

ISSUE

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BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

August 5,
2018

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Arend Gressley
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McAnear
Ryan Matney
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott
Justin Smiley
Kevin Wise
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



Understanding the Consequences (Exod. 34:1-17) *By Andrew Dow*

Consequences accompany everything we do. While we may think of consequences as inherently negative, they are not; they can be positive or negative. Unfortunately, foreseeing the consequences of any given action can be difficult. As a result, many people act on impulse without considering what the final outcome will be.

This shortsightedness was a problem for the Israelites. Shortly after God made a covenant with the children of Israel, they constructed a golden calf and worshipped it as if it were God (Exod. 32:1–6). This was after God had clearly commanded, **“You shall not make for yourself an idol...”** (Exod. 20:4). In an effort to dissuade the Israelites from committing this sin again, God said, **“Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day.... You shall make for yourself no molten gods”** (Exod. 34:11–17). Israel clearly saw nothing wrong with molten gods. So, God clearly lays out the consequences of disobeying Him.

The Commands of God

When the Lord renewed His covenant with Israel, He was primarily concerned with obedience: **“Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day”** (Exod. 34:11). The Lord went on to foretell how He would be responsible for driving out the pagan nations from before them. These nations would only be a distant memory after the Lord destroyed

them, but they posed a threat to the Israelites. Therefore, God gave two commands.

First, God instructed, **“watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going...”** (Exod. 34:12). Under no circumstances were the Israelites to make a covenant with these nations. This is a simple command, but is perhaps contrary to human reason. Despite what may seem logical, God demands that no covenants be made.

Second, God said, **“you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim”** (Exod. 34:13). Another simple command. Do not, under any circumstance, adopt the inhabitants’ religious practices. There was to be nothing left of their idols and rituals in the Promised Land.

Before we go further, God gives the Israelites a very clear reason why they should obey both of these commands: **“For you shall not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God”** (Exod. 34:14). They should have obeyed because the God of Heaven told them to obey! This should be enough. However, the people had already ignored the command of the Lord once by constructing the golden calf.

Can’t you just imagine the Israelites looking at these two commands from God and say-



ing, *“We know you commanded these things, but why can’t we make covenants with the people? Why must we completely destroy their idols?”* After all, allies could be valuable. It could be in their best interests to keep some of the inhabitants happy with them, rather than destroying their way of worship. Anticipating these kinds of questions, God spells out very clearly what the consequences would be if Israel disregarded these instructions.

The Consequences of Disobedience

God explains that, if Israel makes a covenant with the inhabitants, **“they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice, and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons to also to play the harlot with their gods”** (Exod. 34:15–16).

Notice the sequence of events God lays out. If Israel made a covenant with the Canaanites, they would be bound to honor it and the idol worship would continue in the land. God suggests that, **“someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice”** (Exod. 34:15b). What’s the danger in accepting this kind gesture? God continues,

“You might take some of his daughters for your sons” (Exod. 34:16a). Could intermarrying be so bad? **“His daughters,”** God concludes, **“might... cause your sons to play the harlot with their gods”** (Exod. 34:16b).

The choice to disobey God is much more than a poor decision. It’s the beginning of a perpetual cycle into idolatry. Even though they were not immediately apparent to the Israelites, the consequences were serious. Therefore, **“you shall make for yourself no molten gods”** (Exod. 34:17).

Application and Conclusion

We, as God’s New Covenant people, must realize that God demands



holiness of us (2 Tim. 2:4; 1 Pet. 1:16; 2:9). We may convince ourselves of reasons to hold onto friends, jobs, or relationships that tie us to the world, but think of the consequences. Do they bring us closer to or lead us away from God? Realize that God gives these

(and other) commands for our benefit—to avoid the consequences!

After Israel entered the Promised Land, the Gibeonites tricked them into making a covenant (Josh. 9:3–6). Despite God’s explicit warning in Exodus 34, **“The men of Israel... did not ask for the counsel of the Lord. Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live”** (Josh. 9:14–15). Just as God predicted, the idolatry of Gibeon plagued Israel and ultimately lead them to captivity. Brethren, beware of the consequences of sin! .



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**We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.**

● **Let us know if you have any questions.**