

False Spirituality
Leviticus 20
Focus verses: v. 1-8
September 25, 2022

Introduction

- We are spiritual beings
 - Have you ever heard this? “You do not have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body.”
 - This dualism is not altogether correct. We are both body and soul/spirit.
 - But we are definitely spiritual beings. We are not only our bodies.
 - Evidenced in our own lives
 - Evidenced by the search
 - Created by God to be so

Metaphor for False Spirituality

- Adultery / Prostitution
 - Same as label given to marital infidelity
 - Adultery against God**
 - The root meaning “commit fornication,” “prostitute oneself,” is *zānâ*, which is used in sexual contexts for marital infidelity but is used here and elsewhere in the Old Testament as a metaphor for the infidelity that results from the worship of other gods (see 19:9). The metaphor is particularly meaningful because the relationship of Israel to the Lord is one of a covenant relationship. The Hebrew word *bĕrît* (“covenant”), which defines Israel’s relationship to God, is used in fact for the marriage relationship (Prov 2:17; Mal 2:14). The same imagery is used in the New Testament in reference to Christ’s relationship to the church (1 Cor 6:15–20; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:22–23). -Mark F. Rooker
 - Impresses the seriousness of false spirituality in God’s eyes

Penalties for False Spirituality

- Death by stoning

- Being cut-off (“vomited out”) from the community of God’s people
- Ending of one’s participation in the promises
 - Promised land / land distributions
 - Lineage
- Same applies to those who ignore / cover over

The Big Deal about False Spirituality

- Holiness (Last week’s message recap)
 - God’s people are holy, set apart to God
 - Our holiness in an outflow of God’s holiness
 - Living for other “gods” shatters the holiness of God on display in his people

- Who God is
 - God is our One Creator
 - God is our One Source of Life, Blessing, Guidance
 - God is our One Object of Worship
 - There is no god before him
 - Worshiping other “gods” removes God from the place in our hearts and lives that none deserves but him

- God’s Relationship with Us
 - God has made a covenant people *Deuteronomy 7:6*
 - Forefathers, Israel, In-grafted followers of Jesus *Romans 11*
 - An everlasting covenant *Jeremiah 32*
 - Giving our worship to another rejects the Covenant with God

Belonging to God

‘And you shall be holy to me for I YHWH am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should belong to me’ (Lev. 20:26). As explained by this verse, chapters 18 and 20 serve to separate Israel from the detestable religious customs of the nations, while chapter 19 sets out the life that accords with Israel’s access to YHWH’s presence—for the sake of belonging to him.

- L. Michael Morales

Manifestations in Israel

- Idol Worship
 - Molech and the sacrificing of children
 - “You shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech” (*Leviticus 18:21*). “Passing through the fire” was an abominable practice in which people sought to appease the heathen god Molech and seek his benefit by sacrificing their own children by fire.
 - “Moloch,” which could be interpreted as “the personified ruler of shameful sacrifice.”
 - Meaning: king; this is the name of the national god of the Ammonites
 - Includes other idols
 - A perpetual problem for Israel
 - Jacob’s wife, Rachel / Laban *Genesis 31*
 - Golden calf *Exodus 32*
 - Gideon *Judges 8*
 - Solomon *1 Kings 11*
 - Kings of Israel and Judah *1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Prophets*
- Engaging Mediums and Spiritists
 - For talking with the dead, getting guidance, seeking blessing
- Imitating the surrounding Pagan Cultures
 - Includes unholy sexual practices linked to pagan culture / idol worship
Leviticus 20:10-13

Temptations and Dangers for Us

- Spiritualism Divorced from the One True God
 - Cults
 - Witchcraft
 - Celestial Spiritism
 - The Paranormal
 - Creation-centered Spirituality
 - Ambiguous Universal Powers

- Neopaganism

- Idolatry of the Heart
 - Setting anything on the throne of your heart
 - Sacrificing God's good gifts for something unholy
 - Letting other "loves" edge out God for your time and resources
 - You look to other sources for direction, inspiration, motivation, peace, comfort

- Flirting with Evil
 - Not recognizing the reality of the spiritual realm
 - Fascination with the occult, death, spiritual beings, etc.
 - Ignoring the influence that evil has on you
 - Finding yourself compelled or controlled by evil

Where Do We Go From Here?

1. Recognize the seriousness of False Spirituality
2. Repent of giving your hearts and lives to other "loves"
3. Enjoy and pursue a close relationship with God through his endless grace
4. Guard the throne of your heart and keep it for the Lord only

Discussion Questions

1. Why do we instinctively look down on the idolatrous Israelites?
2. In what ways should we relate to their idolatry and wandering hearts?
3. What overt examples of pagan spirituality have you witnessed or experienced?
4. What are some common examples of spirituality divorced from the One True God?
5. Do any of these tempt your heart away from the Lord?
6. Past or present, what have you allowed to replace God on the throne of your heart?
7. How have you or will you seek to change that internal reality and the external results?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would wake us up to the seriousness of false spirituality.
2. Ask God to impress upon us that we guard our hearts to keep him on the Throne.
3. Pray that God would lead us to join him in proclaiming true spirituality based on the Truth of Jesus.

Passage

Leviticus 20:1-8 (CSB)

20:1 The Lord spoke to Moses: 2 “Say to the Israelites: Any Israelite or alien residing in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death; the people of the country are to stone him. 3 I will turn^[a] against that man and cut him off from his people, because he gave his offspring to Molech, defiling my sanctuary and profaning my holy name. 4 But if the people of the country look the other way when that man^[b] gives any of his children to Molech, and do not put him to death, 5 then I will turn against that man and his family, and cut off from their people both him and all who follow^[c] him in prostituting themselves with Molech.

6 “Whoever turns to mediums^[d] or spiritists^[e] and prostitutes himself with them, I will turn against that person and cut him off from his people. 7 Consecrate yourselves and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. 8 Keep my statutes and do them; I am the Lord who sets you apart.

Slides

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