**“KISSING UP TO GOD!”**

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**INTRO. A.** Story from Mexico somebody translated for me. There had been no rain, farmer and his family were going to starve. Wrote a letter to God—Dear God, You’ve sent us no rain. We have no food, no money. We need 100 pesos to get us through to the next harvest.” Took it to the post office. Postmaster got it, what are you supposed to do with a letter to God? Opened it up, read the letter, thought maybe he could help God out a little. Collected money from everybody who worked there, 70 pesos, put it in an envelope, put it in the farmer’s box. Farmer came in, opened letter. Asked the postmaster for a sheet of paper. Another letter to God. “Thank you for the 70 pesos. But we still need the other 30. **But this time don’t send it through the post office—they’re all a bunch of thieves!”** It’s the main lie Satan has been telling for thousands of years—that God is good, but He is not totally good. If you want Him to do more, to forgive ALL your sins, to answer more prayers, bless you more—**you have to do something for Him**. And of course the ultimate thing is—the Cross. When He asks us, “Why should I let you into My heaven?”—we point to the Cross. Do it because of the Cross.

B. **THAILAND—**we were on a boat in Thailand—storm came up, not sure we would make it, one of the doctors shouted out she would give God $1000 if He would save us. We made it, she had to give it. **JEWS**, WWII, came over from Poland, but her parents still over there. Scared to death what Hitler might do, so she made sure her kids, everybody kept all the Jewish rules perfectly—scared to death if they broke any laws God wouldn’t protect her parents. End of the war they got the news—150 of her family had died in the camps. God didn’t do anything—maybe they hadn’t done good enough.

C. **HILDA--**30 years ago—we’d been married a few weeks—when I committed my first sin! Ice in the house. I finally couldn’t stand it any longer, apologized--but just to make sure—got some **Baskin Robbins ice cream and some flowers!** **KOBE—**did a sin against his wife—had to buy her a $4 million ring to get out of the dog house! His sin was a little bigger than mine! **When TIGER WOODS** messed up, he said—“**I’m going to have to get me one of those KOBE rings!” VIETNAM—**you all know where I went to preach back in March. Don’t want to give the country. 1 week before we left, still no permit to preach! They finally had to pay some money. Sometimes they have to buy them a sound system, or some other gift.

D. **IS GOD LIKE THAT? MANILA--**church, they go in the door, get on their knees, go 200 feet to the altar, all on their knees, say a prayer with each step. **BUDDHISM—if you sin,** get up at 5, feed the priests. **SINGAPORE,** put spears through their skin. **INDIA,** want a baby, go lie face down in front of the little god, give them flowers and candles and money—and hope that the gods will change their minds and let you have a baby. **Kids call it KISSING UP**--**DO YOU HAVE TO KISS UP TO GOD, to be forgiven, to get GOD to bless you?**

**I. JEPTHAH: JUDGES 11.** A. Jephthah is a judge in Israel. Israel’s in trouble again. worshiping idols again, sleeping around again, sacrificing children again. Then God has to come in, punish them, wake them up. This time he’s using the Ammonites. They’re desperate, need a leader, think of Jephthah.

B. **JUDGES 11:1 “Jephthah was a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead, his mother was a prostitute.”** His brothers hated him: “Get out of here! Not one of us. Your mother’s a whore.” He has to go live in the jungle, He’s a warrior. Israel has enemies all around them, now they need him.

C. But just before he goes into battle--**JUDGES 11:30 “Jephthah made a vow to the LORD: ‘If you give the Ammonites into my hands,’” JUDGES 11:31 “‘Whatever comes out of the door first out of my house to meet me when I return in triumph, I will sacrifice as a burnt offering.’”** He’s asking God to bless him. But he’s not sure God will really do it—unless he offers some sacrifice to God.

D. God gives them a great victory, comes back, and the first thing that comes out of his door is his daughter dancing with a tambourine. His only child. Remembers his vow. She comes dancing up to him, throws her arms around him. And he has to tell her about his vow. She goes away for 2 months with her girlfriends, crying, never going to be married, never going to have children, her father’s family stops with her. But **JUDGES 11:39 “She returned to her father, and he did to her as he had vowed.”** Terrible.

E. It’s one of the worst stories in the Bible. He knew better. No human sacrifices. Countries around them doing it. They found one place, 200 babies buried. **MOLECH.**

J\*\*ephthah’s religion is a **MIX—some from God, some from the pagan culture around him. What about you—is your religion pure, or do you have a MIX—some God, some from the world?**

F. His picture of God is too small. Not sure God is really going to be totally on his side. Doubts God’s love and goodness. So he has to make a deal with God, **do something**, to change God, kiss up to God..

E. We think we have to do something to **WIN GOD OVER. WORKS**–We don’t think Jesus, Cross, grace enough—have to add some works from us. **PRAYER--**not sure about God, get more people to pray, somehow talk God into it. The **CROSS**–God won’t forgive us unless He gets some blood. No No. No.

**God is a reluctant God, we have to do something to persuade Him, convince Him, motivate Him, pacify Him, fire Him up, wake Him up, do more, we’re OK, let us in.**

**F.**  Implies that God can be better than He already is. Cannot be right. God is perfect. Nothing you can do to make Him love you more than He already does. He cannot work harder than He already is. **You** can be better. **I** can be better. **But God cannot get better!**

**\*\*\*You don’t need to offer Him anything, no vows, no deals, no sacrifices, no works, to persuade Him to put you on His List. You’re already there!!**

**II. PSALM 51: RIGHTEOUS SACRIFICES. A. PSALM 51**–David commits murder and adultery. The prophet comes, says, “Thou art the man.” David repents, writes **PSALM 51:1 “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love.” PSALM 51:7 “Wash me, I will be whiter than snow.” All grace.**

**B. PSALM. 51:16 “You would not be pleased with sacrifices, or I would bring them.”** David’s got it. All other religions, gods get mad—have to offer sacrifices. Not God.

**C.** So what does God want? **PSALM 51:17** **“A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”** He wants us to admit, we have nothing from our side. Empty hands. All Jesus. **REVELATION 22:13 “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega.’” It’s all God.**

D. **THEN he says: PSALM 51:19 “Then you will be pleased with righteous sacrifices.”** If you do good in order to try Kiss up to God, win Him over--**UNRIGHTEOUS SACRIFICES. He doesn’t want it!**

**E. Does God want you to believe in the Cross? Yes. \*\*\*\*The Cross was not to win God over to you. The Cross was to win you over to God!**

**1. Does God want you to keep the Commandments? Yes. But not to win God over. Does God want you to go to church, give tithes and offerings, pray. YES. But not to change God!**

**If you do it to kiss up to God, UNRIGHTEOUS SACRIFICES.**

**IF YOU DO IT *AFTER* the Cross—righteous sacrifices.**

**III. REV. 17, THE PROSTITUE.** A. Now jump down to the end of the Bible and the end of the world. When God wants to talk about the false church at the end of the world—He chooses a PROSTITUTE. **REVELATION 17:1 “Come, I will show you the great prostitute. All the earth was drunk with the wine of her adultery.”** We did the Alaska cruise—every city had a RED LIGHT district. One street was called “Married Man Trail,” where men would sneak up to these houses. Amsterdam, we parked by a church, walked down the street, here these girls are standing in windows, waiting for someone to come in, pay them for love. What is at the heart of prostitution? **You can’t get anybody to love you just for you—you have to pay them.**

B. Is that where we’re at with God? We can’t get God to love us, to forgive us, just for us—we have to pay God, we have to kiss up to God, Two things wrong with it—(1) **Terrible picture of God. Cheapens the Cross. The Cross is how we have to pay God off. Makes God into a reluctant God.**

**C. But (2) CHEAPENS YOU! That somehow we’re not worth it on our own. I read a story about a BLIND MAN,** felt he had to go to a prostitute to get any love. Young man said—“No you don’t. You’re terrific. There’s somebody out there who will love you just for you, you don’t have to pay them.” **God loves you just for you.**

D. We think the Beast at the end of the world is this big bad Church, and as long as you’re in the **RIGHT CHURCH**, worship on the right day, can’t be a part of that. No, any time you doubt whether God loves you enough to just forgive—you’re part of Rev. 17. Any time you think you have to do something to win God over, part of Rev. 17. Any time you aren’t sure you’re saved or forgiven, part of Rev. 17. Be careful!

**CLOSE: (VIETNAM)** One of the countries I go to, We have to go meet with the government. The mission president has books to give them. Hands them envelopes with money. It’s just what you have to do. If you want to build a new church—money. If you want to build a big building—maybe $25,000. You don’t get any answer for a few months—that’s the problem—waiting for you to pay them something. In Thailand, I was at a bank, I’m like 7 years old, little spirit house out in front—flowers, I reached, pulled on one of the flowers—people came running out of the bank—I was messing with their offerings to the gods. I was in Vietnam, in a Chinese temple, lady offered to show me how to do the incense. So I tried to light the incense—wouldn’t work—had it upside down! God won’t answer, until I light the incense right! **No, you don’t have to kiss up to God. God is not a reluctant God. God is always YES!**