

## At A Cross Road

### Introduction

1. The children of Israel found themselves in a unique situation.
  - a. The path ahead of them would be difficult to travel, but it would be rewarding.
  - b. The path traveled by the heathen nations was the path of least resistance, and it also appeared to be rewarding.
2. Though God showed Israel His Power (Deuteronomy 4:35), they had difficulty accepting His Greatness
3. Old Israel was at a cross road just as spiritual Israel, the church, is at a cross road.

### I. What they saw

- A. Deuteronomy 4:3, 4 show that Israel took note of the gods of the surrounding lands.
  1. Deuteronomy 5:6-9 (a repeat of Exodus 20:2-7) warns against their following such idols.
  2. Jehovah's instructions called for the removal of the heathen and their gods (Numbers 33:55; Deuteronomy 4:38). Deuteronomy 9:3 even states that this was to be performed "quickly." Spiritual contamination was to be avoided.
  3. 1 Samuel 8:5, 20 reveal that Israel was a watcher of the affairs of the heathen nations.
- B. As they beheld the nations around them, they saw the success (as well as punishment) of the heathen.
  1. Much of what the heathen did must have seemed to be *working for them*.
  2. There is a way that seems right.
    - a. Proverbs 12:15 teaches the way of the fool is right in his own eyes.
    - b. The way that seems right often ends in death (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).
    - c. Proverbs 21:2 teaches that every way of man is right in his own eyes.

### II. What we see

- A. We are bombarded with (apparent) scenes of the success and prosperity of the world.
  1. How many young would say that their role model is a church member rather than an athlete or musician.
  2. If asked to identify a wealthy person, a powerful person, and/or a famous person, we could do so by looking to the world.

- B. We are bombarded with (apparent) scenes of denominational success and prosperity.
  - 1. Denominational churches boast memberships that run in the thousands.
  - 2. A man said to me, "Our church is small, but we have **a lot of money.**"
  - 3. Fancy buildings, large membership rolls, and a swelling bank account are counted as success among the churches of men, but that is not *real* success.
- C. We further see (apparent) lack of success in sound congregations.
  - 1. Many feel that sound congregations are dying.
  - 2. Numerous sound Gospel preachers are out of work.

### III. What they were told

- A. They were told to guard themselves (Deuteronomy 4:9, 15, 23, 40). They were also told that compromise is corrupting (Deuteronomy 4:16).
- B. What might the children of Israel have been told by the surrounding nations?
  - 1. They might have been mocked in a fashion akin to mockery experienced by Noah (2 Peter 2:5).
  - 2. Might they have been criticized like Paul was criticized (1 Corinthians 1, 2)?
  - 3. Do you think the children of Israel might have had to explain why they were so much different from the other nations?
  - 4. What kind of jokes might have been made about them?

### IV. What we are told

- A. We are told to guard ourselves.
  - 1. The armor of God serves a purpose (Ephesians 6:13-17).
  - 2. We must make a constant examination of our lives (2 Corinthians 13:5).
- B. What are we being told by surrounding denominations and their sympathizers?
  - 1. We are told that the church is dying, and that we must change.
  - 2. We are told that the Lord's Way will not work.
    - a. They say the Lord's teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage will not work.
    - b. They say that church discipline will not work.
    - c. People are negative about negative preaching.
    - d. We are being told that we are too small to make a difference.
- C. Regardless of what the world may be telling us, the Lord's Message is the same (Revelation 2:10). What He says matters most!