

CLASS 1 LESSON #2

THE QUINTESSENTIAL LESSON

by

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(This article first appeared in the 1990s as one of the six foundational principles laid out for the guidance of the Returning Ten Tribes at <http://www.uniteourheart.com>. It is still basically the same, with only a few references and clarifying words added. All quotations are from the KJV version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.)

The most important lesson to learn for Israel, God's firstborn, as well as for the rest of the nations, God's other children, is in the very first two statements God made on Mt. Sinai:

"I am God, your G-d, who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods beside me." (Ex. 20: 2-3)

These two commandments are perfect complements to each other. The first one is a statement; it tells who God is. Only by implication does it tell us to do something. As such it is a positive commandment. It implies that we are to listen to know and hold that truth as the main coordinate to orient us spiritually. The second one is a negative commandment; it prohibits something. It is the first one's perfect complement, commanding us to **NOT ADD** other gods. The word translated here as "beside," is sometimes rendered "before." In either case, the meaning of the Hebrew phrase "Elohim achreim al-panai" in which this word is found, means that no other gods shall be put before His face, in His presence. In other words God's exclusive station is not to be shared with anyone else. He does not share His Divine attribute, i.e. His glory and status with any other gods (Isa. 42:8. 49:26). The unique, Sovereign Creator God of the Universe declares there are no other gods of any sort. To learn this quintessential lesson of not substituting or adding other gods to the God of Israel was the end goal of the process of Redemption from Egypt:

"I shall take you to Me for a people, and I shall be a God to you; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt." (Ex. 6:7)

Moses later reiterated them in a single directive and underscored the formula that the Creator God who delivered them from Egypt, the place of a multitude of gods, and revealed himself at Mt. Sinai is the only God that there is and that Israel is His people with whom He has entered into a binding, non-cancellable, eternal Covenant:

*"You shall know this day and reflect in your heart, that it is the GOD who is God in the heavens above and on the earth, **there is none else.**" (Deut. 4:39)*

*"Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink; **that ye might know that I am the LORD your God..... Observe therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may make all that ye do to prosper.... Ye are standing this day all of you before the LORD your God: your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, even all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in the midst of thy camp, from the hewer of thy***

wood unto the drawer of thy water; that thou shouldest enter into the covenant of the LORD thy God--and into His oath--which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day; that He may establish thee this day unto Himself for a people, and that He may be unto thee a God, as He spoke unto thee, and as He swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

(Deut. 29:5, 8-12)

This stipulation of adhering to the singular God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was the major tenet of the Covenant's promise to receive and stay in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, (Ex. 6:4, 8). Because we have not adhered to this Covenant of Life and Peace, we have been cast out of the Land and sent into exile to learn this quintessential lesson of the singularity of God, and that Israel is His model nation with whom He has entered into a binding Covenant to teach the rest of the nations of world this very same lesson.

In the first two commandments God's original intention for mankind is laid out: to be directly aware and conscious of God's indivisible unity. However, the Israelites, being human, focused too much on the human Moses as a necessary *intermediary*. Instead of looking to and waiting on God directly, God's priesthood/servant people fell prey to the idea of a **substitute intermediary**, the Golden Calf. At the sin of the Golden Calf, Israel, the "chosen priesthood people of God" insisted on an *intermediary* between them and God. Like the nations around them, they made an **addition** to their belief in the God of Israel. This *addition* invited a host of other evils into their midst: the guiding and *inspiring* forces of spiritual evil. Like the idols of the nations, which represented other gods, the Golden Calf was not just a physical material object. It also possessed supernatural qualities of evil origins. Its "powers" came from the dark forces of *shedim* / demons. The teachings, doctrines and theologies, which accompany such idols, are empowered by *convincing, lying* spirits, e.g. I Kings 22:21-23, II Chron. 18:21-22. These powerful *persuaders* can easily seduce and delude with a counterfeit of God's guiding Spirit those who choose such devices and those who are not grounded, educated and focused in knowledge of the God of Israel. Moses warned of this grievous sin that Israel was to commit:

"They sacrificed unto demons, (שְׁלִימָם) no-gods, that they knew not, new gods that came up of late, which your fathers dreaded not."

(Deut. 32:17)

The severe consequences of the most grievous sin of the Golden Calf and its associated teachings caused that generation to wander in the wilderness for forty years till they all died out. In fact, the effects of this blatant and gross idolatry were so severe, that God in his mercy spread them out over Israel's entire subsequent history. They began Israel's history of cyclical episodes of turning to the gods of the nations, bringing on themselves great national suffering and then returning to the God of Israel. That history, now over 3400 years long, is for the learning the **quintessential lesson on this planet: "You shall have no other gods beside me."**

The point of this lesson is repeated many times in the Prophets where the past and future sufferings of Israel are enumerated. At the conclusion of the persecutions, sicknesses, plagues, wars, captivities calamities and devastations, the lesson learned is always the same.

Hosea, writing exclusively to the northern House of Israel, transmits God's message to Israel then and for all time:

*"Yet I am the God thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know **no god but me: for there is no savior beside me**" (Hos. 13:4)*

Hosea repeats the essence of the first two commandments to the Ten Tribes, and gives an explanatory clause: "**... for there is no savior beside me.**" This is a specific enlightening point from God, for He knew the Ten Tribes would justify their idolatry by the doctrine of an **additional god**, of whom they would think of as a "necessary intermediary" of God's grace.

Ezekiel was sent as a watchman unto the northern House of Israel. Himself being a captive in Babylon, over a hundred years after the northern Tribes were taken into captivity, Ezekiel writes to the House of Israel, (Ez.1: 1, 2:4, 3:1, 4). He was commissioned to warn in the latter days the House of Israel, a stubborn, stiff-necked, people who don't want to give up their idols, (Ez. 2:4, 3:11, 17). He told our forefathers then, and tells us now, their children, in a challenging take-it-or-leave-it way, **to repent of our idols**. He refers to personal idols in our hearts, be they dear time-honored theological ones or ingrained, often unconscious psychological ones of our own making. He tells us that our lives depend on this repentance, (Ez. 3:18-22, 6:7-13). Further, Ezekiel makes the cause and nature for survival clear. He describes God's decree that those who sigh and cry at the abominations around them be set apart for protection from the harsh punishments and wakeup calls to come, (Ez. 9:4-6,9).

*"Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel, **and ye shall know that I am the God.**" (Ez.11:10).*

The cycle is the same familiar one; the lesson is the same. Even Jethro who according to Jewish tradition has been around the block with several gods and their religions, had to admit in the end:

"Now I know that the God is greater than all the gods" (Ex. 18:11)

"Look and hear me, O God, my God! Lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death" (Psalm 13:4)

When David wrote these lines of song about "the sleep of death," he was not necessarily referring to physical death. This sleep of death is the "sleep" of not being conscious of God as His people ought to be, of not being connected to Him but being *cut off* soul communication-wise as His people. Moses warned us on the plains of Moab of the effects of idolatry:

*"But if your heart will stray and you will not listen, and you are led astray, and you prostrate yourself to strange gods, and serve them, I tell you today that **you will surely be lost...**" "I call heaven and earth to bear witness against you; I have placed life and death before you, blessing and curse..."*

(Deut. 30:17-19, ArtScroll Chumash)

The stubborn clinging of our fathers to their idols had brought God's curse on us: "My Spirit will reject you," (Lev. 26:30), and we have become *lo ammi / not my people*; we lost our identities as tribes of Israel, and our names were erased from our consciousness under heaven (Hos. 1:9, Deut. 29:19). God through Hosea impresses upon our conscious mind what happened to us, the Northern House of Israel:

"When Ephraim spoke, there was trembling; he exalted himself in Israel, but when he became guilty through the Baal, he died" (Hos.13:1).

This "sleep of death" is clearly evident in the allegory of the whole house of Israel coming out of their graves when God's animating, enlivening and enlightening Ruach / Spirit, blows upon them from the four directions of the compass:

*"Behold O my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come out of your graves and bring you into the land of Israel. And **you shall know that I am the LORD** when I have opened your graves, O my people, and have brought you up out of your graves, and I shall put my spirit in you and you shall live and I shall place you in your own land."* (Ez. 37:12-13)

This resurrection from spiritual death is to begin after "the appointed time of their sentence is finished," (Isa. 40:2). They are to be "ransomed" from the power of the grave, not by an additional savior, but by the God of Israel Himself, (Hos.13: 14). This awakening teaches **the quintessential lesson** to Israel, that it is **the God of Israel** that is **the God's and Savior**. This lesson is mentioned many times all throughout the Prophets. It was **the lesson** to be learned in the Torah, and it is **the lesson** implied at in the very first "utterance" of the Ten Commandments. It is the lesson to be acknowledged and thanked for as we awake and learn what specific words the Prophets prescribe for us to notice upon our awakening.

*"I am the God's and there is none else, **there is none else, there is no god beside me**; I girded thee, though thou has not known me. That they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the God's and **there is none else.**"* (Isa. 45:5-6)

It has always been Israel's great mistake to periodically suppose that there were additional gods to be acknowledged **besides** the God of Israel. In fact, it was Elijah's call and challenge to Israel: *How long will you hold between two opinions?* (1 Kings 18:21). The *opinions* here are the **mix of partially** holding on to the God of Israel, and ALSO holding on to the Baal, the god of the nations. David also addresses the issue of "foreign gods" as he leads all of Israel through his prophetic Psalms. He is exhorting the people of Joseph to do the most important repentance and acknowledgment today. Through the prophetic Psalm 81 he is recounting past failures and points out the quintessential lesson for the people of Joseph to learn today. It is no accident that the people of Israel as a whole, are affectionately referred to as *Joseph* in Psalm 81:5. Just as Joseph was beloved by his father Yaakov, with that appellation, God expresses his love for all Israel in a similar way. However, besides this poetic device, we are to note that Psalm 81 follows several Psalms, which directly address the northern House of Israel, (77, 78, 80). The hint here is that the admonishments and warnings, though applicable to all of Israel, are expressly tailored for the northern House of Israel, Ephraim. If we acknowledge and heed their tenets, especially the one about *strange gods*, they will serve to unify the people of

Joseph, who are splintered into factions and fight among themselves about the theologies of strange additional gods. We need to [literally] live by the adage: "**Only prayer, Torah and repentance will unify the Tribes of Israel.**" In the last days the descendants of Joseph and the rest of the Ten Tribes are reminded with a strong warning about **the quintessential lesson** of Israel:

"Hear my people and I will testify against thee, Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me: there shall be no strange god among thee, nor shalt thou worship any foreign deity. I am the GOD'S thy God who brought thee out of the land of Mitzrayim/Egypt." (Psalm 81:9-11)

Isaiah speaks to us, to the people who were to live at the extremities and **isles** of the earth in the latter days; he identifies us by the relevant issue we are to discuss in our gatherings:

"Assemble and come, draw near together, ye that are escaped out of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye and bring them near, ye let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the God's? And there is no God else besides me, a just God and a Savior, there is none beside me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no one else." (Isa. 45:20-22)

The issue is clear, the message is clear, the target of the lesson is clear, the lesson is clear. In the latter days we, the returnees of the Ten Tribes from the congregation of the dead are to consider and research it, (Jer. 23:20, 30:24). We all have to come out of the "Babylon [confusion] of gods" of the nations and return to the God of our fathers, (Isa. 48:20). This lesson was prophesied to be especially relevant and brought to our minds by the prophets who wrote to **us, the children's children living in the latter days:**

"And the God's shall scatter you among the nations.... And there you shall serve other gods... but if from there thou shalt seek the God thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and all your soul. When thou art in distress, and all these things come upon you, in the latter days, if thou turn to the God thy God, and art obedient to His voice; (for the God thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, nor will he destroy thee, nor forget the Covenant of thy fathers which he swore to them." (Deut. 4:27-31)

We the people of Joseph and his companions, who comprise the "unfaithful wife," will learn the same lesson we should have learned when we left Egypt. After our sentence of exile is served, we are prophesied to reaccept that Covenant again. We will have to live up again to its special provision of not having other gods and not applying the names and powers of other gods to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Their names will not be remembered any more.

"And it shall be at that day saith the GOD'S, that you shall call me Ishi /my husband, and shall call me no more Baali/my master, for I will take away the names of Baalim out her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.... and I will betroth thee unto me forever; yeah I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies, and I

will even betroth the unto me in faithfulness, and thou shall know that I am the GOD'S." (Hos. 2:16-17, 19-20).

Like our mother Rachel did, who had come from the idolatrous house of Laban, we too have to bury the local gods of the nations that we are holding on to and by whom we have been held spiritually captive. Indeed like Rachel was, we also have been born into the religions of other gods. We have to learn the lesson that there are **no compromises with, and no additions or intermediaries** to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The quintessential lesson is: "**there are no other gods and saviors besides Him.**" Our fathers are reaching out to us, because God loved our fathers, (Deut. 4:37). In the latter days, Yaakov is leading again his household to Beit El, the House of God. He admonishes us: "**put away the strange gods that are among you and be clean and change your garments.**" He tells us to get rid of the gods and saviors of the gentiles that we have adopted and added to the God of Israel, and to "come clean," become purified and uncontaminated, i.e. do collective and individual repentance as we come close to God.

The time will come for many, and is upon us even now, when "*Ephraim shall say: What have I to do any more with idols?*" (Hos.14:9). After our graduation day, after the hard quintessential lesson will have been learned by God's witness and servant people Israel, then the rest of the nations will see that God has taught His firstborn, as He promised:

"You are my witnesses, saith the God's, and my servant whom I have chosen; that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he, before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I am the God's, and beside me there is no Savior." (Isa. 43:10-12, 44:8, 45:21)

Then the rest of the nations will fall in line, and send their representatives to Jerusalem to worship, (Isa. 2:2-3). When the great quintessential lesson will have been learned by most, the Golden Age of the world, the Great Shabbat will dawn:

"The earth will be full of the knowledge of God like the waters cover the seas."
(Isa. 11:9)

"And it is said: The GOD'S shall be king over all the earth; on that day the GOD'S shall be one and his name one." (Zech. 14:9)

...We hope therefore, God our God, soon to behold thy majestic glory, when the abominations shall be removed from the earth and the false gods exterminated; when the world shall be perfected under the reign of the Almighty, and all mankind will call upon thy name, and all the wicked of the earth will be turned to thee. May all the inhabitants of the earth realize and know that to thee every knee must bend, every tongue must vow allegiance. May they bend the knee and prostrate themselves before thee, God our God, and give honor to thy glorious name; may they all accept the yoke of thy kingdom, and do thou reign over them speedily for ever and ever. For the kingdom is thine, and to all eternity thou wilt reign in glory, as it is written in thy Torah: "The God shall be King for ever and ever." And it is said: "The God shall be King over all the earth; on that day the God shall be One and his name One."

— From the Aleynu Prayer

Suggestion:

If you doubt the above points about the indivisibility of God and the "quintessential lesson" for all Israel to learn, ask the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to reveal to you where you need to be on this issue. Ask Him to give you ears to hear with and eyes to see with. Let us know the answer.



How to study and retain the contents of this lesson:

Thank God for this lesson and ask for yourself and all others concerned for His help in this mission.

Study with a buddy or small group.

Go to the **study page** of this lesson, print out the page and say aloud the questions and answers and write down the answers to the questions from memory without looking at this lesson.

Review this lesson and correct your answers. Mark the references in your Bible.

Have someone to ask you the questions and tell him/her the correct answers.

Practice till you know all the answers of this lesson by heart. You will need to know all of them to act accordingly, and to give them to others who will be sent to you and to whom you will be sent.

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