

## **The Responsibility of Holiness**

“Did you hear the one about the ministers who formed a bowling team? Called themselves the Holy Rollers”. Not sure what qualified them to such a name!

How about some fun statistics? “Here are ... your chances of a serious accident: 1) Avoid riding in automobiles because they are responsible for 20 percent of all fatal accidents. 2) Do not stay home because 17 percent of all accidents occur in the home. 3) Avoid walking on streets or sidewalks because 14 percent of all accidents occur to pedestrians. 4) Avoid traveling by air, rail, or water because 16 percent of all accidents involve these forms of transportation. 5) Of the remaining 33 percent, 32 percent of all deaths occur in hospitals. So, above all else, avoid hospitals. But ... you will be pleased to learn that only .001 percent of all deaths occur in worship services in church, and these are usually related to previous physical disorders. Therefore, logic tells us that the *safest place for you to be at any given point in time is at CHURCH!*”

Now, do you think we should share these facts with California Governor Gavin Newsom? You know, at the beginning of this month, the “honorable” governor reenacted restrictions in his misguided attempt to stem the rapid increase in cases of the Chinese

Communist Party coronavirus, euphemistically called COVID-19. His newly-imposed restrictions are even more draconian than before, and particularly single out churches and Christians. For in California, since July 1st, it is now currently illegal to sing or chant in church! And since July 13th, in 30 counties, not only are all indoor worship services in churches banned, but so are those held in private homes, including home Bible studies! So, according to the facts of the statistics we just cited, it would seem that the “esteemed” governor is putting many people’s lives at needless risk by forbidding them from worshipping God, in direct and flagrant contravention of the Second Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America. Which is why a whole network of churches there has now sued the governor and the state for this unconstitutional, blatantly illegal order which specifically allows at the same time so-called “protestors” to gather in huge numbers and shout, yell, and scream to their heart’s content.

Such overt discrimination against us people of faith actually would not be in the least bit surprising were it not for the fact that it is occurring here in America, a land, a nation, that was founded from the very beginning for the express purpose of propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ here and all around the world. We are unique among all the nations of the world, even including Israel, to be established solely to propagate the Gospel. Israel’s mandate was also unique and holy, and in a way, similar to ours, but not the same. God created them to be the vehicle through which

the Gospel would be accomplished, by bringing forth the Jewish God-Man Savior of the World, Jesus the Christ the Messiah. America's role then is complementary to, and a fulfillment of, what Israel was tasked with from before the beginning of time. While the purposes of God were not, would not, could not, nor ever be thwarted, Israel as a nation ultimately failed to follow through on its mandate by its rejection of the very Savior of the World Who was birthed through them, and thus they suffered the consequences of thousands of years of exile and suffering. However, God's promises are irrepressible, His love unfailing, and in these last days, God has resurrected His Chosen People in their own Promised Land once again, never again to be displaced or oppressed by any other peoples forevermore.

For the Israelites, aka Hebrews, now called Jews, were set apart for their special purpose. They were a holy people. Holy means to be set apart as special, distinct, partakers of the holiness, the glory, of God Himself. As we read in Deuteronomy 7, they were set apart, that is, made holy. This was a special status, a true privilege given them by God, not because of any special merit or virtue of their own. Which is why it says there in verses 6-8: "For you are a holy people, who belong to the Lord your God. Of all the people on earth, the Lord your God has chosen you to be His Own special treasure. The Lord did not set His heart on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other nations, for you were the smallest of all nations!

Rather, it was simply that the Lord loves you, and He was keeping the oath He had sworn to your ancestors". This special privilege was not something to be arrogant about. Rather it was to be seen as a mandate to be an example to other nations, indeed to serve them in ways that will direct all the other peoples of the world back toward the One and Only Living God Whom they had all gradually abandoned after the days of Noah, turning instead to abominable idol worship, utterly rejecting God and His ways which lead to blissful, everlasting life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

This is why, we see here in Deuteronomy 7 that from the very first verse, the Lord God tells them that they are to utterly clear the Promised Land when they enter it of all these various people groups whose sin and pollution of the land had become unbearable and an intolerable stench, even by the lowest depraved standards of many modern uber-rich Hollywood titans, tech moguls and the Jeffrey Epsteins and their political lackeys. Israel was, as God empowered and cleared the way for them, to literally exterminate the debauched pagans inhabiting the land, totally avoid any entanglements with them, completely destroying both them and all, all, all of their belongings and assets. The Lord God sternly commands them to do this and warns them of severe consequences if they didn't follow through. Well, guess what? They didn't follow through. Of those explicitly named nations in verse 1, the Israelites didn't cleanse the land of any of them, leaving remnants behind that ended up ensnaring them in the very

despicable idolatry and immorality that God had forewarned them against. They themselves were holy, set apart, and thus were to not even touch, meaning not even admire, the priceless gold and silver that adorned these pagan nations' goods and objects. God called it all "accursed things". All of it was to be completely destroyed, sacrificed in a manner of speaking, to Father God. Yet multiple times Israel failed to do this; their eyes drawn to the sparkling, shiny glamour of abominable baubles and their celebrities' priceless valuables. Couldn't they see that all this was just stuff? Ultimately, perishable, immaterial, transient "junk" at that? God, the very Creator of the World could make uncountable whole worlds of gold, silver, precious stones, whatever struck their fancy, by speaking a mere word from His divine mouth.

So God sovereignly chose the Israelites to be the special nation through which He would bring about the salvation of not just them, but of all the world, in Christ Jesus the Jew. They were thus set apart for a special, a holy, purpose. Thus God gave them a measure of His holiness, in particular His very Words, the sayings of God, culminating in the very Word of God in human flesh, the anointed One of all anointed ones, Yeshua Ha Mashiach. Similarly, we Americans, originally nearly 100% Christians, followers and save-ees of this very same Christ, were brought here to this most fertile land of all the earth, the veritable bread basket of the world, for to which we both feed the world physically, and spiritually with the Bread of Life, the Word of God. You must know

that America has sent more missionaries to take the Gospel of Christ Jesus to all the world, than all the rest of the world put together. And the many churches the Lord has established through our work are beginning to send their own missionaries to the rest of the world, and even back to us as well. For as great, as faithful as we once were, friends, we, as a nation, have backslidden. We have fallen in our faithfulness. So much so, that in many ways, vast swathes of our country are now nearly as pagan as the nations of the Promised Land before the Hebrews were sent in by God to liberate it. But we'll speak more of that next time.

So what were those Hebrews to do? Their mission was to be the instruments to accomplish God's beautiful and perfect will to purify and make lush and magnificent the Promised Land once again. Like unto the Garden of Eden that it had originally been in the early days of creation. In Deuteronomy 7:12-13 God tells them: "If you listen to these regulations and faithfully obey them, the Lord your God will keep His covenant of unfailing love with you, as He promised with an oath to your ancestors. He will love you and bless you". That was their responsibility for being holy. Likewise, our responsibility and joy for being made holy is to obey our Savior Jesus' commands. Then we are assured in Romans 8:39: "nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord". This is the true treasure of the Kingdom of Heaven for which we must literally sell everything we own, our very lives, to possess eternally!

