

Day Two

Psalm 145; Job 1-14; Exodus 20:3-6

Ushering forth from the Divinely inspired hearts and minds of Job, Moses, and David, is a connection of their generations—and how a jealous Creator lovingly protects His chosen people down through the ages. The reciprocal response of love and admiration is present in David's psalm and Job's comments to his companions. Providentially, the Second Commandment amplifies the need for all to demonstrate allegiance and worship of the One True God, who introduces Himself in the First Commandment. In no uncertain terms the Lord spells out the consequences of idol worship, while declaring His jealous love for all who worship Him.

Before we reflect upon the great contrast between the iniquitous results of idol worship—versus the lovingkindness bestowed upon those who love God and obey Him—I encourage you to take the time to reflect upon the words of Psalm 145. Hear the heart of one who truly, in spite of his own personal challenges with iniquity, will forever be known as “a man after God's own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14, NASU).

The Second Commandment

The Second Commandment articulates that God's people are forbidden to worship any idols which have been fashioned in the likeness of things in Heaven, on Earth, or in the seas:

“You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those

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who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:3-6, NASU).

It is important to recognize that humanity at large, reeling from the effects of the fallen condition inherited from Adam’s transgression (Romans 5:12), has an innate predisposition to operate by the power of its carnal or natural nature. This is a serious problem which God recognizes. Since humans naturally prefer to worship something which they can physically see or touch (i.e., Exodus 32:1-4), the prohibition against fashioning any type of idol is strictly delivered. As the Lord declared it in absolute terms, He is a jealous God who has determined consequences for those who worship idols.

At this point, the term “jealous” (Heb. *qanna*) could perhaps use a little clarification, in order to understand just who God is, as the One who required Ancient Israel’s worship and exclusive devotion. Further on in Exodus, the Lord stated the reasons why He was jealous:

“Then God said, ‘Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the LORD, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you. Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. But *rather*, you are to tear down their altars and smash their *sacred* pillars and cut down their Asherim—for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God—otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice, and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons *also* to play the harlot with their gods. You shall make for yourself no molten gods” (Exodus 34:10-17, NASU).

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As you can read from this passage, the covenant that the Lord made with Israel was that He would be the God who would drive the other nations out of the Land He promised to them, requiring the Israelites to destroy any remaining altars and pillars. If they did not do this, then they might co-mingle with these other peoples, perhaps worshipping their gods and creating idols and images for veneration. Of course, this is sadly much of the history of Ancient Israel, and lamentably the reality of many today in various pagan religions.

The jealous God then went on to explain how He would be required by His righteousness to visit the iniquity of the fathers or ancestors, onto the third and fourth generations. This is a difficult part of this commandment to understand, because what it describes is what is commonly labeled as “generational curses.” The sin or iniquities of one’s forbearers—immediate or distant—can have residual effects. If our ancestors practiced any kind of idol worship, then the consequences which were brought upon them for their idolatry could somehow *be brought down to us*. In the Book of Job, some of the issues of generational curses are touched upon. In the words of one of Job’s counselors, Bildad the Shuhite, the subject of generational curses is indicated:

“If your sons sinned against Him, then He delivered them into the power of their transgression. If you would seek God and implore the compassion of the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, surely now He would rouse Himself for you and restore your righteous estate. Though your beginning was insignificant, yet your end will increase greatly. **Please inquire of past generations, and consider the things searched out by their fathers.** For we are *only* of yesterday and know nothing, because our days on earth are as a shadow” (Job 8:4-9, NASU).

Here, the suggestion for Job was to inquire of past generations and to consider the things they searched out, because one’s days could be a shadow or reflection of what one’s ancestors did. If one’s ancestors were involved in idol worship, then the curses of following or worshipping objects which depict things in Creation, could directly or indirectly pass down to the next generation. If this has ever happened, then today we certainly have the ability to confess of such sins, repenting of them and being delivered from their residual

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consequences—committing ourselves to the way of righteousness. Complete redemption is available in the Messiah Yeshua! A great admonition regarding how this works is recorded for Ancient Israel in Leviticus 26:

“So those of you who may be left will rot away because of their iniquity in the lands of your enemies; and also because of the iniquities of their forefathers they will rot away with them. If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me—I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land” (Leviticus 26:39-42, NASU).

For those who may be spiritually “rotting away” because of the (unknown) iniquities of their forbearers, there is a prescription for relief. Curses which have been inherited, even if one is born again, can still stifle and place barriers between people and the Lord. In order to experience a full restoration to Him, we must first confess our own sins and iniquities, and then the iniquities of any of our ancestors and their unfaithfulness and hostility toward God. With our humbled and circumcised hearts, the Lord promises to be merciful and *He will fully restore us to Himself*.

We need not overlook how this has been witnessed since the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. Can you imagine how much confession took place among various Jewish people during the time of the Holocaust in Europe? With all of the persecution which was taking place, many Jewish people were certainly turning to the Scriptures for answers to this great dilemma. Books like Job could have been considered, as the sufferings of the Jewish people were beyond imagination. Prayers like Psalm 145 were doubtlessly recited, as people were crying out for deliverance from unspeakable disaster. Were the blessings and the curses of the Second Commandment being reviewed?

As we read a little further in the Second Commandment, we see that God will show His lovingkindness to the thousandth generation of

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those who love Him and obey Him. This is an interesting couplet which can be easily linked to what the Tribulation holy ones or saints will have in common, as another time of great persecution will come upon God's people. The two common denominators which will define the end-time Believers, are that they will have a testimony of salvation in Messiah Yeshua and they will be keeping the Father's commandments (Revelation 12:17; 14:12). If this is a description of how you are ordering your life, then you can appreciate the words of King David in Psalm 145:11-13:

"They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom and talk of Your power; to make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts and the glory of the majesty of Your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion *endures* throughout all generations" (Psalm 145:11-13, NASU).

The psalmist David understood the concept of generational blessings, and the requirement we each have to declare to our own generation the mighty acts and glory of God's Kingdom. May this be the prayer and meditation of our hearts!