

Part of an exposition of 2 Kings, 17:15-16

Author: Isaac Newton

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2 Kings 17.15. They followed vanity And became vaine & went after the Heathen that were round about them concerning whom the Lord had said that they should not do like them. — Baâl.

This whole Chapter is spent in describing how the 10 tribes for their abominations were carried into captivity by the Assyrians & how the nations which the Assyrians placed in Samaria in the roome of the captivated Israelites, continued in the abominations of the Israelites which was to joyne the worship of the true God in the calves with the worship of the Heathen Gods round about. And the words which I have chosen to discourse upon are a part of the {second} that is a part of the description of the Idolatry of the Israelites for which they were captivated.

— but the words I have chosen to discourse of are a part of the description of the abominations of the Israelites which these nations imitated. Now this comprehending both the worship of Ieraboam's calves dedicated as I shal show to the true God, & also the worship of other Idols dedicated to the Gods of the nations round about we have here an opportunity to consider Idolatry in its full latitude & to discourse of it's nature in general: & for this end I shal propound these three queres 1 2 Whether the Israelites worshipped the true God in the Calves as dedicated to the true God 3^{dly} whether they worshipped other Gods as equal to this God or as his ministers, 1 whether the Israelites worshipped the Images as Gods themselves or as dedicated to other Gods. And having determined these Quere's I shall then proceed to shew you plainly wherein the nature of Idolatry consists & how its definition is couched in these words, as also in many other places of scripture notwithstanding / And for this end I shal first shew you what kind of worship that of the calves was, & secondly what kind of worship that was of the Gods of the Gentiles. And after this I,

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thirdly because it is accounted | reckoned among the crimes of these nations that they made the lowest of the people priests to this God: for had this sleight been done to any but the true God, the prophet here would have reprehended them for it.

By this history it is easy to collect that the Lord of the Land which the new nations were taught to worship in the cities of samaria was the true God & that this same Lord, was worshipped by the Kingdom of Israel even amidst the worst of their Idolatries as the God of their Land till the very captivity. But this though it be plain enough of it self yet I intend the next time to point at the particular marks by which it is put beyond all cavil & not only so but also to shew out of Sacred History by examples in ages before Ieroboam's times that the Israelites & their forefathers forsook not absolutely the true God when they fell into Idolatry but only joyned to his worship the adoration of the Gods of the Gentiles as these did since Ieroboam: And this I shall do that it may appear that Israel during all her abominations from first to last scarce ever forsooke the true God but only corrupted his worship by mingling their own inventions with it as too many of our neighbouring

Christians dayly do. upon the account of which corruptions if they are at any time said to forsake & reject him no more is to be understood by that but only that they forsook & rejected his laws

before them for in the 33^d vers it is expressly said that the new nations feared the Lord & served there own Gods after the manner of the nation whome they carried away from thence that is after the manner of Israel. Thus runs our English translation but yet because the original is capable of being otherwise translated I shall not lay the stress upon this place but shew you the matter of fact from other characters in the history. And first whereas it is said that at the first coming of the new nations to dwell in the cities of Samaria they feared not the Lord & therefore the Lord sent Lions among them which slew some of them: one may hence infer that the Lord had been feared in those regions till that time & that he sent in these Lyons becaus his worship began now to cease out of the land: for if his worship ceased there before that <3> of Gods people which are every where in scripture called whoredome much be wors then the abominations of the heathens which are never called by that name, God being as he sometimes calls him self, the Husband of his people, but not of any other nation: & this abomination must be the wors because it was done not upon a forgetting of their God, but even while they acknowledged him & pretended to honour him. And reason it should be so because this acknowledgment of him is a testimony against them that they owned his laws & therefore were more inexcusable for not keeping them. ffor he that knows his masters will & does it not must be beaten with many stripes: And this I could wish they would well consider who goe about to extenuate any crimes of Christians for their being committed by Christians: for as the profession of Chrstianity exalts every thing that is good so it aggravates every thing that is evil. No drunkard so bad as a Christian drunkard, no adulterer so bad as a Christian adulterer & so no Idolater so bad as a Christian who does those things which a Heathen cannot do without being an Idolater. Nor let any one perswade himself that he is charitable in extenuating any such crimes, or that the aggravating them as he may suppose is uncharitableness. To pronounce damnation universally upon any state as the Papists do upon us or to do it upon any single person only would indeed be great uncharitableness: but for my part I know not what mercy God may have for both the best of heathen & the best of Christian Idolaters such as sin though invincible ignorance & in the meane while labour to know as much of their duty & to live up to their knowledge as they can. And so I judge no man's person, but only inquire into the nature of the sin abstractedly R And where nothing but this is done I see not what danger or ill consequence there can be in aggravating the guilt of a thing that is certainly evil, since the least sins cannot be too much abominated & shunned, but the diminishing y^m may be of very ill consequence because it will certainly weaken mens aversion from the sin & may in the end prove the me{ans} of many's falling into it. And certainly the greatest

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Prop 3. Hos: 4.15. ~ King 17.21. 1 Kings 14.9.

Here you may see that Israel retained the worship of the law at Bethel & Gilgal the chief places of their transgression, but not exactly: for they offered – – – the institution being without Leaven Levit. 7.12. Now whereas God upbraids 'em for this, certainly – — This respects the national worship of the Ten tribes for the discourse begins with a lamentation against the h. o. I. for w. they did at B. G. & B. & ends with threatening them the Captivity by the Assyrians which happened about 3 or 4 score years after.

The first Proposition I laid down to explain these words was that – – – – & this I proved out of the history of the captivity set down in this chapter, & for further confirmation added a place out of Hosea where tis exprest how upon coming to do their wicked worship at Bethel & Gilgal they used to swear Iehovah liveth

Gen. 24.51,52. (2) . Gen 31.24, 29, 49, 50, 53. & 30.23, 24, 27 . Iudges 17.3,13. 18.5, 6. 2 King 17.

Genes 30 23 Abstulit Elohimi opprobrium meum elohim in ver 21 & 22 at Iehovah in vers 24 viz addat Iehova mihi alium filium. Item in vers 27 benedixit mihi Iehova propter te. & Gen {illeg}1.49 Iehovah sed in 50 est Elohimi testis inter me.

Iudges 17.2, 3 Iehovah bis viz benedictus fili mi Iehovah. & sanctificavi argentum Iehovæ. vers 13 Iehovah. ch 18.6 Ante Iehova via vestra

2 King 17.28 docens eos quomodo timerant Iehovah. vers 32 erant timentes Iehovah & fuerunt sacerdotes ver
33 Iehovam timentes & Idolis servientes. sic et vers 41.

Gilgal Bethel Bethaven Oes. 10.5. 1 Sam 16. Bethel = the House of God Beth-aven the house of iniquity.
Amos 4.4. & 5.5
