

Separated Unto God

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the urgent call for believers to live in purity and integrity, avoiding compromise to maintain an open heaven with God.

Duration: 1:00:28

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:5-6, Proverbs 3:7-8, Matthew 5:14-16, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 6:17, Ephesians 5:8, Hebrews 12:1-2, James 4:4, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 John 1:5-7

Topics: "Separation", "Separation from Compromise", "Living as Children of Light"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the urgent call for believers to separate themselves from compromise and darkness, urging the church to live as children of light. He draws parallels from the life of Daniel, highlighting the necessity of passing tests of purity, worship, and adherence to God's Word to maintain an open heaven. The preacher warns against the dangers of justifying sin and compromise, reminding the congregation that true obedience to God is essential for spiritual vitality. He stresses that the church must not conform to the practices of the world but instead reflect God's holiness and character. Ultimately, Beach calls for a heartfelt response to God's Word, seeking transformation and a deeper commitment to living righteously.

Transcript

Father, thank you for the Holy Spirit. Thank you, Lord, for your grace and your mercy and your truth. Lord, we do sense that you're dealing.

It's very urgent here this morning in our hearts. Inviting us to come clean of compromise, inviting us to come clean of any allegiance or affinity that we have with darkness. We are the children of light.

We are to live as children of light and not as children of darkness. We are to live. In righteousness and.

But, Lord, we confess that. Our spirit is willing, but our flesh is indeed weak. And in addition to that, Lord, we live in the midst of a crooked and a perverted generation, and without.

Your continued grace and. Our continued diligent pursuit after you, Lord, it is inevitable. That we will be corrupted.

By the gods of this nation. And therefore risk. Having our testimony.

Extinguished and being set aside as a people. Have mercy on us, Lord. Speak to us by your word today, Lord.

Let it penetrate. The defenses that we've put up, the pride that we've put up, let it penetrate this deception that has ruled in areas of our heart, Lord, let it tear down. The doors that we've locked in the kingdoms of our heart with Pat able to get in, Lord, no one you get in today, Lord.

You get in today with that great searchlight of your word. The hammer of your word. The sword of your spirit changes, Lord, we pray.

Changes, Lord, we pray for the honor and glory of your son and our savior, the Lord Jesus. Proverbs going to read quite a bit of scriptures. I encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit to open up your heart to hear God's word this morning.

This is a heart cry of God. This is a heart cry of his spirit. This is a heart cry of what God is saying to his church everywhere.

Three. You remember that last week. We have this on tape.

We saw that in the life of Daniel, God took Daniel the prophet and he used Daniel as a picture. Of of the church, and he used Daniel as a picture of what God wants to do with the church while the church is in the world. But we saw that Daniel, in order to be used the way he was, was subject to the law of testing.

And it was only after Daniel passed the law of testing that. As we have here, number two, the law of an open heaven in revelation was given to him. And we saw that the book of Daniel teaches a direct connection, having an open heaven and by an open heaven.

We saw in the scriptures that an open heaven simply means that the eyes of your heart, the eyes of your understanding. Are open and that, you know, and understand what God is saying, an open heaven is in is a position whereby the believer is able to understand what's going on in the heavens, understand what God is saying through his word. Jacob having the vision of the latter.

Was a picture of the open heaven, the angels of God ascending and descending. It is God's intention and thought for the church to be a people that live on earth, but who are in tune with the heavens. They're in tune with the heavens.

The great tragedy today is God's people live in earth and they're in tune with earth. They live in the world and they are of the world and they're supposed of heaven. Their citizenship is in heaven.

In the great battle today that we live in is the battle over being spiritual, over being heavenly minded. Having heavenly vision. Daniel teaches us that it's God's intention to have a remnant in the earth who are walking with an open heaven.

We saw the Lord Jesus had the open heaven when he was baptized. The scripture says the heavens were open. The spirit of God descended upon him.

What does that mean? That means that Christ was a man walking on earth with an open heaven. He heard the voice of his Father. He interpreted all that went on in earth from heaven's perspective.

This is the calling of the church. We are to be prophets and priests and demonstrate the kingliness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As prophets, we are to walk in this world and we are to speak and live God's Word.

We are to demonstrate to the world what God likes and what God hates. As priests, we are to engage in the role of intercession, be touched with the feelings of people's infirmities. As priests, we are business exclusively the call of the preacher.

Traditionally, it's the preacher's job to visit people. It's the preacher's job to go to the nursing home. It's the preacher's job to go to the hospital and visit the sick.

We come to church and see whether our preacher's doing it. If he's not, well, we might give him a cut in salary because he's not earning his salary. Brothers and sisters, that's not what the scriptures teach.

The church, the people, we're all a kingdom of priests. And the kingliness of the calling of the church, the kingliness, we're to demonstrate the kingship of Christ. He should be our king.

He should be our Lord. We should be reigning in life over sin. Reigning in life over corruption.

This is what Daniel demonstrates as we read through the book of Daniel. We saw three major areas of testing that God subjected Daniel to, which are the three areas of testing that you and I will be subject to. The first area was the area of purity.

And it wasn't until Daniel was subject to this test of purity and because of the power of God that was working in his life, he overcame that test right following that test. What happened? Do you remember? What happened after the test? Yes, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and who was able to interpret it? Daniel. So we see that there was never in the book of Daniel a time when Daniel was able to see in the heavens and understand what was going on without first having gone through a test.

Secondly, we saw worship. The second test that Daniel had to be subject to was the worship, heart devotion. Daniel had to be tested over the issue of what was it that his heart was devoted to.

Was he going to bow down because of the pressure of the society that he lived in and worship something other than the Lord his God? And then we know what happened after he passed that test. Another dream came and Daniel was the man who had an understanding. The heavens were opened to him.

And then thirdly, we have he was tested over compromise of the Word of God. This is what the Lord was ministering to us earlier. Every single one of us are being tested right now.

We're being proven in one of these areas. One of these areas. And when we fail to pass the test without acknowledging our failure and coming to the Lord and asking Him to change our heart and free us from any sin or anything that we've compromised on, when we practice that, when we practice living in a state of compromise, brothers and sisters, please listen.

The heavens become closed to us. Now, that doesn't mean we stop practicing our Christian religion. That's the problem with religion.

You don't need a right heart to do it. That's why God hates religion. Sorry.

You don't need God to do it. We know that in the Bible there's evidence and also in real life. We know that years ago there was a season when God unveiled the sin that was going on in the church.

We know prominent preachers who were engaging regularly in filthy, filthy, sexual, impure things and yet standing in national television preaching the Word of God. That's religion. You know, listen, do you know that one of the preachers that was exposed as having lovers in various different cities that he used to visit and preach, who was engaging in pornography and all kinds of filthy things, do you know before God exposed him? And I have this from evidence from a man who actually sat under this preacher's ministry.

Do you know that there was a Sunday when he was preaching and God sent a prophet into the midst and the prophet stood up and started walking toward the pulpit and started mentioning the sins that he was engaging in? And do you know what the preacher did? He had his elders pick the guy up and bring him right outside. Picked him right up, arm to arm, and lifted him right outside. So God gave this preacher a chance to come clean from the sin.

He didn't do it. And so God took his sin and the whole nation found out about it. Compromise.

See, the heavens were closed. But he continued to preach doctrine. He continued to have a gift.

He continued to have charisma, personality. And undiscerning people would say, wow, everything seems okay. But a discerning person, one with the ability to distinguish between good and evil, one that can touch life and death, would say something's not right here.

Something's not right. I'm touching death. Death comes from compromise.

In purity, in worship, or in compromise over the Word of God. And so the Lord is wanting us to recognize this and be alarmed and be diligent in our walk with Him so that we don't allow any compromise to come into our life. Now, this leads us to today's message.

Proverbs 3. Proverbs 3, beginning in verse number 7. Be not wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and depart from evil. Brothers and sisters, listen carefully.

Be not wise in your own eyes. To be wise in our own eyes in this context means this. I recognize that there is sin in my life.

I recognize that there's an area of compromise in relation to my purity. I recognize there's an area of compromise in relation to my worship and heart devotion. I know that my heart is devoted to the Lord, but boy, there's something else that I... I'll tell you right now, I have a hard time giving up.

Being wise in our own eyes is... There's a compromise in the Word of God. The Bible says to flee from all wrath. Well, I have an anger problem.

And I've had an anger problem, someone might be saying, for a long time. But I just learned to live with... I've made a treaty with this enemy in my life. Because I figure out there's no way I can overcome it.

It's just too big. There's compromise over God's Word. If sin, if your imperfection, whatever it might be, doesn't trouble you, doesn't bring you down to your knees, doesn't hurt you, doesn't cause you to cry out, Oh God, have mercy upon me.

Then there is a compromise there. Your heart has become hard. And there's an area of blindness in our lives and the heavens are opened, are closed.

The heavens are closed then. So here's what it means to be wise in our own eyes. We recognize there's something that's not right in our life, but we continue anyway.

We continue anyway. We continue with these thoughts in our mind. Number one, well, God knows I'm human.

Did you ever justify something in your life by saying, well, God knows I'm human and imperfect? That's a lying spirit. There's nowhere in the Bible where you can support God justifies what is wrong simply because we're human. But we use that.

How about this, number two? This is a good one. Everyone else is doing it. Everyone else is doing it.

I mean, I've had honest talks with my children. And they've said, you know, Dad, I know what you taught is right. I know it's true.

From being a baby, you taught us nothing but God's Word. But you want me to tell you? Because no one else is doing it. It's hard, Dad.

Because everybody else doesn't care. No one else, Dad, weeps over the Word of God. No one else, Dad, that I know weeps.

Even professed Christians, everyone else is compromised. And lastly, here's another stronghold of the devil. Well, I'll never get ahead if I don't compromise.

I'll never get ahead if I don't compromise. Brothers and sisters, if you feel that there's something available to you that you can lay hold of if you compromise, it's not for you. It's not for you.

God's not calling you to do that. So when the Scripture says here, be not wise in your own eyes, that's what it's talking about. Don't justify what is wrong.

Why are we hammering on this? Why is the Lord hammering on this? Because we live in a society that does. It's nothing for society to break every one of God's commandments which represent His holiness, which represent His character, and not care about it at all. It's one thing for the society to do that, but is that acceptable in the house of God? Is that acceptable when we can break the Lord's commandments and not feel any trouble about it at all? What kind of Christianity is that, brothers and sisters, when the house of God can transgress the law of God and keep singing? When the house of God can break the commandment, Thou shalt not commit adultery, and then come to church on Sunday and sing in adultery? What kind of Christianity is that? Thou shalt not covet anything.

No covetousness, Paul said, should be named among those that profess Christianity. Yet, there's an entire brand of Christianity that is now infiltrating the whole church and it's teaching greed and covetousness. Be not wise in your own eyes.

Fear the Lord and depart from evil. One of the promises of the New Covenant is God said He would put His fear in our hearts. Brothers and sisters, we must pray, God put Your fear in my heart so that I will be able to depart from evil.

Proverbs 1, verse 21, My son, let not them depart from thine eyes. Keep sound wisdom and discretion. So shall they be life unto thy soul and grace to thy neck.

Then shalt thou walk in the way safely and thy foot shall not stumble. Proverbs 3, I'm sorry. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely and thy foot shall not stumble.

When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid. And when thou lie down, thy sleep shall be sweet. Now, back to chapter 1, verse 23.

Here's the danger, brothers and sisters, listen. Here's the danger of being wise in our own eyes. Here's the danger of compromising purity, compromising heart, devotion to God, and compromising the Word of God.

Here's the danger. Listen to what God's Word says. Turn at My reproof.

Behold, I will pour out My Spirit to you. I will make known My words to you. Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out My hand and no man regarded.

But you have sat at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof. What that means is that God speaks to us through His Word. He speaks to us in the preaching of the Word.

He speaks to us as we're in the Word reading alone. He speaks to us when we're mingling in one with another in the body of Christ. He speaks to us as we look at our brothers and sisters.

You remember months and months ago we spent some time on the need to be transparent with others? And how God speaks to us when we become interrelated one with another? For example, I might see something in my brother Norman that convicts me. A gentleness. I might see something in him that he might not even say to me.

Brother, you need meekness in your life. I might just see it. And all I have to do is see it and sense the Lord convicting me.

That's God speaking to me. That's God ministering to me. But if I ignore it and push it aside and justify my own hardness, then what I'm doing is I'm saying, God, I don't want this.

I'm resisting God. That's what this means here. But you have said it not.

All my counsel and would none of my reproof. I will also laugh at your calamity. I will mock when fear comes.

When your fear comes as desolation and your destruction comes as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer. Right here is why we mustn't buy into the lie. Well, I know God's dealing with me about this sin today, but you know what? I've got next week.

I've got next week. I mean, after all, God is merciful, isn't He? And He's so long-suffering and patient. I'm young now.

Or maybe we're old and we say, well, this has been in my life for so many years, but the blessing of God sure hasn't been withheld because I'm sure really blessed. God's really been doing good things in my life. I know this area of sin is a problem, but hey, everything is okay.

I mean, look it. Brothers and sisters, that's tempting the Lord. That's despising His goodness and mercy.

Because goodness and mercy is supposed to what? Lead us to repentance. Goodness and mercy is not to lead us into a posture where we say, well, God must not care if I have this sin in my life because He's still being good and He's still being merciful to me. No, it's supposed to lead us to the place where we say, oh, God, in spite of this horrible sin, You're still blessing me.

Lord, have mercy. I can't have this in my life anymore. Please, God, do what's necessary in my life.

If God's goodness and mercy isn't affecting you in that way, you're taking advantage of it. And if you're taking advantage of God's mercy and God's goodness, then there may be a day when this is what God speaks to you in the day of your calamity and the day when you need Him. You say, well, God wouldn't do that.

All right, does everyone have a pair of scissors? I'll cut this out of my Bible, okay? Anything else we don't want God to be? We could do this. This'll be fun, all right? Let's create our own version of Christianity. Everyone else is doing it.

Oh, we'll rip this out. Anyone else have a Scripture they don't like that they can rip out? Come on, I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll create a new translation.

I bet you every one of us can end up with good dividends because everyone wants a new translation these days. Any other Scripture you don't like? What about some of those Scriptures in Revelation where Jesus is talking to the New Covenant church and He says, what? I gave them a chance to repent and they didn't, so I'm going to kill all her children. Doesn't sound like New Covenant theology, does it? What about where Jesus said, repent or else I'll remove your candlestick.

You'll no longer have the power to be a light. I'll take the light right out of you. Any other Scriptures we don't like, Norman? There's one that gives us trouble.

If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Let's take that out of our Bible because you know that just can't be true. I mean, let's just get real.

So you see what's happening here? Either we live by the Word of God and we die by the Word of God and we come to the Word of God and when the Word of God doesn't sit right with us, we either reject the Word or we say, God, something's wrong in my heart because I'm not receiving this, but I know it's Your Word. See, it's either or. What are you doing with the Word of God? Are you bowing down to it as your final authority or is there compromise over God's Word? If that's the case, then there's an open heaven that's going to be closed to you and me.

Here you go, brothers and sisters. Right here it is. Verse 27, when your fear cometh as desolation, your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call, but I will not answer.

They will seek me early, but they will not find me. For they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel.

They despised. That means to scorn, to mock my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way.

Here's what God's saying. Here's what God's saying. You don't want my counsel? Then I'll give you what you want.

I'll give you that sin. I'll give you that thing you want that's springing out of greed, that's springing out of covetousness. I'll give you that thing that you want that's springing out of something that's not right, and that will be the very thing that destroys you.

Don't just think because God gives you what you want that it's a blessing. You learn that pretty soon in your Christian life. What did God say to Israel? I gave them what they wanted, but what did it do? Brought leanness to their soul.

I know a family who's not a part of here who God gave them what they want, and their family is being destroyed. But He gave them what they wanted. Isn't God's Word beautiful? Oh God, how we love Your Word.

Help us, Lord, to hear Your Word. Therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices. Regularly I pray this prayer.

Lord, God forbid that I should choose my own way. God forbid that I should choose my own way. There's safety to pray that prayer.

God forbid that I should choose my own way. Lord, You choose my path for me. You choose my way.

Now listen to this. Verse 32, For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoever hearkens unto me, listen, shall dwell safely and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Turn your Bibles to Deuteronomy, please. Deuteronomy, listen, is a book of tremendous encouragement and warning. Deuteronomy was the book that Moses wrote right before Israel went into the land of promise, right before they entered into the very place that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

But you'll find as you read through the book of Deuteronomy, listen, that there is a consistent theme in the book of Deuteronomy, and it is a redundant theme. You almost think that God, you almost say, God, do you have a problem or something? Why do you keep mentioning this theme over and over and over and over and over again? I know over the years, from time to time, people would come and say, Phil, you know, I get a little tired of hearing the same thing. Well, that's exactly what happened in the book of Deuteronomy.

Moses kept saying the same thing over and over again. One chapter, he'd say something. Two chapters later, he'd repeat himself.

Four chapters later, he'd repeat himself. Why do you think God moved on Moses to say the same thing over and over again? Because He knew that we are simple, stubborn, stiff-necked, rebellious people left to ourselves and that we easily forget. That's why.

I learned that when I had sheep for a few years. They are dumb. They don't learn their lesson.

The same sheep gets caught in the fence over and over again. You go. You jump in.

You rip its head out from between the barbed wires. It runs away. Two days later, in the middle of the night, you hear this sound.

Ah! Ah! You wonder what's wrong. The next morning, you go. You look, and what's wrong? The same, did you get that? You hear it at night, but the next morning, I've just been exposed.

I neglected the sheep. But what do you do? You go the next morning, and it's the same one. And what do they got? They got their head in between the barbed wire fence again.

They don't learn. They constantly need a shepherd. So what happens? God is saying over and over again.

Listen. Here's the theme that is mentioned over and over and over again. First of all, in Deuteronomy chapter 5, God gives us the Ten Commandments.

We're not going to read them. But it's imperative for us to understand in connection with what we preached on last week and what we're bringing this week. God's thought was that his people would not be like the other nations.

Now, the other nations simply were the exact opposite of what God was like. See, this is what God was after. He was after a people who would be like him.

Now you say, what is God like? God is like what the Ten Commandments teach. That's what God is like. The Ten Commandments reveal the moral character of God.

You oftentimes hear from kids, why does God require us to keep the commandments? Why does God have the Ten Commandments? You have to connect the commandments with the person, or else it doesn't make any sense. Kids understand why the commandments are important when they understand the commandments are directly related to the Lord. The commandments reflect the character of God.

And so in Deuteronomy 5, right before God leads Israel into the land of Canaan, he tells them the Ten Commandments. Why? To remind them of what God is like. Because they are about to go into a land that is inhabited by seven nations that make it a practice to break every one of the commandments.

That's what God's heart cry is for Israel, and that's what God's heart cry is for the church today. So here they were about to go into a perverse land, and God says, I am the Lord. I am holy.

Worship me alone. Then he says, don't make any graven images. Then he says, don't take the name of the Lord God in vain.

Then he says, keep the Sabbath day. Make it holy. Then he says, honor your father and your mother.

Now, we've just mentioned five of the Ten Commandments. Now, those five that I just mentioned, every one of those commandments were actively broken by the religious and cultural practices of the land of Canaan. They made graven images.

They worshiped thousands and tens of thousands of different deities and gods. They broke the Sabbath day. They didn't honor the Lord any day.

Honor thy father and thy mother. They dishonored their father. They dishonored their mother.

Parents took their children and burned them in fire as an offering to the gods and deities of Ashtoreth, and Baal, and Moloch, and Dagon, the god of the Philistines. They broke every one of these commandments. And so what is God doing? He's saying, oh, Israel, hear my heart cry.

I spoke to your forefather Abraham, who lived in a pagan society. The Ur of the Chaldees, a place where they were idol worshippers. What was Abraham's father? An idol worshiper.

He said, and I called him out of the land. I called him out because I wanted a nation. I wanted a people who would understand who I am, who would know what I am like, and who would be able to exhibit that in the midst of the nations.

And then God says, you shall not kill. These cultural, religious practices of the seven nations of Canaan, they actively killed. They didn't think anything of killing people.

God says, don't you practice their ways. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Oh, my Lord, have mercy. Astra, which was the female deity of Canaan, she represented inordinate sexual passion. They worshipped Astra.

They worshipped the passions of sex unrestrained. Does that sound a little bit familiar with the society that we're living in today, brothers and sisters? Yes, it does. Yes, it does.

Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not lie against thy neighbor. And so here, God has got Israel on the threshold of the land of Canaan, and He reminds them of who He is.

He reminds them that they're about to come into a land where people are corrupt, where people have gone astray. And He's saying, I do not want you to be like them. And brothers and sisters, the Spirit of God is saying to every one of us this morning, every single one here who names the name of Jesus Christ, who claims to be a follower of Christ, He's saying to you and I, I do not want you to be like the nation that you live in.

I do not want you to serve the gods that the inhabitants of this country are serving. I do not want you to engage in the abominable, detestable practices that the nation that you live in is engaging in. I want you to be a separate people, a holy people.

I want you to be for myself. So there's the redundant, continuous theme throughout the book of Deuteronomy. Now, when this simple message is preached regularly to God's people, they get weary.

They get weary of it. I know. I've heard it.

They get weary. Ah, this gets old. You want to hear something else.

Are we better than Israel? Chapter 6, Deuteronomy. Now these are the commandments, the statutes and the judgments with the Lord your God commanded to teach you that you might do them in the land where you go to possess. You see what God is saying? He's saying, listen, I'm bringing you into a land, but you are not to do what they do.

You are to do what I'm commanding you now. Hallelujah to God! What a Word! What a living Word today! God is saying to the church today, I have called you to be in the world but not of the world. He's saying stand against the practices of this world.

Stand against the gods of this world. Here's what He's saying to us. That you might fear the Lord thy God to keep all of His statutes and His commandments.

Listen, the New Covenant does not dissend all the need to obey God. It provides the power to do it. Don't ever buy into a Gospel that says it doesn't matter what you do.

God doesn't require obedience anymore. It's just faith in the blood and once you're saved, it doesn't matter. That is a lie.

He that saith what? I know God and keepeth not His commandments is a what? A liar. That's New Covenant. Not Old Covenant.

So see, God commands the New Covenant church to keep His commandments, but He doesn't leave them to do it by their own power. He empowers them with the Holy Spirit. He empowers them with grace.

He empowers them with a change in heart. And so please, brothers and sisters, don't ever buy into a Christianity that is light on obeying God. Don't ever, ever, ever start drinking from a fountain, whether it's the fountain of a ministry, a church, a book, a preacher, a teacher, that enables you to sit and waddle in the grace of God without any sense of need to obey God and to forsake all evil and all sin.

Anywhere there is a New Testament church and the fear of God is not growing in the heart of people, and there isn't a preaching word coming forth causing people to cry out to God and to see the difference between holy and profane and that which is of God and that which is of man, and constantly dividing so that we can clearly see wherever that's not happening, there is compromise. And where there's compromise, there's every evil work. Every evil work.

Where there's compromise, sin goes unrestrained. But not religion. Religion prospers in that kind of an environment.

God wants His people to obey Him. That's why the Holy Spirit comes to write the law of God on our heart. This is how radical the Word of God is.

And let me tell you, the New Testament is no different. Watch this. Verse 2, that you may fear the Lord, keep all of His statutes and His commandments which I command you, that thy sons all the days of their life may be prolonged.

Watch this. Watch this now. He has cast out many nations before thee.

Now here are seven nations. Listen, the Hittites, the Gergashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites. Perizzites? Perizzites.

Wow, they're perizzites. See what happens when I try not to do it without these glasses here? Alright, here we are. The Perizzites, that's right.

And the Hivites and the Jebusites. Seven nations greater and mightier than you. And let me just say this now.

We're not going to do this today, but we can go into a study of every one of those nations and we can discover the gods they served, where they came from, and we'll see that all of these nations gathered together represents all of the evil practices and cultural religious garbage that was going on in the land of

Canaan which God commanded Israel to have no part of. Actually the land of Canaan, the religion of the Canaanites gathers together in that religion all of the religions, plural, of these seven nations. So as we study the Canaanite religion, we get a picture from God of all the evil practices that were going on in the land of Canaan which God commanded His people to be completely and entirely free from.

He told them over and over again. Watch what he says. Verse 2, And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, utterly destroy them, thou shalt make no covenant an agreement of peace, make no covenant with them, nor show mercy on them.

Oh my God! How many times do we make a covenant of peace with that which is evil? How many times do we show mercy on something that we should in fact be destroying? Ask yourself this question today. What are you showing mercy on that you should in fact be fighting against by the power of God and destroying in your life? This is radical. You see how very straightforward God is here? Neither shalt thou make marriages with them, thy daughter shall not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods. So will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you. But thus shall you deal with them.

Listen, verse 5, You shall destroy their altars, break down their images, cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God. The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Chapter 8, verse 11, Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God in not keeping His commandments and His judgments and His statutes, which I command you this day. Verse 14, Then your heart be lifted up and you forget the Lord your God which brought you out of the land of Egypt. Chapter 12, verse 29, When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee where you go to possess them, and you succeed at them, and dwell in their land, listen, take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee, and that you inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? Even so will I do likewise.

Thou shall not do so unto the Lord thy God. For every abomination to the Lord which He hateth have they done unto their gods. You see this consistent and persistent theme? How many feel weary? Like, all right already.

Huh? All right already. Be careful. Because that's just what Israel said to God.

All right already, God. Don't harp on it. But what happened? What happened? They went into Canaan and what did they do? They drove out all the enemies, right, Norman? And they established God as Lord of the land.

Hardly. They went in and they did the very thing that God said not to do. They compromised.

Guess what today the church is doing? Now go to chapter 13, brothers and sisters. God is so set about this compromise, now He brings it into a religious context. Watch.

If there among you arises a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign and wonder, and the sign and wonder come to pass, stop right there. Right there. What's happening now? This is a religious setting now.

You might say, oh yeah, I know. Stay away from the world. All right, now let's go into the church now.

We got a prophet. We got somebody who's got power to do a sign or a wonder. I mean, I can't believe it.

The guy looked at me and he told me what was in my heart. He told me what my thoughts were. It's unbelievable.

Healings, I saw healings. Watch what God says. And the sign and the wonder come to pass, wherefore He speak unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods which thou hast not known.

Let us serve them. Listen, you shall not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God proves you.

He's testing you to see whether or not you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the Lord, fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice. And that prophet and dreamer shall be what? Put to death.

Now let me say this, brothers and sisters. We're going to close in a few moments. Is my clock running faster than this clock? Good.

Good. Oh, that's slow? Oh, I knew it. Okay, listen, brothers and sisters.

Listen closely. There is a big test that's coming on the church today. You know what that test is? There's many prophets, many apostles, many preachers, many teachers, many movements arising in the land.

There's signs. There's wonders. There's apparent miracles.

People are saying, this is really incredible. And they're teaching God's people to break the commandments of the Lord. They're leading God's people.

They're hooking them with signs and wonders. And then when you get in and see what they're all about, they're not about the Lord Jesus Christ and laying our hearts before Him and keeping the commandments of the Lord. They're not about that.

It's the gospel of greed, the gospel of covetousness, the gospel of worldliness, the gospel that never, ever confronts the sins, never confronts the flesh, never makes distinction between what is clean and unclean. And yet, signs and wonders are happening. But what does God say? Don't listen.

Follow God's Word. So we've got the preacher now. Now what about this? Verse 6, If thy brother, son, mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend entice thee secretly, listen, let us go and serve other gods, the gods of the people which are around about you.

Verse 8, Thou shall not consent. Is God covering all the bases or what? First He said, Preachers, don't listen to them. Now what is He saying? Your own brother, your own sister, your own husband, your own wife, if they are enticing you, oh, come on, let's delve into the world.

Let's do something that will take our hearts from the Lord. Don't listen to them. And then verse 13, Children of Baal come right into the midst of the house of God.

And so God breaks it up into three categories. A prophet, your own brother, sister, husband, wife, son, daughter, and now worldly people. People who don't even claim to be Christians.

They're even enticing a lot of God's people now. They're coming right in the midst and they're saying, oh, come on. I mean, this Christianity is cool, but you should see what I do.

Come on. Come with me. Check it out.

Don't compromise. All right, brothers and sisters, we're going to close now. Let's just bow our hearts before the Lord for a few moments, please.

Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you, Lord, that you are wanting to establish in us a clear understanding of what you're after. And today, Lord, we pray that you would grant each of us the ability to hear and be changed by your power.

Please, Lord. Again, I ask for mercy. Every one of us would be free from the practices of this world that lead us astray.

That we would be free from any bondages by the power of Jesus Christ. We ask these things, Lord, for your honor and your glory. Let's just sing this song and believe God to make us a people like Him today.

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