

YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER gods BESIDES ME

Exodus 20:22-23

How many gods do you worship? Is this an insulting question? Read this and then answer.

Israel, God's chosen people, was in bondage in Egypt for four hundred years due to a change in the Egyptian Dynasty. The Dynasty that had favored the Israelites was overcome by another dynasty. This king made slaves of the Israelites and oppressed them greatly. The Israelites cried out to God for deliverance from the cruel oppression the king had put them under. God heard their cries and chose Moses to lead them out of their captivity. Pharaoh resisted and God brought ten plagues on Pharaoh and the Egyptians. These plagues were so directed that the Egyptians and the Israelites witnessed both the power and miracles of the One True God – The God of heaven. These plagues were to show all peoples, including the Israelites, that the God of the Israelites was supreme over all so called gods. They were to be a constant reminder to the Israelites that, if they trusted and obeyed God, He would help them in achieving His desired purpose for them. Not only was He able to deliver them from physical harm but He was able to deliver them from spiritual death brought on by sin (**Ezekiel 18:4, 20**).

After asking Pharaoh to release Israel and Pharaoh's refusal to let the people go, God brought ten plagues of enormous magnitude upon the Egyptians.

The first plague was when God turned the water of the Nile into blood (**Exodus 7:14-25**). God told Moses to go to the bank of the Nile and when Pharaoh came to the river tell him why he was performing this miracle – so that Pharaoh would know that God is Lord. God told Moses to take his staff (the one that become a serpent when Moses first came to Pharaoh), strike the waters of the Nile and it will turn into blood, the fish will die and the Nile will become foul making it difficult for the Egyptians to drink its water. God also instructed Moses to have Aaron lift his staff and turn the other waterways and even the water that had already been drawn up and put into containers into blood.

Pharaoh's magicians did the same with their secret arts and so Pharaoh was not impressed by what Moses and Aaron had done.

The second plague was a plague of frogs (**Exodus 8:1-15**). In **Exodus 8:1-6 (NASB95)** it is recorded, "Then the LORD said to Moses", "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, Thus says the LORD, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. But if you refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite your whole territory with frogs. The Nile will swarm with frogs, which will come up and go into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed, and into the houses of your servants and on your people, and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls (bowls used in the making of bread). So the frogs will come up on you and your people and all your servants." Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the streams and over the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.'" So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

Again, Pharaoh's magicians brought up frogs onto the land and again Pharaoh hardened his heart. He did, however, request that the frogs be removed and God had Moses to remove them. Why, you might ask, didn't Pharaoh have his magicians remove the frogs? Maybe it was because he began to see a supernatural power at work? Whatever the reason, Pharaoh asked Moses to remove the frogs and Moses removed them because God told him to.

In the **third plague (Exodus 8:16-19)**, God told Moses to have Aaron stretch out his rod and strike the dust and gnats (**NASB; NIV**) or lice (**KJV**) would appear swarming on man and beast. This Aaron did and the gnats came on all the Egyptians.

The magicians tried to duplicate this plague but they could not (**Exodus 8:18**). ***They told Pharaoh that this plague was the finger of God (Exodus 8:19). From this plague on the magicians could not replicate any of the plagues Moses and Aaron participated in.***

The plagues continued (seven more) and then the last (the tenth) which was the death of the firstborn of all the land of Egypt even among the cattle. Pharaoh's house and all the officials were not spared. The cattle of the Israelites however were spared.

Before this plague was carried out, God told Moses to have the people of Israel place blood on the door posts and the mantle and the death angel (who would pass over Egypt killing the first born), seeing the blood, would *pass over* them. Any doorpost that didn't have blood on it would loose the first born child.

God instructed Israel what they must do to prepare for the journey out of Egypt and so they prepared and ate the **Passover** meal just as He had told them to do.

It should have been obvious that God, the One True God, was to be revered and obeyed but this was not enough for Pharaoh to bow to God's wishes to let Israel go and so he saw that the Israelites had left he sent his army to bring Israel back. God, however, protected His people by placing a cloud between the army of Egypt and the Israelites by day and a pillar of fire by night (**Exodus 13:21-22**).

The Israelites were fearful when they saw the Egyptian army approaching and wanted to go back to Egypt. "Then they said to Moses, "Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." (**Exodus 14:11-12 (NASB95)**). After all God had done to deliver them because of their crying out to Him, sending Moses and Aaron and the ten miraculous plagues, these people lost faith!

When Israel came up to the Red Sea they could see no way out but God had Moses lift his rod over the water causing the sea to part and delivered His people through the Red Sea. Israel went across on dry ground but when the Egyptians tried to follow God caused the water of the sea to return to its place trapping the Egyptian army with their chariots and horses and they drowned. (**Exodus 14:13-31**).

One would think that this would be so great a testimony of the power of God that they would never doubt His instructions and power again, but as we study the continuing history we see that was not the case.

Soon after the Israelites entered the wilderness they began to murmur about their food and complain when they became thirsty. God gave them water out of a rock (**Exodus 17:1-6**). Then they wanted all the things they had enjoyed in Egypt, the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, the onions and garlic. (**Numbers 11:4-9**). They forgot they had been slaves, mistreated, worked to exhaustion and even killed. They were an ungrateful people who did not appreciate that God was leading them to the Promised Land, a "land flowing with milk and honey."

Like the Israelites, sometimes God's people who have left sin, been washed by the blood of Christ, saved, are tempted to look back at some of the sinful pleasures they enjoyed before they became Christians and are tempted to go back to them. They forget they were dead (spiritually) in those sins, were delivered to freedom from them, and are looking forward to eternal life in a place of bliss.

Because of Israel's murmuring and rebellion God had serpents to enter into their camp and kill many of them. When the people saw their sin they asked Moses to intercede to God for them and ask Him to take away the snakes. God had Moses make a fiery serpent, place it on a pole and raise it up so that when the people who were bitten looked at the serpent on the pole, they would be healed. This Moses did and those who looked at the serpent after being bitten were healed (**Numbers 21:6-9**).

Christians today who are tempted to go back into sin need to remember that we have a Savior who was placed on a cross and died for our sins. And after we believed in Him and submitted to His instructions concerning the forgiveness of our sins, He continually cleanses us of our sins (**1 John 1:6-9**).

When God made His covenant with His Chosen People at Mt. Sinai after passing through the Red Sea (Exodus 19:1-8; 20:1-26), one of the commandments He gave and they agreed to keep was; “**You shall have no other gods before Me.**” “**You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.**” “**You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me.** (Exodus 20:3-5 (NASB95)). To bow down to other gods is equated to *hating the One True God!*

Over and over throughout the Old and New Testaments God proved Himself to be the One and Only True God. The people continued to forget Him and trust in their own thinking and make Him out to be whatever they wanted Him to be. His teaching and commands were lost over and over to their own thinking. They just transferred their own ideas about who God was and how He would be pleased **to make a god of their own.** Whatever they wanted to do, they did. This is seen in **Judges 17:6; 21:25** where the people strayed when there was no king (one appointed by God to guide the people in God’s way). When people cease to follow the clear teaching of God or His word they justify whatever they decide to do in their own minds as being in line with the teaching of God. *When one bows to their own thoughts rather than to God, this is equivalent to bowing to “other gods.”*

IN REALITY, THIS KIND OF THINKING MAKES ONE HIS OWN god.

This is brought out so clearly in **Romans 1:18-32 (NASB95)** – 18 “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 **because** that which is known about God is evident within them; **for** God made it evident to them. 20 **For** since the creation of the world His **invisible attributes**, His **eternal power** and **divine nature**, have been clearly seen, **being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.** 21 **For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened** (Insert: the Greek for darkened - σκοτίζω – their minds were darkened – the true light did not shine in their understanding. What they saw was *what they speculated about God*, not what He revealed [R.P.] **End of Insert**). 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of **corruptible man** and of **birds and four-footed animals** and **crawling creatures.** 24 **Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity**, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 **For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie**, and **worshiped and served the creature** rather than the **Creator**, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26 **For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions: for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural**, 27 and in the same way also the men **abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.** 28 And just as **they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper**, 29 being **filled** with all **unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil**; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; **they are gossips**, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 **without understanding**, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and **although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.**” Giving approval is joining into the same sin with the sinner!

Listen to all the chatter today about homosexuality and leisbienism; what do you hear?

You hear every kind of philosophy, speculation, and home spun idea about what **God calls a sin** as not being a sin. It is explained away by saying that one was born a female in a male body or a male in a female body and that one gets to **choose their sexual orientation even though God, the Creator, clearly condemns this**. (cf. Genesis 1:27; 5:2; Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13). What does this do to the inspired word from Almighty God? Does this mean that I get to tell God where He got things right and where He messed up and got it wrong? **Not if God is God!** If God is God He doesn't make mistakes that we have to fix, explain away, or re-write. **God is creator and we are not!** (Genesis 1:1ff).

This kind of speculation and philosophy is like that of Adam and Eve when they listened to the instruction of Satan rather than obeying and following God, thus bringing sin into the world because **"they did it their way"** (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; Romans 5:12).

Israel, God's chosen people were promised a land of their own. They went through many trials and hardships but **eventually Israel did enter the Promised Land through the help of God. Christians today have a similar, but much better promise in the promise of eternal life with God in heaven!**

Israel, later began to worship the gods of the people around them **while still claiming to worship the One True God**. Because they worshiped other gods, God sent them off into Assyrian captivity. Judah was not long in following and God sent them into Babylonian captivity. Both **Israel** (the Northern kingdom) and **Judah**, (the Southern part of the divided kingdom) claimed to believe in the One True God but they rebelled by following after the gods of the peoples around them. This is clearly seen when a group of elders from Israel come to Ezekiel the prophet for advice. God gave Ezekiel His answer to these who had idols in their hearts. Ezekiel records, "14 Some of the **elders of Israel** came to me and sat down in front of me. ²**Then the word of the LORD came to me:** ³**"Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces. Should I let them inquire of me at all?"** ⁴**Therefore speak to them and tell them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When any Israelite sets up idols in his heart and puts a wicked stumbling block before his face and then goes to a prophet, I the LORD will answer him myself in keeping with his great idolatry. ⁵I will do this to recapture the hearts of the people of Israel, who have all deserted me for their idols.'** ⁶**"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices! ⁷"When any Israelite or any alien living in Israel separates himself from me and sets up idols in his heart and puts a wicked stumbling block before his face and then goes to a prophet to inquire of me, I the LORD will answer him myself. ⁸I will set my face against that man and make him an example and a byword. I will cut him off from my people. Then you will know that I am the LORD. ⁹"And if the prophet is enticed to utter a prophecy, I the LORD have enticed that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and destroy him from among my people Israel. ¹⁰They will bear their guilt—the prophet will be as guilty as the one who consults him. ¹¹Then the people of Israel will no longer stray from me, nor will they defile themselves anymore with all their sins. They will be my people, and I will be their God, declares the Sovereign LORD."**

Judgment Is Inescapable

¹² The word of the LORD came to me: ¹³**"Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its men and their animals, ¹⁴even if these three men—Noah, Daniel and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD."** Ezekiel 14:1-14 (NIV)

Only when they repented did God rescue them and bring them back into the Promised Land and then only a remnant returned!

Paul, the inspired writer of Romans, said only what God revealed to him (Romans 1:1-6),

just as he had when he wrote the book of 1 Corinthians (**1 Corinthians 2:1-13**) and as he did when he wrote the book of Ephesians (**Ephesians 3:3-5**) and all of his writings. When Paul wrote **Romans 1:18-32** he was writing by the inspiration of God who sent the Holy Spirit to guide him in his writing. Why do people, even religious people, argue with divine instructions concerning homosexuality and lesbianism, adultery, fornication, gossip, envy and strife, trying to justify it?

If one can justify homosexuality, and lesbianism, they can justify the rest of the list - unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents. 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful. If God forbids a thing, action, or attitude, it is sin to practice it. If we practice a sin this places us in an unsaved condition as John brings out, in **1 John 1:6 (NIV)** ***6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.***

The answer to people trying to justify sin I am afraid, is that many are unwilling to make their stand with God, trusting Him to be Supreme, Divine, Creator and therefore the one who calls things as they are without prejudice or favoritism.

MANY ALLOW THE *WORLD* TO INTERPRET THE BIBLE JUST AS MANY ALLOW ATHEISTS AND EVOLUTIONISTS TO DO AWAY WITH A DIVINE CREATOR.

The world and the media teach godlessness with a fervor and some Christians who do not study the bible are eventually convinced – not because it is true but because so many are flooding the airways and college professors are spouting their ignorance about spirituality and creation as if they had hard evidence for their statements and belief. They make it sound as if what they say is accepted by all intelligent people and so it makes anyone who stands up to them seem stupid or unlearned in the eyes of others. Students want to be in the know and accepted by their professors and their peers and it seems to them that in order to achieve this they must agree with them. They are pressured into submission, ***unless of course, their desire to be accepted by God is greater!***

God says that adultery and fornication is sin (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 15-20**). He says that living together out of marriage is sinful. What does the world say about this? It is being touted in all the media that there is nothing wrong with this. The media has gotten so powerful that many people are afraid to stand with God and teach what is right and so, little by little, these things are tolerated even by Christians who are weak because of their ***lack of conviction and study.***

If God is our God we will follow Him. His teachings are true and there is no substitute for truth. God's truth stands against what is wrong. ***If we go along with the world we are bowing to "other gods,"*** gods that are different from the One and Only True God. By bowing to the teaching of the world, we create our own god. God does not tolerate His people compromising His truth.

WE ARE TO TEACH TRUTH, LIVE THE TRUTH, AND STAND FOR THE TRUTH!

God is a God of truth (**Psalms 31:5; Isaiah 35:16**).

Jesus Christ is the truth (**John 14:6**).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (**John 15:26;16:13**).

The apostles and prophets wrote the word of truth so that when we read it we can understand it (**John 17:17; 2 Timothy 2:15-16; Ephesians 2:3-5**).

Jesus said, ... ***"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6 (NIV)).***

Paul wrote "There is ***one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all*** (**Ephesians 4:4-6 (NIV)**).

Are you taking your stand with God or the world? If with the world, you have ***"other gods"*** besides the True God and you stand condemned.

If you stand with the One God, you will believe and obey His word – All of it!

WHO IS YOUR GOD? THE GOD OF THE BIBLE OR THE god OF THE WORLD?

