

CALL to PRAYER - the void in society left by genuine Christianity... is being filled with....

Exodus 20:1-3 - RULE #1

INTRO - Rule #1. Any list has a 1st but the 1st is usually foundational. It sets the stage, it's the main thing that all the other things tie into. It is 1st not because what follows lacks priority, but the 1st does have seniority. This list of 10 has 2 halves (2 tablets). Each half conveys the greatest of all rules which is LOVE. 1st half is how to love God. The 2nd half is how to love neighbor. The 1st rule in the 1st half is foundational to loving God. If we are to have any love for God, then Rule #1 has seniority in saying what love for God looks like. These rules are rulers to measure our affection so we can see where we come up short (73 7/8...). Rule #1 cuts us all down to size. Our affections seem to go in the wrong direction. This is a one way wrong. God's love for us is always on the mark but our love for Him just doesn't measure up. Rule #1 helps set us straight

WHO GAVE THE RULE?

- Exodus 20:1 - If there was a Red Letter OT this passage would be all red
 - These words weren't inspired through someone but are a DM from SOMEONE
 - These words were heard by everyone at the mountain (not like movie)
 - No intermediary just extraordinary. Ex. 19:18-19; 20:18-19
 - All scripture is God's word, but these words came by a direct audible message
- These are God's rules not man's rules
 - Manmade rules are only as good as ones who made them
 - Man is no good. Man is fallible, malleable, unreliable...so are his rules
 - Man is corrupt and his rules droll...with corruption
 - God's rules rule. Transcendent, holy, right, true to the mark and unchanging
- His rules reveal how to love. God is love and His rules are what love looks like.
 - This is the heavenly standard for all earthy interaction

THE RELATIONSHIP IN THE RULE

1. Exodus 20:2
 - a. This commandment is based on relationship
 - b. Gods people bear the biggest responsibility with idolatry...& all the rules on love
2. The rule is not just general it is personal and individual and relational
 - a. "...the LORD your God..." the real God is a relational God (Heb. 8:10c)
 - b. "You shall have..." not *y'all* but you. It is given to all but addressed to you
3. These rules are from a personal Creator and individual Redeemer
 - a. The nation was fresh out of 400 years of slavery. 3 months into freedom (19:1)
 - i. This is their charter from their new loving Master
 - b. God not only made us, He redeemed us, bought us, loved us, married us (you)
 - c. The God of love has some rules on how to reflect and reciprocated that love
 - d. Rule # 1 is relational. Rule #1 is personal (can't use cliché "not personal")

RULE #1

Exodus 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before Me" This is personal - between you and Me

- God demands exclusivity in relationship (Matt. 10:37 - even "in-laws" can't encroach)
 - In Rule #1 is that God permits no rivals in the relationship.
 - He made us, loves us, redeemed us, provides for us and want us all to Himself
- God is the Only True and Living God
 - Deut. 4:39 Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6; 45:5, 21-22 John 17:3 1 Tim. 2:5
 - 1 Kings 18:21 - "...if Baal is god then follow him."
- All other gods are idols Psalm 96:5 1 Thess. 1:9 (repented/converted)
 - Other religions worship demons Deut. 32:16-17 1 Cor. 10:20
 - All religions are not different roads to the same god. 1 God and 1 way
 - There are many demons behind every false religion. Many lanes on broad road.
 - Debate in our state a while back over placement of 10 commands at capitol. To paraphrase Gazette - the biggest objection was with Rule #1 because it says there is only one right way and all the other ways were wrong. (no plurality/equality)
 - They understood the exclusivity of Rule #1
 - By the way, there have been satanic display during holidays in capitols
- The best way to convey Rule #1 is to realize the exclusive marital relationship in Rule #1
 - Idolatry is spiritual adultery. If we love Him, we won't cheat on Him
 - Hosea 3:1 Ezekiel 6:9; 23:37 Jer. 3:8-9
 - Rule #1 is God is to be #1
 - Simple terms - Don't screw around on God. He won't settle for the silver metal
 - Polytheism = many gods Polyamory = many lovers (both becoming popular)
 - No open marriage with God...though it is often tried Jer. 2:28
- Israel had a problem with Baal. There were others but this one got them in particular
 - Baal = Master was seen as the god of the storm/rain. Fertility/life
 - Israel joined themselves to this god as a provider (agrarian society)
 - We sing "Beulah Land" = married is the word *baal* land is married=*baal*
 - They already had a Husband/Provider. Jer. 31:32 "I was a husband=*baal*..."
 - Idolatry is to love another/marry another/join with another / seek provision and satisfaction from another.
- Whatever or whomever has our highest love...our greatest trust...our deepest devotion, what we look to for satisfaction and provision.....that is the God, or god, we serve
 - no polyamory or multiple lovers with God - Matt. 6:24 (1 Kings 18:21)
 - Covetousness and greed is idolatry - Eph. 5:5 Col. 3:5
 - Hedonism is idolatry - 2 Tim. 3:4 our belly can be our god - Phil. 3:19
- "...before Me"
 - This is more than being #1...it is where the dastardly deed is done.
 - When we break Rule #1 we break it before HIM
 - All our adulteries are done BEFORE HIM. He sees it all. It is in His face
 - We try to hide our idolatry (Ezek. 14:3) our infidelity/indiscretions/other lovers
 - We try to hide our nakedness/shame Heb. 4:13
- Rule #1 is how love for God is done