

# Placing God's Name on Pagan Practices

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In 2Kings 17:24-41, people from different nations and religions were relocated to Samaria by the King of Assyria. These settlers were taking the place of the 10 tribes of Israel who had been defeated and removed from their land because they persisted in disobeying God over many generations. This action was a sudden reversal of what had happened many centuries before when Israel entered the land that God had promised Abraham.

So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, <sup>11</sup>houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant--when you have eaten and are full-- <sup>12</sup>then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage (De. 6:10-12).

Hear, O Israel: You are to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, <sup>2</sup>a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you heard it said, 'Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?' <sup>3</sup>Therefore understand today that the LORD your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you. <sup>4</sup>"Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you. <sup>5</sup>It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. <sup>6</sup>Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people (De. 9:1-6).

I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant. <sup>14</sup>"Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! (Josh. 24:13-14)

At that time God instructed Abraham's descendants to follow His laws and commandments in order to live a happy and productive life. He also warned them about consequences should they refuse to obey His way of living,

<sup>25</sup> When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: <sup>26</sup> I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong [your] days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. <sup>27</sup> And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. <sup>28</sup> And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell (Deut.4:25-28; cf. Lev. 26:14-39).

Unfortunately, ancient Israel chose to walk contrary to God's instructions, which resulted in defeat and slavery for 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel. The remaining 2 tribes were still located in and around Jerusalem at that time, and they comprised the bulk of those who are referred to as Jews today (1Ki. 12; 2Ki. 16: 5-6; 18:1-12).

At first, those who re-settled Samaria did not appreciate why most of Israel had suffered and been removed. However, they soon realized the principle of cause and effect when they began receiving consequences for their actions.

And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them. <sup>26</sup>So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land" (2Ki. 17:25-26).

Although arrangements were made to try and do what was right, according to the laws and commandments of the One True God, the new settlers soon reverted back to their old ways in much the same way that Israel had done. After all, the Angel of the Lord was able to take Israel out of Egypt, with all its idolatry, but he was not able to take idolatry out of Israel because they were comfortable living in it.

Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land." <sup>28</sup>Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD. <sup>29</sup> However every nation continued to make gods of its own, and put them in the shrines on the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities where they dwelt. <sup>30</sup> The men of Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, <sup>31</sup> and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim (2Ki. 17:27-31).

But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire" (2Pet. 2:22).

The new settlers in Samaria feared the consequences for disobeying God, but they were not willing to trust that living according to His ways would create better results for all the nations (2Ki. 17:32-41).

In essence, the nations that were now living in Samaria wanted to assimilate the One True God into their pagan rites and customs, just as they do today. For example, the birth of the pagan god Mithra is now called Christmas after the name of the Son of God; rites associated with the goddess Ishtar are now part of a festival named Easter, which takes place at the same time of year that God's Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread are to be observed by all mankind.

And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath (Mk. 2:27).

One of the chief holy days of the god Baal, which is the first day of the week (Sunday), is often referred to as God's Sabbath, which it is not. God's weekly Sabbath is on Saturday, using the current secular calendar.

God gave clear instructions about starting each New Year in the spring just before the Passover season, but the nations have decided to go contrary to His directions and commence the New Year in the dead of winter, January 1<sup>st</sup>, according to pagan customs.

Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, <sup>2</sup>"This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you (March/April). <sup>3</sup>Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household (Ex.12-1-3; Est. 3:7).

Most holidays have their root in pagan practices, and the religions of this world want to lend legitimacy to them by loosely associating these days with those of the One True God.

Because God is loving and longsuffering, He does not react every time someone, or some nation, contravenes His laws and commandments. Instead, He knows that walking contrary to His way of life will eventually bring very negative consequences (De. 28:15-68).

So will I choose their delusions, and bring their fears on them; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not hear; but they did evil before My eyes, and chose that in which I do not delight (Isa. 66:4).

And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold (Mt. 24:12).

All the sorrows that have befallen mankind began with disobedience to God's laws and commandments.

It is for the purpose of restoring peace and happiness that Jesus Christ will be returning to administer his Father's laws and commandments worldwide.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isa. 9:6-7).

For thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then you shall feed; on her sides shall you be carried, and be dandled on her knees. <sup>13</sup>As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem" (Isa. 66:12-13).

Until this occurs, those who want to benefit from God's blessings (De. 28:1-14) need to repent of sin (Ac. 2:38; Mt. 3:1-12; 1Jn. 3:4) and begin living in harmony with every word of God.

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God' " (Mt. 4:4).

The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever (Ps. 119:160).

This new way of living (Rom. 6:4; 7:6) includes avoiding pagan holidays and customs that attempt to legitimize themselves by being associated in some manner with the God's (Rev. 18:4; Jn. 17:14-16), while going contrary to His word and will.

When He slew them, then they sought Him; and they returned and sought earnestly for God.  
<sup>35</sup>Then they remembered that God was their rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer.  
<sup>36</sup>Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouth, and they lied to Him with their tongue; <sup>37</sup>for their heart was not steadfast with Him, nor were they faithful in His covenant (Ps. 78: 34-37).

Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men, <sup>14</sup> Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this people, A marvelous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden." <sup>15</sup> Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD, And their works are in the dark; They say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who knows us?" (Isa. 29:13-15)

As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, 'Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the LORD.' <sup>31</sup>So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. <sup>32</sup>Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them (Eze. 33:30-32).

These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me (Mt. 15:8).

Many scriptures show that God's true Holy Days will be restored worldwide and completely replace those of this present system.

<sup>22</sup>"For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain" <sup>23</sup> "And it shall be from new moon to new moon And from sabbath to sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD (Isa. 66:22-23).

And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. <sup>17</sup>And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. <sup>18</sup>If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. <sup>19</sup>This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. <sup>20</sup>In that day "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar (Zech. 14:16-20).

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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