

## SABBATH THOUGHT 2023-06-03—WHY PROPHECY?

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

The Ten Commandments are the cornerstone of the Law of God. They are so concise, uncomplicated, easy to remember, and comprehensive in their scope especially when contrasted with any other system of law. In fact, they are so much so that Exodus 34:28 calls them the “ten *dabar* [*Heb.* = *words*].” When originally written by God on the two tablets of stone, it seems that God wrote the Ten Commandments using ten simple words, not the text as found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5:

### **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS:**

- I. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.
- II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing ... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them ...
- III. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain ...
- IV. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy ...
- V. Honor thy father and thy mother ...
- VI. Thou shalt not murder.
- VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- VIII. Thou shalt not steal.
- IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness [*testimony*] ...
- X. Thou shalt not covet ...

God made the Law such that even children could learn it from a very early age. God gave it to Israel because of Abraham’s obedience and love<sup>1</sup>. They were not the mightiest nation but God intended to make them the greatest if they would simply keep the Law and be an example to all others<sup>2</sup>. Sadly, even the simplicity of the Law was not enough for them as the Bible clearly shows the Israelites continually rebelled.

But such is the case still today. The vast majority of modern Jews are not Torah-keepers, partly because the Oral Law (“traditions of men”) has made it so hard to understand and keep the Written Law. The Orthodox rabbis (modern Pharisees) have truly fulfilled the Scripture that says, “they bind heavy burdens ... and grievous to be borne”<sup>3</sup> upon the people. As a result, most modern Jews have given up even trying.

However, *all* of the tribes of Israel have led the world in rebellion and wickedness. Throughout their history, the USA and Britain have been Sunday-worshippers in

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. 4:38.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. 4:6-8.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 23:4.

violation of the fourth commandment. However, in the last few decades history has recorded that the rest of the commandments have been completely rejected as well.

The first three commandments were the victims of the elimination of the Bible in society. The result is that vainly using God's name is both public and ubiquitous. Banning the Bible also promoted acceptance (not just "tolerance") of once unthinkable pagan religions<sup>4</sup>. (Remember the popularity of Buddhism and crystals?) The remaining six commandments, while they certainly have always been violated, are no longer done in secret. Children rule over their parents; abortion is a "right"; murder and theft are no longer serious crimes; adultery is not only rampant but a way of life; people lie so much it is hard to know the truth; false testimony is common in the courts; and greed is an accepted business practice. People disparage, spit upon, and hold the Ten Commandments in utter contempt. No one feels shame for violating them.

Considering the state of disobedience by the descendants of the chosen nation Israel, is it any wonder that God is angry? The only difference between ancient and modern Israelites is how much worse the disobedience and wickedness is today. In ancient times, God sent prophets or judges to warn them. If that did not cause them to turn from disobedience then plagues, droughts, and even foreign invasion or slavery usually worked. Most times, when things got bad enough the ancient Israelites turned back to God—at least to some extent.

Since WW2, history has painted a picture of a society that is receiving its due for turning its back on God. Beginning with the Korean War (fought to a stalemate), every war that the US has engaged in has been a failure (including the Iraq War, which was essentially just one battle of a war that actually continues to this day against so-called rogue insurgents that have never been defeated). God has obviously withdrawn His hand of protection! Throw in massive debt, drought/floods, crop failures, inept and weak military, sickness and disease, and invasion of foreigners (illegal immigrants) and one can see Deuteronomy 28 being fulfilled before our very eyes! At this point, God has stopped sending prophets or judges to a world that refuses to hear:

JEREMIAH 25:4-7 And the LORD hath **sent unto you all his servants the prophets**, rising early and sending *them*; but **ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear**. 5 They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever: 6 And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt. 7 Yet **ye have not hearkened unto me**, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

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<sup>4</sup> In my lifetime, popular rock-n-roll singers proclaimed the wonders and benefits of eastern religious practices in the 1960s. Prior to that, even Catholicism was frowned upon as was the case with the campaign and presidency of John F. Kennedy.

Since the modern Israelites have rejected the Word of God by banning the Bible, God will have to once again resort to plagues, droughts, foreign invasion, slavery, and all the other things mentioned in Deuteronomy 28. But it is not just to bring a humble few back to God—it will DESTROY a large percentage of people in this world<sup>5</sup>.

So, what does all this have to do with prophecy? Everything. For example, if you continue reading Jeremiah 25, it prophesies of the consequences of disobedience. Many estimate that one-third of the Bible is prophetic and I have no reason to doubt it. Sadly, many overlook the purpose of biblical prophecy. Many in the *ekklesia* focus on the how, what, when, and where of future *events and timelines* rather than the **why** of prophecy.

Biblical prophecy actually contains scant details of the timing and accomplishment of end-time events. Except for Daniel, Revelation, and a few chapters and verses scattered elsewhere in the Bible, most prophecy does not contain **any** details of end-time events and timelines. Instead, it records serious WARNINGS against the nations of the world. In biblical terms, these are prophetic Testimonies and Judgments, which are records of the **sins** of the people—witnessed by God—and the **punishments** promised for continued disobedience.

Interestingly, if one considers how much of prophecy talks about actual events and timelines at the end times, it makes up only about 3% of the entire Bible or 10% of all prophecy by my estimation. So, if one third of the Bible is prophecy and only 10% of *that* contains details of events and timelines, 90% of prophecy is Testimonies and Judgments—warnings of punishments for disobedience to God!

Not surprisingly, most Bible study focuses on the 10% of events and timelines but few consider the 90% that is Testimonies and Judgments! People spend an enormous amount of time examining those things that have the least amount of information while largely ignoring the big prophetic message in God's Word! If God wanted us to understand the specifics of end-time events and timelines, then why did He give us so little information? The purpose of prophecy is not to provide us with a map of future events and timelines but to warn the world against sin!

The sole purpose of this physical life is to grow in agape love, develop the deep faith of Jesus Christ, learn and obey God's Law of love and justice, and do good works! The firstfruits of His Kingdom make up only a small contingent of the world's population, but God's desire is the salvation of the entire WORLD<sup>6</sup> and prophecy is for both the rebellious nations **and** the *ekklesia*. The warnings will be ignored by this world, but once the punishments and destruction come upon it, there will be those who repent and turn to God who will save them! We are witnesses of a sinful world that suffers because of foolishness, pride, arrogance, and rebellion. We grieve when we contemplate the coming

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<sup>5</sup> Isa. 6:11-13.

<sup>6</sup> John 3:16.

vengeance of God because the world has refused to take to heart ten simple “words”—the Ten Commandments:

EZEKIEL 9:4-10 And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of **the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations** that be done in the midst thereof. 5 And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: 6 Slay utterly old *and* young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom *is* the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which *were* before the house. 7 And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city. 8 And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem? 9 Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah *is* exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, **The LORD hath forsaken the earth**, and the LORD seeth not. 10 And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, *but* I will recompense their way upon their head.

God has withheld much from us when it comes to understanding prophetic events and timelines. So, next time you are reading prophecy, put aside speculations of events and timelines for a little while to focus on the main message—the Testimonies and Judgments of God coming upon the world for their sins. God will reveal the details soon enough<sup>7</sup>. The Testimonies and Judgments are humbling to read because they give us insight into OUR purpose! The firstfruits of the *ekklesia* are being prepared for a work—to minister and teach those who will be in the future great spiritual harvest of mankind. We will encounter much pain, sorrow, and ignorance that will require great love, compassion, mercy, and healing. Are we growing in these things? Are we becoming like God IS? While there is terrible suffering coming upon the world, our calling is to **change** the world. We will have a part in reuniting families destroyed by war; eliminating crime and poverty; restoring justice and truth; healing broken hearts; and promoting prosperity and peace. Can you imagine having a part in anything so great and wonderful? DO you?

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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<sup>7</sup> Amos 3:7.