

Drinking the Gold

Have you ever heard a Bible story so many times that you don't think it has any more surprises for you? That's how I felt about Moses and the Ten Commandments. When we have heard a story from our youth, we think we know all about it but if we read it again with adult eyes, God can reveal things that we never knew were there.

Most of us know the story of how Moses spent 40 days on the mountain and God gave him the Ten Commandments. What was to be a triumphant moment in the history of Israel was spoiled when he returned to camp and found them celebrating before a golden calf (idol). (Exodus 32) Now, here's the part that I hadn't seen before....

"And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it"...(Ex32:20)

I wondered why he made them drink it? The book of Exodus really doesn't explain it. In the rest of the chapter, the faithful Levites killed about 3,000 men in an effort to purge the camp. Then Moses told them to purify themselves and he would try to make atonement with God.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book....And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf,...(v33,35)

I had never heard anyone teach about drinking the gold but as I studied it, I remembered that God equates worshipping idols with adultery. There are many places in the Old Testament where the prophets referred to unfaithful Israel as adulterers. (Ezekiel 16 and Jeremiah 9:2 and 23:10 for example) According to the New Testament, Jesus is coming back for a glorious church, his bride. He is betrothed to her.

Now consider Numbers Chapter 5 where God gave Moses a test for a wife suspected of adultery. She was to be taken to the priest along with a jealousy offering. The priest would give her a mixture of holy water and the dust from the tabernacle floor to drink. If she had sinned, she would be cursed, her belly would swell and her thigh would rot. If she was innocent, she would be free and would conceive seed.

Moses had spent time with God and understood the law. Do you think it possible that the gold the Israelites drank could have led to the plague that separated the faithful from the unfaithful?

I was excited when I first saw this but, I had to look further than this because unless we can relate it to our own lives, it is very cool but useless information. I know we live under the Dispensation of Grace but I also know God doesn't change. He still sees our unfaithfulness as adultery and it is serious when anything comes before our relationship with Him. So I looked for something in the New Testament that related to all of this.

I do not believe that it's a coincidence that many communion cups are made of gold. I was raised in the Roman Catholic Church. Unfortunately, I have been to many masses where communion has been served so routinely that it's simply the next "order of service." (Before the rest of you get smug, I've seen it in other denominations as well.) But, this is one sacrament we can't afford to get complacent about. God is serious. That is why we are admonished in scripture.

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." (1 Cor.11:27)

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (v.29,30)

Thank God we are under grace and He has provided forgiveness

for us. Verse 28 says to *"let a man examine himself and so let him eat"...*also, 1 John 1:9 says *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

The next time Communion is served. Be sober about it. Renew your relationship with the Lord. Examine yourself to be sure your conscience is clear and everything is right between you and the rest of the Body of Christ. That way, we will grow stronger and stronger as we participate. Let's get serious and be careful how we "drink the gold".

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