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CONTROVERSY: Part 5

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Let's continue our series on God's Controversy in our text: *"Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven (house of wickedness), nor swear (say presumptuously), The LORD liveth. For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place. Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone. Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love (do say), Give ye. The wind (of idolatry) hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices"* (Hosea 4:15-19).

Though thou, Israel, are squarely playing the harlot, let not Judah offend by doing the very same thing. This means Israel had passed the point of no return.

I feel America has all but reached that point as well.

Judah is advised and warned to not follow suit. Israel is being portrayed as an outright prostitute or strumpet. For this reason the prophet warns Israel, do not swear by declaring, *"The LORD liveth"* (Hosea 4:15).

Like many an adulteress, America has frivolously taken God's name in vain! To take Gods name in vain means to declare they are a Christian but, in the end, they fail to abide by the tenets of His most Holy Word.

Because Israel had fallen so far into idol worship, they were now associating Jehovah with every

false god and idol. Hosea rebukes Israel when they declare they are faithful in their relationship with Jehovah.

We all know *Bethel* (beth=house, El=God) means "house of God", but now Jehovah defines Israel's house as *Bethaven* meaning: "house of wickedness" or "house of naught".

That is exactly what has happened in most houses of God today. Because the church in America has lost its light and saltiness, we too have become a house that is worthless and full of wickedness.

Next, we witness Israel described as a backsliding, rebellious heifer that can no longer be led by its owner. If the church no longer walks in the spirit and in the light of Christ we are left to walk in fallacy and darkness.

We are told: *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7).

The term; backsliding heifer speaks of a young female cow that has never borne a calf attempting to throw off the yoke from her neck. Let's remember Christ's exhortation: *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls"* (Matthew 11:29).

Anyone who claims to be a born again follower of Jesus Christ must be wholly yoked to Christ alone. If not, then that individual is unequal-

ly yoked. Whoever desires to walk with Christ must be in subjection and agreement with His most Holy Word. Many in this modern church era say they walk with God but daily they violate the Scriptures. The Word of God is the schematic diagram for every blood bought, born-again child of God! No blood-bought Christian can successfully navigate this earthly pilgrimage without abiding in the Word of God.

Jesus declared, *"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing"* (John 15:5).

Just like Israel, the modern church has become self-sufficient and self-absorbed concerning its spirituality. The church today is truly backslidden and indifferent. Jesus profusely rebuked the last church in the book of Revelation when he declared: *"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm (tepid), and neither cold nor hot, I will spue (vomit) thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel (advise) thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and*

anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Revelation 3:15-19). What a sad portrait concerning the church at Laodicea. Today the modern church in America looks just like the church of Laodicea.

I just read some weeks ago where a so-called Christian fellowship in Texas has declared itself a Christian nudist camp. They declare Adam and Eve were naked, justifying this group’s ungodly wickedness.

What these buffoons do not understand is that Adam and Eve were clothed with the righteousness of Almighty God – before they sinned. However – after they sinned – they lost their righteousness covering and in a moment they realized their nakedness and sowed fig leaves and quickly hid themselves. Thus Elohim questioned, *“Who told thee that thou wast naked?”* (Genesis 3:11).

Knowing of their transgressions, Elohim quickly slew animals and made coats of skin to clothe them.

This so called Christian nudist camp once again demonstrates the gross apostasy and degree of deception that has filled Christendom.

Meanwhile, back in our study text, the prophet declares Jehovah *“will feed them as a lamb in a large place* (Hosea 4:16), it means they will be scattered throughout the known world of that day. However, He does tolerate their rebellious existence because of His covenant with Abraham but, nevertheless, they would be exiled. Israel would be as a lamb taken into the wilderness and left to range in the wild without His divine provision and protection.

An unfathomable price will always be paid when anyone

forsakes the true and living God. Israel would no longer be attended by the true Shepherd and the same can be said of America today.

Because Jehovah had forsaken Israel they would now be subject to ravenous wolves and other beasts of prey. Such a lamb lives in a lost, perishing, dying world.

If Christ is your Shepherd you will have no want nor lack anything within your personal life because He is the Chief Shepherd.

Concerning Israel’s end, we witness a sad proclamation: *“Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone”* (Hosea 4:17). This meant Israel had totally abandoned Jehovah and was wholly given over to idolatry. Because Israel refused to divorce their idols, prostitution, and idolatry, Jehovah would now divorce them.

When Jehovah declares, *“their drink is sour”* (Hosea 4:18) this means Israel had turned into something bad. As soon as milk goes sour it must be poured out. Israel was soured: therefore they had become a bad taste in the mouth of God, just like we saw in the church at Laodicea.

We see the phrase, *“Give ye”* in **verse 18**. This speaks to the rulers requesting more whoredom and idolatrous worship. This act of continual whoredom and idolatrous worship would now become even grosser because the rulers desired it and the people gave it. This demonstrated absolute contempt for the sacrifices Jehovah had commanded. Israel's rulers, who were supposed to lead the people to Jehovah, would instead lead them into more falsehood and idolatry. The rulers encouraged Israel in that direction with those vain words, *“Give ye”* – meaning give more devotion to idols.

In **verse 19**, the *“wind”* speaks of the spirit of idolatry which


carries its devotees into greater bondage. All who fall into the bondage of idolatry will always be put to shame. The wind of false doctrine always impedes the spiritual gait of anyone who seeks fellowship with the world.

The apostle Paul warned: *“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”* (Ephesians 4:14).

In the end, this wind of false doctrine will ultimately become a strong wind of divine wrath. This wind would seize Israel by wrapping them up in its wings of idolatry, and ultimately carry them away into devastating judgment. The time would come when Israel would finally be ashamed because of their false sacrifices but then it would be too late. Once Israel realizes her devastating mistake by worshiping idols they would be destroyed by divine judgment.

If both America and the modern church continue the path they have chosen then both will end in devastation and overwhelmed by the judgment of God.

Serving Alongside You,



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