

I. Intro

A. Text: **Ex. 34:12-15**

¹² Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. ¹³ You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim ¹⁴ (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), ¹⁵ lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice. (Ex. 34:12-15)

B. Recap

1. Idolatry (Rom. 1:25): serving a created thing, instead serving the creator.
2. As God descended on Mt. Sinai, He invited Israel into a covenant relationship with Him.
 - a. 1st Condition: No other gods

¹ And God spoke all these words, saying, ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ You shall have no other gods before me. (Ex. 20:1-3)

- b. Israel gladly accepted the conditions of this new relationship.

⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." ⁸ And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." (Ex. 24:7-8)

- i. YHWH invited, Israel said "Yes" (Ex. 24:18)
3. Israel was initially awestruck by the Presence of God.

*When people are no longer fascinated by the Presence of God, it's inevitable that they replace His Presence with something lesser; something created (idolatry).

4. Replacing God with some lesser thing... is idolatry.

II. Body

A. Idolatry is Associated With Adultery

1. Scriptural References

a. **Ez. 16:8, 15- 16**

⁸ "When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love, and I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness; I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord God, and you became mine... (Ez. 16:8)

*¹⁵ "But you trusted in your beauty and played the whore because of your renown and **lavished your whorings on any passerby**; your beauty became his. ¹⁶ You took some of your garments and made for yourself colorful shrines, and on them played the whore. The like has never been, nor ever shall be. (Ez. 16:15-16)*

b. **Jer. 31:31-32**

*³¹ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, **though I was their husband**, declares the LORD. (Jer. 31:31-32)*

c. **Jer. 13:25-27**

*²⁵ This is your lot, the portion I have measured out to you, declares the LORD, because you have forgotten me and trusted in lies. ²⁶ I myself will lift up your skirts over your face, and your shame will be seen. ²⁷ I **have seen your abominations, your adulteries and neighings, your lewd whorings**, on the hills in the field. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! How long will it be before you are made clean?" (Jer. 13:25-27)*

d. Is. 57:7-8:

⁷ “On a lofty and high mountain, You have set your bed; Even there you went up to offer sacrifice. ⁸ Also behind the doors and their posts you have set up your remembrance; For you have uncovered yourself to those other than Me, And have gone up to them; You have enlarged your bed and made a covenant with them; You have loved their bed, Where you saw their nudity. (Is. 57:7-8)

e. Jer. 3:6, 9, 13-14

⁶ The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: “Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot... (Jer. 3:6 – NKJV)

⁹ So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. ¹⁰ And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense,” says the LORD. (Jer. 3:9 – NKJV)

¹³ Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the Lord your God, And have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice,’ says the LORD. ¹⁴ “Return, O backsliding children,” says the LORD; “for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. (Jer. 3:13-14 – NKJV)

B. Relationship with God is Associated with A Marriage

1. God Reveals Himself as a Relational God
 - a. Not A Distant, Detached God
 - b. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph. 5:32)
2. With those relational lenses (the lenses of a Husband and His Bride) we can see the meeting with God and Israel on Mt. Sinai a little clearer.
 - a. God was revealing Himself to the Bride that He had passionate desire for. (Ex. 19:16-20)
 - b. YHWH set His attention on her

- c. He built a faithful history with her.
- 3. As YHWH gave Israel the terms for their ongoing relationship, the terms were not simply a contract.
 - a. He was inviting them into a marital covenant.

*² “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴ You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God **am a jealous God**, (Ex. 20:2-5)*

- b. Israel was absolutely flattered.
 - i. But she accepted the proposal. (Ex. 24:7)
- 4. 40 days later, she was seeking other forms of pleasure from lovers who could never truly satisfy.
 - a. They rose up early, to give their affection to created things. (Ex. 32:6)
 - i. A golden calf.
 - b. We recognize the idolatry, but God saw it as adultery.
 - c. YHWH had every right to wipe 'em out AND wipe out their created things that they desired so much.
 - i. But He didn't.

C. Our Spiritual Adultery Did Not Surprise God

- 1. Everyone in the camp committed adultery.
 - a. In His mercy, God used this as a moment of Divine Confrontation.
 - b. Ex. 32:26: Who is on the Lord's side?
 - c. The results of Divine Confrontation are always exactly what He already knew.
 - i. God knows those that are His.

Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” (2 Tim. 2:19)

- 2. God renewed the vows that Israel broke.

¹⁰ And he said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. ¹¹ Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. (Ex. 34: 10-11)

- a. God makes the terms.

III. Conclusion

A. Idolatry/Adultery is an assault on the goodness of God.

1. All that He has done for us isn't enough.
2. Tearing Down idols was the least they could do.

¹² Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. ¹³ You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim (Ex. 34: 12-13)

B. Idolatry is not just an issue of priority, but an issue of exclusivity.

1. 1st Condition of the Marital Covenant: “You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Ex. 20:3)
 - a. 1st Condition of the Vow Renewal: ¹⁴ **For you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. (Ex. 34:14)**

2. If we see our relationship with God as a marriage, then we will see that God is not pleased with simply being first.

3. God reveals something staggering about His nature: Jealousy!

¹⁴ **For you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. (Ex. 34:14)**

- a. Jealous: bearer of no rival.
- b. Not jealous of you, but jealous for us.
- c. Those who are the chosen will choose Him only.