

The Iniquity Of The Amorites

Their Corruption is in Them

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We have forgotten how to hate. As a society, we are so self-righteous that we have become more righteous than God. It is true. God hates sin and wickedness and every evil thing, but we accept all that quite readily in this society. With the multiculturalism and tolerance that are pumped out of our schools, our media, supported by government policies which make it lawful to tolerate all these things, we censure nothing and sanction essentially everything.

When I use we, of course, I mean we the church, too, because we have bought into this acceptance to some degree, one way or another. Dr. Hoeh is famous for saying that "if it's in the world, it's going to be in the church, if it's not in the church already." So if Laodiceanism, let us say, is in the world, if we can see it out there, it is certainly going to affect us. And if multiculturalism and tolerance and all that rot is in the world, then it is going to be in the church at some point. Our distinctions between good and sinful behavior are not as clear cut as they used to be in the past. To some degree, this is good, but in other ways, we tolerate far more than we once did and that we should.

Some of us—and I am talking not just here in the Church of the Great God, but in all the churches of God—even apply a kind of moral equivalence to everyone without distinction, as if there is really no difference at all between the church and the world, when there is a huge difference between the church and the world because we have been sanctified through God's Holy Spirit. There is a difference. God has made the difference. He has made us holy. Now, that does not mean that we are totally righteous and holy as individuals, but it means that in God's choice, He has made a distinction. He has separated us from the world, and He is working on us to bring us to the point where we are righteous and holy.

But enough about that. I want to get back to the moral equivalence. Moral equivalence in this world is blinding. It glosses over important details, distinctions that make a real difference in the judgment of God. And sometimes our failure in following up on this multicultural, tolerant way of life, our failure to make these distinctions, causes us to miss vital, pivotal truths. And what it does, it leads to very poor and sometimes disastrous and terrible decisions.

Now, my example today, since we are in this time between the Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost, centers on the grain of the wave sheaf and the common belief among many in the churches of God that grain planted and grown by the Canaanites could be used in the offering. The reason I think that they say this, that they failed to make this distinction, is because they bought into the moral equivalence idea of this world of our society. What this shows is that, sadly, many in the church, even among the ministry, have lost the ability to distinguish the holy from the profane, leading to wrong decisions and, in the case of the ministry, leading to disastrous decisions for whole organizations.

Let us begin in Exodus 23 and review this. This is a principle that we are going to get to here in Exodus 23. It is a principle concerning offerings. In this particular place, it is the part of the Old Covenant where God commands that the people keep the feasts, particularly the three feasts in which they would pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the place where He put His name.

Exodus 23:14-16 "Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); and the Feast of Harvest (which is the feast of Pentecost), the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering [should be the Feast of Tabernacles], at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field."

Now, beyond the fact that He commands these three seasons of the year, these three feasts, He tells us here very specifically that these feasts are to be

celebrated with the fruits of the Israelites' labors in the field. And I want you to notice that in verse 16, it mentions the fruits that have been sown in the field and also, at the end of the verse, He mentions that you have gathered from the field. So, in this case, He is talking about sowing and reaping. And those two ideas, sowing and reaping, mean the whole process from beginning to end, from start to finish.

Let us go to Leviticus 22.

Leviticus 22:18-20 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: 'Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, who offers his sacrifice for any of his vows or for any of his freewill offerings, which they offer to the Lord as a burnt offering—you shall offer of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats. But whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf.

Leviticus 22:25 'Nor from a foreigner's hand shall you offer any of these as the bread of your God, because their corruption is in them, and defects are in them. They shall not be accepted on your behalf.'"

This is very important. God is quite clear that an offering made to Him, any offering, had to be perfect. It had to be without blemish or defect in its entirety because He is a holy God. He demands excellence. And it says there in verse 25, in addition to all that, the offering could not come from a foreigner's hand. And as we saw back in Exodus 23, the Israelites' part in the offering or in the celebration using the firstfruits of their labor had to be entire.

So, putting these two together, what it means is they had to be fully a part of the growing and reaping of the offering, or if it was an animal, from start to finish in the animal's life, and the foreigner could have nothing to do with it. If such a foreign presence was in the offering, it would not be accepted. And why is that? Well, because God considered such an offering to be defective due to the corruption, the sin in the foreigner. The foreigner was

unsanctified. He was profane. He was corrupt, and so his taint touching whatever it was that was to be offered profaned the offering, profaned whatever it was.

Haggai 2:10-14 explains this principle. When an unclean person touches a clean thing, it becomes defiled. It is unclean. It is unfit to be presented to God.

Back to Genesis 15. This is where we start to turn to the wavesheaf offering and the Canaanites. This is when Abraham was making an offering to God. God was going to show him something.

Genesis 15:13-16 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them [meaning, Egypt], and they will afflict them for four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve, I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation, they [meaning his descendants] shall return here [meaning, the land of Canaan], for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

So God tells Abraham here that four hundred years, roughly, from that time, He would bring His descendants back into the land because He determined that it would take about that long for the Amorites to be so totally wicked and corrupt that they would be ready for judgment. And they would be weak, and His children of Israel would be able to come in and do the work for Him of judging them. They would be the sword to judge the Amorites. So we can see that God is not arbitrary in dispossessing even these corrupt Canaanites because He gave them a long time—four hundred years from that point—until His judgment was fully justified and absolutely necessary. And beyond this, to show how fair God is, He did the same thing to His own people several hundred years after that, first to Israel and then to Judah.

So God did not just wipe out the Canaanites because He wanted a place for His people. Certainly, that was a part of it. But He gave the Amorites, who

were the largest tribe of the Canaanites, enough time to prove that they would not change. And then, when they were ready, He would then wipe them off the map, as it were, through His own people.

What kind of iniquity are we talking about here when we speak of the iniquity of the Amorites? Well, first, they had a pantheon of idols. They had El, which was the father god; Baal, which was the mighty storm god, which was, throughout Israelite history, one of their bugaboos.

There was Ashtoreth, who was a female goddess, and she had all kinds of fertility rites that went along with her. Dagon, which was a fish god, and some have thought that he might also have been a god of grain. He was worshipped not only by the Canaanites, but we find out he was also worshipped by the Philistines. And then there was Anath, who was another goddess, and there were various rites associated with her, not to mention a small host of other minor and local gods or maybe even we could call them regional gods, which we learn about in Scripture like Chemosh or Molech. And Melchart, Melchart was one of the gods of the Phoenicians. This is part of the iniquity of the Amorites.

Now, human sacrifice (I am showing you this is the iniquity of the Amorites) is associated with both Chemosh and Molech, shown in II Kings 3:27 and with Molech in several places. He is probably the one that we know most in terms of human sacrifice among the Canaanites. If you will remember the word Tophet, that was the place in the Valley of Hinnom where human sacrifice was done in Molech's name. You can find that as early as Leviticus 18:21 (the children of Israel were warned against that particular god), also II Kings 23:10, and even by the time of Jeremiah, Jeremiah 32:35, He is still telling them to avoid Molech. The religion was highly ritualized. It contained ritual sex, ritual prayers, ritual offerings, and certain other rituals, many of them using some sort of divination to receive answers from one of these various gods.

On certain high places, the Canaanites would erect a stone pillar to represent the male deities (phallic worship there), and on these same places, they would put a wooden pole or a tree or an image to represent the female goddesses. And they also had various temples, sanctuaries, and shrines, and other (as God would put it so 'gently' in Scripture), abominations that they

placed around the land. Now, their religion, for the most part, was essentially a fertility cult. A fertility cult is one in which the people would try to either placate or make a deal with the various gods or goddesses through sexual worship practices where they mimicked the sexual act or actually did the sexual act with various priests and priestesses, in order to show the process of nature.

What they were doing by engaging in these practices was trying to guarantee their own fertility, first of all, as well as the fertility of the land, and even their ability to buy and sell, make their crafts and sell them, or whatever they did. These were all intertwined in that, and they did it through ritualized sex. This practice, then, obviously involved what we would call in our rather dry way, cultic or cult prostitution, in which various young ladies, in order to do the rite of passage, would become priestesses for a certain amount of time, and they would engage in these practices with the men of the community. Sometimes it was flipped around. If you want to read about any of these things in a fictionalized setting, James Michener's *The Source* goes into just how awful these were. Of course, he comes at it from a humanistic, evolutionary point of view, but he is fairly accurate about the things that happened in Canaan during this time.

Most of you probably are not aware of this, but there was also a death cult associated with Canaanite religion, a death cult/ancestor worship. Certain of these gods had this. And what it involved was Bacchanalian feasting and drinking, along with sexual activity. But what set it apart from the fertility cult is that these things were done in tombs and on burial mounds in order to placate the ancestors or the various gods of the dead. And there is some indication from archaeology and whatnot that some of these rites, because they were ancestor worship, they were done in families, and it is a very strong possibility that they involved incest. So, we are seeing how far gone these people were in terms of morality.

Now, these fertility cults and death cults were reflected in Canaanite culture. One thing we know about the various death cults that have sprung up in recent times is that they end up being very violent because they have no respect for life. Their minds are associated entirely with death, and death is

seen to them as a release. And so, it is not only that they have no care for their own life and what they do, they have no care for anyone else's life either, and they tend to be very, very violent.

So, theirs was an anything-goes culture. Sodom and Gomorrah were only two cities that were engaged in homosexuality to the point that God stopped it during the time of Abraham. If He did that, I wonder what it was like by the time Joshua came around to conquer. And in their business practices, they were cutthroat, probably literally as well as in terms of business. Because, by the time we get to the later Old Testament, the term Canaanite was associated with a crafty merchant, someone who would steal your shirt in order to make a buck.

Let us conclude in Leviticus 18. Leviticus 18, if you know your chapters, is all the sexual practices that God tells Israel to avoid.

Leviticus 18:20-23 Moreover, you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her. You shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. You shall not mate with a beast to defile yourself with it.

Leviticus 18:24-28 Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who sojourns among you (for all these abominations the men of the land have done who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you.

These are just a few of the evils of the Canaanites. And some in God's church think that God accepted an offering that was sown and grown by such people. I do not think so. Our God is a holy God who will not tolerate sin.

The Iniquity of the Amorites by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<https://www.cgg.org>)

He would never allow the horrid iniquities of the Amorites to defile the wave sheaf.