

By Holly Effiom

Introduction

Yesterday, I asked God, “What do You want me to make known in this writing?” And His reply was, “Show them Numbers 27. Anything used to try to *subjugate*, or anyone attempting to *subjugate* anyone, is *not of Me!*”

Zelophehad was a descendent of Joseph through Manasseh. He had only daughters when he died in the wilderness. The daughters' names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

When the time came for the children of Israel to take possession of the Promised Land, and the land was being apportioned by lot among the *sons* of Israel (for the community was patriarchal), the daughters of Zelophehad made a complaint, “‘Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father.’ And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.” Num 27:4-5

God *knows* that I *love* this story! Being one of 6 daughters by my father's first wife. I've been wanting to write about these women for years, now. Just imagine the courage it took for these women to stand before the whole congregation, and *Moses* himself, and say, “Hey, hey, *hey*... What about *our rights*?” And *think*, What would've happened to women among the children of Israel if they *hadn't* made that stand, if they *hadn't* spoken up?

But *most* importantly, the issue of *women's rights* was plainly placed before God Almighty, and He answered, “The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shall surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren...” Num 27:7-9

If those courageous daughters *hadn't* spoken up, we might not *have* this wonderful section of scripture which tells us *God's* heart toward His daughters, and their *rights... as women!* According to God's righteousness, just as the daughters of Zelophehad were entitled to a portion among the children of Israel, so, too *indeed*, are women entitled to an *inheritance* among the children of Adam.

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Making Vows

There are so many funny stories in the Bible, and one of the funniest is the story of Joshua and the Gibeonites.

As Joshua led the children of Israel into the Promised Land, all the nations of the surrounding areas heard about the miracles in Egypt, and the battles at Jericho and Ai, and coordinated a confederacy among the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites to prepare to fight them. But the Gibeonites took a *different* approach.

The Gibeonites sent “ambassadors” that appeared to have been traveling a *long* distance for a *long* time, carrying old sacks filled with old, well-worn wine skins on their donkeys, their clothing, old, torn and patched; their shoes, travel-worn, old and dirty; and among their provisions, the bread was dry and moldy. These “ambassadors” told Joshua, “...we are thy servants.’ And Joshua said unto them, ‘Who are you? And from whence come ye?’

“And they said unto him, ‘From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the Lord thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan,’ which was at Ashtaroth. ‘Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go and meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us...” (Joshua 9:8-11)

The ambassadors went on to explain that their bread had been taken *hot* from the oven for their travel provisions, the wine was new when they set out on their journey, and that their clothing had become old and dirty from the long travel. Joshua and his men took these ambassadors at their word and made peace with them, without seeking counsel from Almighty God, Who was *among* them.¹

Three days after the peace treaty, Joshua discovered that Gibeon was *actually* a great, royal city among the Hivites, larger than Ai (Joshua 10:2), and to add insult to injury, they *lived* right next door... not in a land

¹ Joshua 9:12-15

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far, far, away! "...Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD..." (Josh 9:27)

Many, many years later, under the reign of king David, there was a famine in the land for 3 years, and David asked the LORD about the reason for the famine, and he received the answer, "...It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." 2 Samuel 21:1. Saul violated the children of Israel's vow to the Gibeonites.

The story of the Gibeonites is filled with object lessons on many levels, but *most* importantly, we get the lesson regarding God's view of honoring one's vow – He takes it seriously, such that God *defined* a Law of Vows in Numbers 30.

Moses handed down God's determination on the rights of His daughters among the children of Israel in Numbers 27. What do you want to bet that that was *not* the end of the discussion? Money would be lost by the one who wagered that men would bow to the Almighty's pronouncement (Ezekiel 3:5-6). Promptly in Numbers 36, the children of Gilead (a son of Manasseh) were back, wanting to *constrain* the rights of women so the men would not lose any of their family's possession to another tribe, now, nor at Jubilee.

The propensity to subjugate is not of God, because it runs *counter* to justice or righteousness, of which God is king. So strong is His sense of justice that He has given the example of how He even punished his "chosen" ones because they had violated their *vow* to a people who had *gained* that vow through *trickery!*

That is how seriously God takes our vows.

Subjugation

Revelation 12 gives a "backstory" on the origin of the attempts at subjugation that we are witnessing in the world today.

There is the woman with a crown of twelve stars (Revelation 12:1) and a red dragon with 7 heads and a crown on each and 10 horns (Revelation 12:3). The dragon sought to corner the woman at a vulnerable time in her life, she was about to give birth to a child who would rule, both the heavens and the earth. The dragon's goal was to destroy this Son of Adam, but he failed because the child's Father brought Him up to

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the safety of God's own throne in heaven. This is the Story of Jesus, and when you *think* on it, this story teaches us that the woman (Adam) is *able* to birth his own *salvation*, his own *redemption*, through children (1 Timothy 2:15).

[ASIDE: Recall, God's deep sense of justice is further exemplified by His act of obtaining *permission* from Mary prior to impregnating her (Luke 1:38). God holds *women*, who are *also* Adam, in very high esteem.]

And what of the red dragon, does *he* have this ability to save himself? No. Furthermore, he gave up his position and authority in his act of rebellion, igniting a war in heaven which he also loses, to be cast into the earth over which he ruled, but *only* for a time. Remember, the Son of Adam is the inheritor (the *ruler*) of the heavens *and* the earth.

So, the dragon is cast into the earth and must find a way to survive as a *ruler* in a domain that doesn't even belong to him – it *belongs* to Adam. How does he do this? With smoke and mirrors. All the while he is *filled* with great wrath against the woman because *she* still has her crown (her power, her position, her authority) – maybe *listing to port*, but it is *still on her head!* His own – his 7 heads with crowns and 10 horns (power, position, and authority) – he confers on the final beast from out of the sea in Revelation 13:2.

The dragon's anger against the woman put him at war with her and the remnant of her seed – those who keep the commandments (the children of Israel; Isaiah 43:10-12; 44:8) and those who have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Christians; Acts 1:8; 13:31), the two witnesses placed in the earth, who stand beside the Lord of all the earth (Zech 4:2-3,14). Revelation 11:3; 12:17.

The Existential Battle

The Bible tells us the story about Noah's family after the flood. At the time of the telling, he had three sons: Japheth, Ham, and Shem; and Ham had a son named Canaan.²

² Genesis 9:20-29

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After the trauma of witnessing the entire earth being inundated with water, and the lives – people, animal, plant – that were destroyed, and the desolation of all that had been built by men, Noah returned to farming, and he specialized in grapes, becoming quite a vintner.

One day Noah, who was in his *own house*, enjoying the work of his own hands, imbibed a bit too much and passed out naked. Remember, he was *in his own house*. Well, his youngest son, the first born of Ham, had gone into his father's house and saw him passed out drunk, and promptly went and *published* this information to all and sundry – he *disrespected* the *leadership* or *headship* of his father. Well, Shem and Japheth, went into their father's home and covered his nakedness in that vulnerable moment, without looking themselves – they *respected* Noah's position as *head* of the family.

When Noah awoke later, he knew what Canaan had done, he prophesied regarding the leadership or headship of his sons. And he cursed his grandson, condemning him to servitude to his brothers³. And, he spoke blessings over Shem and Japheth, particularly in this moment, that "...God shall enlarge Japheth..." Gen 9:27. Japheth AKA the Gentiles (Gen 10:6).

Noah prophesied about the leadership/headship of each of his sons, and Noah, says that Japheth's leadership should be enlarged, in comparison with Ham and Shem. So, with regard to time, if Ham has a zenith of dominion and Shem another, Japheth's zenith will be longer and greater, i.e., "enlarged".

In Daniel 2:28-46 God had given Nebuchadnezzar a dream, introducing the reader to the beginning of the rule of the Gentiles – king Nebuchadnezzar, the conqueror of the kingdom of Jerusalem, brought the time of the Semites or children of Shem to a close and that of the children of Ham (Ezekiel 30:20-26).

Daniel 2:36-45, in particular, informs the reader that the time of the Gentiles, though longer than the other powers, will also come to a close just *like* the prior powers, in calamity. But this time, the calamity will usher in the eternal rule of God's kingdom under Jesus Christ, the Son of Adam (Son of man).

In Daniel 7:1-28, the *same* vision is given to Daniel directly, using the example of creatures formed from the earth on the sixth day. Daniel lived to see just the rise of the second beast from out of the sea.

³ Canaan disrespected his grandfather's leadership and he, therefore, would be *bereft* of a time of leadership.

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Ezekiel 30 continues on, providing an “on-the-ground” look at what’s going to take place in the last days, through Armageddon and beyond, while living in the very *belly* of the first beast.

Jesus, in Matthew 24:15-31, confirms the theme and prophecy of Daniel, that there would be tribulation and disappointment and cruelty in men’s behavior at the end, but that He is coming for His own, and will put things right. Jesus walked the earth during the time of the fourth beast from out of the sea. Daniel couldn’t *imagine* an animal that adequately described the characteristics of *this* beast.

The apostle John, with his visions in Revelation, having spent his life in the belly of the fourth beast, is able to bear witness to Daniel’s visions, because he was living just past the halfway point of Gentile world domination.

Yes, these books and scriptures of the Bible have been read and studied, and there are probably *plenty* of others that are not mentioned here. But my question is, *where* in any of these verses, or anywhere in the scriptures, for that matter, does it say the Gentiles will remain in power forever? *Where* does it say that the sons of Shem, or even *Ham*, will replace the Gentiles?

There are “Christians” fighting their brothers as if their battle is existential. *Existential for whom? Why* are you fighting a battle that is *NOT* yours? Recall the story of how king Josiah died, fighting a battle that wasn’t even his own. 2 Kings 23:28-30.

Broken Vow, Broken Law

The law of vows lays down the way vows were to be honored in a patriarchal society to ensure that a person’s word, man or woman, was their bond, for all participants in the relationship, which is the point of the vow, to keep the peace in a relationship. If two people can come together on the *ground rules*, then you can trust and respect one another, because you are both operating from the same set of rules, one law. And then you can build something together – in the case of individuals, this can be a marriage (or family) or a business, etc.

In community, those vows or *ground rules* are the law. The law is based upon a fundamental trust and respect between a community’s leadership and the people being led, to keep the peace in a relationship.

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And then, upon *that* foundation, a community of families, can become a nation, a world power, etc. The sky is the limit. Perhaps, *politics* might be viewed as a *communication tool* for the relationship.

What happens when the vow is broken? Trust and respect are broken, and where does this leave the relationship? Can there be agreement, or *anything* be built, on *this* foundation? And, what about that which has already been established, prior to the break, can it continue to stand? How can there be *peace* in a relationship when the word of a principal to the agreement cannot be *trusted*?

So now, consider the ways in which the Supreme Court of the United States – arbiter of “...equal justice under the law...” – has broken its vow to the people of the United States, in fact, the *world*, as this nation is a world power (the *final* Gentile world power, Revelation 17:11):

- Over-throwing the right to vote (and having that vote count) for only *certain* children of Adam, in a *supposed* democracy.
- Over-throwing the right to bodily autonomy only for *female* children of Adam specifically, *citizens* of the *supposed* democracy.
- Over-throwing the *vow* to make whole a people harmed by the nation’s systemic *injustices*, through Affirmative Action policies.

All of these are *acts of subjugation* and cannot claim the mantle of being *of God*.

Interestingly, the “Enuma Elish” creation epic tells the story of Akkadian gods who “created” men with the intent of making them perpetual servants of said gods, in order to put them “...at ease...”⁴. Why anyone would *prefer* this origin story to that of the Bible is a *complete mystery!*

Imagine that! Someone of power, position, and authority telling Adam, “I created *you* (and *your children*) to serve *me*, and make *my* life easier... *forever*.” Does this sound *familiar*?

Juxtapose *that* against the Bible, which describes the creation of Adam as being awesome and done with the utmost *respect* (Psalms 139:14-17), to the *intent* that Adam would hold dominion over *himself and his house and his future... forever*.

⁴ *The Ancient Near East, An Anthology of Texts & Pictures*, “Enuma Elish”, Tablet VI, lines 1-10, and 32-40, PP33-34.

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Conclusion

The Bible speaks of two witnesses, two olive trees (anointed ones), standing beside the Lord of the whole earth (Zechariah 4:14). Revelation 11:3 explains the work of these two witnesses, and *when* the Christian witness will be killed by satan – 1,260 days from the establishment of the abomination of desolation. That of the Children of Israel, 1,290 days according to Daniel 12:11.

I began counting the days after witnessing the first acquittal to the impeachment of the 45th US President – the leader had broken a law and the people, including Christians, *affirmed* him. On day 1,242 of the count, the US Supreme Court *broke a vow* to those the nation's systemic injustices have harmed. On day 1,267 of the count, the Israeli Prime Minister moved to undermine the power of the Israeli Supreme Court. *Both* of these are acts of *subjugation* of a kind, in each respective nation. Consider the *enormity* of these acts, in light of what is *known* about God's perspective from scripture.

The leadership of the two witnesses who go by God's name, i.e., associate themselves with the God of the Bible (Genesis 32:28 and Acts 11:26), have been *corrupted*, such that they, like the world, *also* take action to subjugate their own brothers and sisters.

Deuteronomy 5:22-33 tells the story of the children of Israel *choosing* a unitary system of governance over *self*-governance, which led to the establishment of a priesthood system, *because* the leaders among the children of Israel *knew* that their hearts were not right. And God lamented, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" Deuteronomy 5:29

The leaders of the wealthiest, most educated, most free, most powerful nation on the face of the earth and those who have enjoyed the blessing of the *freedom* of a relationship with God Almighty, are doing it again! They are choosing to set up a shepherd with clay feet, instead of trusting God Almighty, and accepting the responsibility of carrying the burden of leadership upon their *own* shoulders!

Why anyone would *choose* authoritarianism over the *freedom* God offers is *still* a mystery to me!

Thank God Almighty, His children will not be subjected to the whims of corrupt shepherds any longer. God *Himself* is acting for *His* names' sake because His *witnesses* are not.

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I don't know if anyone else feels as I do, but I have been very *angry* as I have watched the *church* that I attended and served for more than 20 years fall under the spell of one who is all things *antithetical* to the truth of Christ; and, for *no one* at the governing-level of the church to speak out, unequivocally, and say, *THIS IS NOT RIGHT! THIS IS NOT CHRIST!*

In the midst of all my anger, God reminded me, If Jesus, in *all* His glory, was willing to condescend to directly interact with, suffer, and *die* for His church, surely I, in *all* my self-righteous anger, should be willing to at least *fight* for His church!

God loves us, church, and His hand is stretched out toward us *still*, calling us to *choose life!*

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