

Mixed Multitudes Led The Israelites Into Sin

'A mixed multitude of people went with the children of Israel with flocks, herds and very much livestock' (Exodus 12:38).

'The mixed multitude among the children of Israel lusted exceedingly' (Numbers 11:4).

The mixed multitude of Gentiles who left Egypt with the children of Israel were people of their generation and culture. They were idolaters. They worshipped idols of every description and the thought of having just one Deity to worship was alien to them. They were Egyptians plus other races of people who were living in Egypt at that time. When this multitude of people realised the Hebrews were leaving Egypt, they must have believed they would have a safer life with the Hebrews, rather than stay in Egypt where the plagues had just taken place, or perhaps because there was very little left in Egypt for them. They may have fled Egypt in terror. Whatever their reason for leaving Egypt, there is no scripture telling us they ever believed in the Lord God. They may have obeyed the laws given to the Israelites out of fear but few, if any changed their idolatrous ways. If these people had genuinely changed their ways and turned to God, Israel would not have fallen into sin, but the hundreds of idolatrous people influenced Israel negatively, causing their terrible downfall soon after Moses died, but the Lord still held Israel accountable for their sin even though the mixed multitude had lured them into idolatry. The Lord makes us all accountable for our own sin regardless of who tempts us. The Gentiles who fled Egypt with Israel were all quite entitled to use that opportunity of salvation. They partook of the feasts, celebrations and covenant right alongside Israel, but their hearts did not change. The idolatry of the mixed multitude, plus the idolatry of the Canaanites, tempted Israel to rise up against the Lord, break the covenant and forsake Him.

'The Lord appeared in the Tent of Meeting in a pillar of cloud that stood over the door of the Tent. The Lord said to Moses, "Behold, you will sleep with your fathers and then this people will rise up and play the prostitute after the strange gods of the land, where they will go to be among them and will forsake Me, and break My covenant which I made with them. My anger will be kindled against them in that day and I will forsake them. I will hide My face from them and they will be devoured. Many evils and troubles will come on them so they will say in that day, 'These evils have come on us because our God is not among us.' I will surely hide My face in that day for all the evil they will have worked when they turned to other gods. Now write this song for yourself and teach it to the children of Israel. Put it in their mouths so this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel, for when I have brought them into the land I swore to their fathers, flowing with milk and honey, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods, serve them and despise Me and break my covenant. It will happen, when many evils and troubles are come on them, this song will testify before them as a witness, for it will not be forgotten out of the mouths of their descendants, for I know their imagination which they frame this day, before I have brought them into the land which I swore"' (Deuteronomy 31:15 to 21). The Lord said, "I know their imagination ..." so it seems by what the Lord told Moses, many Israelites did not change their hearts either. They were not totally dedicated to Him but paid Him lip service.

Part of that song the Lord gave to Moses to teach to the children of Israel reads: 'The Lord alone led him (Jacob who was re-named Israel). There was no foreign god with him. He (God) made him (Jacob's descendants – the children of Israel) ride on the high places of the earth. He ate the increase of the field. He caused him to suck honey out of the rock, oil out of the flinty rock, butter of the herd and milk of the flock, with fat of lambs, rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the finest of the wheat. Of the juice of the grape you drank wine. But Jeshurun (the Lord's pet name for the children of Israel) grew fat and kicked. You have grown fat. You have grown thick. You have become sleek. You forsook God who made you a nation and lightly esteemed the Rock of your salvation. Israel moved Him to jealousy with strange gods. They provoked Him to anger with abominations. They sacrificed to demons, which were no God, to gods they did not know, to new gods that came up of late which your fathers did not dread. Of the Rock who became your Father, you are unmindful and have forgotten God who gave you birth. God saw your sins, and abhorred them because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters. He said, "I will hide My face from them. I will see what their end will be for they are a very perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not from God. They have provoked Me to anger with their foolishness. I will move them to jealousy with those who are not a people (Gentiles). I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation (of Gentiles), for a fire is kindled in My anger. It burns to the lowest Sheol, devours the earth with its increase and sets the foundations of the mountains on fire. I will heap evils on them. I will spend My arrows on them. They will be wasted with hunger and devoured with burning heat and bitter destruction. I will send the teeth of animals on them with the poison of crawling things of the dust. The

sword will bereave and in the chambers, terror on both young man and virgin, the suckling child with the grey-haired man. I said I would scatter them afar ... Israel is a nation void of counsel. There is no understanding in them. Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!' (Deuteronomy 32:12 to 29).

The idolatry continued until the Lord had the children of Israel exiled to Babylon in judgement under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. They remained captive in Babylon for seventy years (Daniel 9:2). When Daniel prayed and repented of the sins of Israel, they were allowed to return to the land of Israel (Daniel 9:3 to 20). Once the idolatry ceased, the Jewish people returned to Israel to rebuild the temple under the leadership of Nehemiah and Ezra. There is a very interesting verse telling us it had taken hundreds of years and the terrible exile before Israel accepted the Laws of Moses and reject the actions of the mixed multitude. 'When they heard the Law, they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude' (Nehemiah 13:3). It was prophesied the idolatry would stop. 'It will come to pass in that day', says the Lord of Heavenly Armies, 'I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land and they will be remembered no more. I will cause the false prophets and the spirit of impurity to pass out of the land' (Zechariah 13:2). Although they were in Israel and had stopped worshipping idols, the problems that came from the curses did not cease.

These verses explain the reasons behind the terrible plight of the Jews from the days of Joshua until today, when they suffer terror, bombings and bereavement. They broke the sacred first covenant given to Abraham, ratified in the blood of circumcision. God said to Abraham, "As for you, you will keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant you will keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you. Every male among you will be circumcised" (Genesis 17:9 & 10). Then the Jews broke the second covenant given to them by Moses, after they had all agreed to obey. 'Moses spoke to all of Israel saying, "Keep silence and listen Israel. Today you have become the people of the Lord your God. You will therefore obey the voice of the Lord your God and do His commandments and His statutes, which I command you today ... Cursed be the person who does not confirm the words of this Law and do them. All the people say, Amen' (Deuteronomy 27:9, 10 & 26).

Deuteronomy chapter 28 explains all the blessings Israel would enjoy if they obeyed the Lord, then He explains all the curses they would suffer if they disobeyed His commands. 'It will happen, if you will listen diligently to the voice of the Lord your God, to observe all His commandments ... the Lord your God will set you on high above all the nations of the earth and all these blessings will come on you and overtake you, if you will listen to the voice of the Lord your God ... and not turn aside from any of the words I command you today, to the right hand or to the left to go after other gods to serve them ... BUT ... It will come to pass, if you will not listen to the voice of the Lord your God, to observe all His commandments and His statutes I command you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you' (Deuteronomy 28:1 & 2; 14 & 15). If the children of Israel had listened to the Lord and obeyed Him, they would not be suffering like they are today. But it got worse for them. The idolatry in Israel had ceased long before Jesus was born. The Jews had become very dedicated to the Lord God and tried to obey His every command. Jesus ushered in the New Covenant in His blood, the third covenant, but many rejected the New Covenant and rejected the Messiah invoking a blood curse on themselves and their descendants, making their plight even worse. Jesus said, "This is My blood of the New Covenant poured out for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). 'Pilate said, "What will I do to Jesus Who is called Messiah?" The people said, "Let Him be crucified!" ... "May His blood be on us and on our children!" (Matthew 27:22 & 25). The Lord said they were foolish, lacking wisdom and should have considered their latter days!

From the days of the apostles, the Gospel message has gone out to the Gentiles. When the curses are lifted, all Israel will be saved. That will happen when the last of the Gentiles have accepted Jesus as their Saviour and have come into the Kingdom of God. The Apostle Paul hoped that would incur jealousy among the Jews and turn them to Jesus as the Lord God said. "I will move them (the Jews) to jealousy with those who are not a people (Gentiles). I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation' (Deuteronomy 32:21). 'Did Israel not know? First Moses says, "I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is not a nation, with a nation void of understanding I will make you angry." Isaiah is very bold and says, "I was found by those who did not seek Me. I was revealed to those who did not ask for Me" (Romans 10:19 & 20; Isaiah 65:1). 'Did they stumble so they might fall? No! Absolutely not! By their fall, salvation has come to the Gentiles to provoke the Jews to jealousy ... A partial hardening has happened to Israel but only until the fullness (the last) of the Gentiles has come in (to the Kingdom) and so all Israel will be saved' (Romans 11:11, 25 & 26).

Amen and God bless you.

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