

THE WORLD'S BIBLE #1

By Keith Greer

“MUST WE BE DIFFERENT?”

It has become painfully evident to me, that we have not learned very much from the children of Israel. As we study the history of the nation of Israel, one overwhelming point keeps coming up, they wanted to be like "those round about them".

In 1 Samuel 8:5, we can read where the elders of Israel went to Samuel and said, "... now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." God warned them where a king would lead them. He had warned them that they would forget about Him, but they didn't believe it. (Deuteronomy 6:11-14). They wanted to be like "those round about them".

We can follow the children of Israel down the path of history through the period when they first came out of Egypt, the settlement in Canaan, the judges, the first kings and then into the divided kingdom. Time and again they rejected the wisdom and counsel of God in order to be like the nations around them.

When the children of Israel were in Egypt, their lives were "bitter with hard bondage". God delivered them from that bondage. He told them, through Moses, that "... I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself". (Exodus 19:4) God promised to take care of them, and deliver them from their enemies - IF THEY OBEYED HIM AND FOLLOWED HIS COMMANDMENTS!

Of course, we know what happened. By the reign of Manasseh, we can read that the children of Israel "... hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel." (2 Kings 21:9)

The children of Israel were God's people. They were to be separate for Him. How had this happened that they had become so wicked and disobedient to God? THEY WANTED TO BE JUST LIKE "ONE OF THE CROWD".

As Christians, we are God's people today. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, ..." (2 Corinthians 6: 17) "... Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:" (1Peter 2:9)

Today, I am perplexed and saddened at what I find many of God's children trying to justify and practice. It is becoming more and more difficult to see any difference between some of my "brethren" and those in the "world". How can we "win the world for Christ" when we think, speak, act, and have the same priority in our lives that those in the world do?

Why do I believe this to be true? Here are just a few examples: Some of my brethren want to justify "social drinking." Others believe they can go to dances, nightclubs,

public water parks, and other worldly places and still maintain their relationship with Christ. Some even tell me they play the lottery and gamble as long as they do it in MODERATION! What does all this say to the world? Guess we have succumbed to the old saying, "if you can't beat them join them!"

We are told to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' (Matthew 5:16) Never has there been a time that God desired His people to be "just like everyone else." God's people have different marching orders, different aims and different purposes for living. How many people are willing to sit down with us and open the Bible to study? Could it be the world sees no need to do so—since we're just like them? ***