Jews of whom Paul wrote in Romans, that "they are without excuse for their sins".}

IV The Laws Jesus Came to Fulfill, not Destroy.

1. Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 5:43: You have been told to love your neighbors and hate your enemies'

2. Be like God (Matthew 5:44,45): "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." (NASV)

What is most important to you? That is your God! Jesus, Who came to fulfill not destroy the 10 commandments, summarized them for us in the words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart, mind, and soul; and the second is like unto it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

So what do you love with all your heart, mind, and soul? Family, children, country, career, status, prosperity, a car, a boat, a house, sports, hunting or fishing? Well, whatever your answer is, that is your god, that is your idol; and the daily process by which you do that is IDOLATRY. Nations, like the US and Israel are selfish and self-centered, clear violations of what Jesus said about love of God and neighbor. Jesus in the parable of the good Samaritan was describing both love for neighbors and who is a neighbor: a neighbor is someone you recognize or observe that is in need, a neighbor is a person or persons that you seeing their need have the capability to do something about.