



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – June 13, 2010

Heart to Heart...

Nothing has changed from beginning. Sin still controls the lives of people, people listen and follow what "experts" say from raising our children to how to cope with life and people still follow the examples set by those around no matter if they line up with God or not. Holiness is something rarely discussed. We dare not say anything about something being 'sacred.'

As God's people, we need to keep the holiness of God and His holy things holy. We need to be careful in regard to God's holy things or we will profane Him. Israel was not careful. While they traveled through the desert on their way to God's promises, they grumbled and complained. They spoke against God and Moses: "***Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food.***" (Numbers 21:5) The holy God who saved them and brought them to Himself was being treated as unholy and they were expressing their unholy attitudes by directing it at Moses with the complaining. As punishment, the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people so many died (Numbers 21:6-9). In all the people's unholy attitude and behavior, the Lord provided a way to be spared by having Moses make a bronze serpent and set it on a staff that all who looked to it would live. The bronze snake was God's holy answer and tool of salvation. It was God who established this means.

As the years went by, the people turned the bronze serpent into an object of their worship! It seemed fine to their minds. Man has a tendency to corrupt God's desires and plans. The bronze serpent was from God and God had Moses make it and it was a source of living. They called the bronze serpent they worshiped "Nehushtan." It means 'a piece of bronze.' They also burned incense to it. It wasn't until King Hezekiah, walking hand in hand with his holy God, broke the bronze serpent to pieces and ended their idolatry (II Kings 18:1-6). The people of God had taken a holy thing from the Lord and profaned it and made it unholy!

Nothing has changed in our day and time. Sometimes brethren treat God and His holy things as unholy by abusing Him. You see it in our worship, in our teachings and what draws our attention. Some turn the grace of God into 'licentiousness' (Jude 4). 'Licentiousness' means the absence of restraint. In other words, one does what feels good to them and what they deem as right! That's how man-made practices come about. That's where the teaching of 'once saved, always saved' comes from. Congregations have "baby dedication services" (I am talking in the Lord's church). The truth is made subjective, righteousness relative and acceptance universal. Does it make you wonder if some people who claim God as their Father would *make God in their own image*?

God is holy. God gives us His holy things and we must make certain that the holy things of God remain holy. The Corinthians corrupted God's holiness by glorifying spiritual gifts, making them front and center in their worship (I Corinthians 14). The sacred worship of God became a loud, out of control, man-centered worship. The weaker brethren in the body were over-looked and put down as not a

valuable part of the body (I Corinthians 12). If we rename or redesign or remake God's holiness and blessings into something else, we become like lost Israel in worshipping 'Nehushtan.' Think about it!!!

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