

Let The Bible Speak Series

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Who Is On The Lord's Side?

Ex. 32:25-26

When Moses delayed to come down from the mountain where he was receiving the law, the people asked Aaron to make them gods to go before them v.1. Taking their golden ear rings he fashioned a golden calf and proclaimed the next day as a feast day. On that day, they offered burnt offerings to the calf. This was in direct disobedience to the first two commandments. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" Ex. 20:3,4. On that morning they rose early and sacrificed their offerings to an idol then sat down to eat and rose up to play. Adam Clarke thinks that the word "play" signified that they participated in the orgies common in the worship of idols i.e. fornication and adultery. God's wrath waxed hot against them because of their sin v.9-10. It was a religious sin. Religious sins have always quickly kindled God's anger. Some today conceive of sin only in terms of immoral conduct. Hence, any religious act or belief meets their approval. When Moses came down from the mountain and walked into the camp he saw the calf and the people dancing. The dancing was probably a wild orgy, licentious and productive of frenzy. When Moses saw this, in the extremity of his anger he cast down the tablets and broke them in pieces. His countenance blazing with anger, and exhibiting every sign of grief, surprise and horror struck immediate dismay into the evil-doers. Moses then takes the calf and burned it in the fire, and grinds it into powder, strewed it upon the water and made the people drink it. What could be more humiliating to these idolaters than to see their god ground to powder, and its dust made into a nauseous mixture, which afterwards they were compelled to drink? Oh how often the instruments of our sin, become the instruments of our punishment. These people needed to learn that setting up other gods was no small thing. God is a jealous God and He will not tolerate such behavior. Aaron in defense of his blasphemous actions offered two puny and hypocritical excuses for his misconduct.

1. He tried to blame the people. The same old excuse used in the Garden of Eden. Not my fault, it belongs to someone else---the people. "The people are bent on mischief.." He did not have to grant their request. But he willingly did. If the first excuse was bad, the second was worse i.e. "it just happened." I threw the gold in and out came the calf. I didn't make it, it just came out.

If this conception of human behavior would become generalized, then no one would accept any responsibility for any wrong.

The murderer would say, "the gun did it."

The arsonist would say, "it's not my fault, the match did it."

The homosexual would say "God made me this way, I can't help it."

People in general say "society is so corrupt, its customs are wrong, but it is too strong for us. We had to give in."

V.25 tells us that Moses observed that most of the people were still without the garments, they had laid aside when they began to dance, and were probably still engaged in dancing

and shouting. The shame of their nakedness was observed by their enemies (probably the Amalekites) who were no doubt still hovering about the camp. Hence Moses in v. 26 issues the rallying cry "Who is on the Lord's side?" Lit. "Who for Jehovah?" "Let him come unto me."

1. In the warfare between good and evil, there is need for taking sides.

We cannot remain neutral. Not to be on the Lord's side, is to be on the side of the enemy. Jesus said "He that is not with me is against..." Mt. 12:30

God has a claim on our allegiance. It is the side of honor and duty. It is the side all will ultimately wish they had chosen.

2. The example of one good man, in declaring himself on the Lord's side, affords a rallying-point for others. His influence decides and emboldens them.

How do we prove that we are on the Lord's side?

I. By The Rejection of All Substitutes.

The bowing down to an image was an offence to a "jealous God." It was an express prohibition of the very act that Israel committed, one that had been put in the forefront of the "book of the covenant" which said "Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven, ye shall not make anything to be with me, gods of silver, neither shall you make unto you gods of gold." Ex. 20:22-23.

They could not plead ignorance. Neither can we. An idol or substitute for God is nothing. 1Cor. 8:4 "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." An idol has no power, cannot even save itself. Nothing convinces men of the vanity of idolatry so much as to see their idol destroyed. Hence the command given in Isa. 2:18 to "utterly abolish idols." What is true of idols proper is also true in its measure of all substitutes for God, which the bulk of men idolize.

a. Riches readily make themselves wings and vanish, leaving their worshipper a beggar. 1Tim.6:9-10 "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." Mark 10:24 "...how hard it is for them who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God."

1Tim. 6:16 "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;" Riches are a god to many people.

b. Wife, mistress, favorite child, lover erected into an idol, is laid low by death, decays, and crumbles in the grave. Luke 14:26 "If any man come after me and hate not his father, mother, sister, brother, wife etc. he cannot be my disciple." We can put no person before Christ.

c. Reputation, glory, sought and striven for throughout long years as the one sole good, fades suddenly away before the breath of slander or the caprice of fortune. When they are gone, when the bubble bursts, men feel how foolish was their adoration. Their idolatry stands self-condemned by their idol's weakness and nothingness. One cannot be on the Lord's side and serve idols or substitutes.

"He that is not with me, is against me."

II. By Our Allegiance To His Word.

According to the text the Levites were on the Lord's side because they were free from idolatrous transgression. Ex. 32:26 They had honored the word of God, the others had not. The factor that determines if we are on the Lord's side is obedience or disobedience to his commands. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things I say unto you." Luke 6:46 Many who have said "Lord, Lord" will be disappointed at the judgment to find that the Lord never knew them. Why? Because they did not obey the father's will. There is nothing to be gained in calling Him Lord, unless we do what He says.

"Now ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John 15:14

Titus 1:16 "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

You can tell whether a man is on the Lord's side by the way he treats what the Lord has said in his word. Those who reject, change, add to or subtract from heaven's inspired message are not on the Lord's side. People who change, ignore, or refuse to obey God's plan for their redemption are not on the Lord's side. Living a moral life is commendable. But morality alone is not sufficient to save. Cornelius was a moral man of sterling character, but he was lost (Acts 10:2). People who violate God's instructions for worship and praise are not on the Lord's side. Religion links man to God or places him against the Lord. The bible speaks of false prophets 2Peter 2:1-3, other plants and blind guides Matt. 15:13-14. It speaks of vain worship Matt. 15:9, Satan's synagogues Rev. 2:9 and 3:9, and Satan's ministers 2Cor. 11:14,15. This means that there are many who may think they are on the Lord's side when they are not.

Those who refuse to become members of the Lord's spiritual body are not on the Lord's side. One is either in Christ or not 2Cor. 5:17. If one is on the Lord's side he has renounced sin and obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine delivered. Rom. 6:17-18. "Know ye not to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey his...But God be thanked that ye were the servants of but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you, being then made free from sin."

III. By Our Godly Living.

When Moses returned from the mountain he found the people worshipping an idol. Dancing with little or no clothes on which was evidence of immoral conduct. All of this was proof positive that they had forsaken the Lord. Such in our lives proves the same thing. No doubt the enemies of the Lord and His people wondered at what they were seeing when Israel behaved as they did. The Amalekites were seeing the same behavior that existed among them. There was little or no difference. Peter writes, "They think it strange that ye run not to the same excess of riot speaking evil of you." 1Peter 4:4 Romans 12:1-2 "I beseech ye therefore brethren by the mercies of God...Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed..." 1John 2:15-17 "Love not the world..." We may be confused as to whether we are on the Lord's side or not, but the world knows. They know by our talk, appearance, and life.

IV. By Our Steadfastness In Serving Him

Just being baptized is not enough to keep one on the Lord's side. Having your name on the church roll is not proof of being on the Lord's side. In fact some who have obeyed the gospel are worse off now than they were before baptism. 2Peter 2:20-21 "For if after they

have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning, for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Backsliders hurt the church with their unsoundness in the faith, worldly influences, and discord. 1Cor. 15:58 "Therefore my beloved brethren be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord for as much as ye know your labor is not in vain." 1Cor. 16:13 "...stand fast in the faith."

Gal. 3:1 "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"

Gal. 5:1 "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Those who remain faithful and prize their salvation are on the Lord's side.

They refuse to be tempted to the point that they give up.

They will not allow the discouragements of life to draw them away.

They refuse to sell out to the devil or anyone.

They prize too greatly their salvation and hope of heaven.

They are on the Lord's side. There is no middle ground.

We have to be "for" or "against." Jesus said "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" Mt. 2:30. This is a fearful passage.

In this struggle we can tell what a man is for by what he is against and what he is against by what he is for. There can be no compromise. If one is for righteousness, he is against sin. If he is for truth, he is against error. If he does not have much love for the truth, then he does not have much hatred for error.

David said "I have every false way." Psa. 119:104 "Ye that love the Lord, have evil."

Psa. 96:10, It just works that way.

Who is on the Lord's side? You must answer.